

Mr. Thomas C. Bordine
 Manager, Licensing
 Palisades Plant
 27780 Blue Star Memorial Highway
 Covert, MI 49043

May 14, 1997

SUBJECT: PALISADES PLANT - EXEMPTION FROM CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS OF
 10 CFR 73.55, REQUIREMENTS FOR PHYSICAL PROTECTION OF LICENSED
 ACTIVITIES IN NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS AGAINST RADIOLOGICAL SABOTAGE
 (TAC NO. M95185)

Dear Mr. Bordine:

The Commission has issued the enclosed Exemption in response to your request dated April 4, 1996, to utilize an alternative access control system. This Exemption is from certain requirements of 10 CFR 73.55 relating to the issuance, storage, and retrieval of picture badges for individuals who have been granted unescorted access into the protected area of the Palisades site.

The alternative system will require individuals with unescorted access to the protected area to not only have their picture badges to gain access, but also have their hand geometry confirmed. Upon implementation of the hand geometry biometric system at the entrance/exit to the protected area, the Exemption will allow all individuals not employed by the licensee (e.g., contractors), who have unescorted access, to keep their picture badges in their possession when departing the Palisades site.

A copy of the exemption is being forwarded to the Office of the Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Robert G. Schaaf, Project Manager
 Project Directorate III-1
 Division of Reactor Projects - III/IV
 Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket No. 50-255

Enclosure: Exemption

cc w/encl: See next page

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| DATE | 4/23/97 | | 4/24/97 | | 3/31/97 | | 4/7/97 | | 4/18/97 | |

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Consumers Power Company

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Palisades Plant

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of
Consumers Power Company
(Palisades Plant)

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Docket No. 50-255

EXEMPTION

I.

Consumers Power Company (CPCo, the licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License No. DPR-20 which authorizes operation of the Palisades Plant. The Palisades facility is a pressurized water reactor located at the licensee's site in Van Buren County, Michigan. The license provides, among other things, that the facility is subject to all rules, regulations, and orders of the Commission now or hereafter in effect.

II.

In 10 CFR 73.55, "Requirements for physical protection of licensed activities in nuclear power reactors against radiological sabotage," paragraph (a), in part, states that "The licensee shall establish and maintain an onsite physical protection system and security organization which will have as its objective to provide high assurance that activities involving special nuclear material are not inimical to the common defense and security and do not constitute an unreasonable risk to the public health and safety."

In 10 CFR 73.55(d), "Access Requirements," paragraph (1), it specifies that "The licensee shall control all points of personnel and vehicle access into a protected area." Also, 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) requires that "A numbered picture badge identification system shall be used for all individuals who are authorized access to protected areas without escort." It further states that individuals not employed by the licensee (e.g., contractors) may be authorized

access to protected areas without escort provided that the individual, "receives a picture badge upon entrance into the protected area which must be returned upon exit from the protected area...."

The licensee proposes to implement an alternative unescorted access system that would eliminate the need to issue and retrieve picture badges at the entrance/exit location to the protected area and would allow all individuals, including contractors, to keep their picture badges in their possession when departing the Palisades site.

III.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 73.5, "Specific exemptions," the Commission may, upon application of any interested person or upon its own initiative, grant such exemptions from the requirements of the regulations in this part as it determines are authorized by law and will not endanger life or property or the common defense and security, and are otherwise in the public interest. According to 10 CFR 73.55, the Commission may authorize a licensee to provide alternative measures for protection against radiological sabotage provided the licensee demonstrates that the alternative measures have the same "high assurance" objective, that the proposed measures meet the general performance requirements of the regulation, and that the overall level of system performance provides protection against radiological sabotage equivalent to that which would be provided by the regulation.

Currently, unescorted access into the protected area of Palisades for both employee and contractor personnel is controlled through the use of picture badges. Positive identification of personnel who are authorized and request access into the protected area is established by security personnel making a visual comparison of the individual requesting access and that

individual's picture badge. In accordance with 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), contractor personnel are not allowed to take their picture badges off site. In addition, in accordance with the plant's physical security plan, the licensee's employees are also not allowed to take their picture badges off site.

The proposed system will require that all individuals with authorized unescorted access have the physical characteristics of their hand (hand geometry) registered with their picture badge number in a computerized access control system. Therefore, all authorized individuals must not only have their picture badge to gain access to the protected area, but must also have their hand geometry confirmed. All individuals, including contractors, who have authorized unescorted access into the protected area will be allowed to keep their picture badges in their possession when departing the Palisades site.

All other access processes, including search function capability and access revocation, will remain the same. A security officer responsible for access control will continue to be positioned within a bullet-resistant structure. A numbered picture badge identification system will continue to be used for all individuals who are authorized access to the protected area without escorts. Badges will continue to be displayed by all individuals while inside the protected area.

It should also be noted that the proposed system is only for individuals with authorized unescorted access and will not be used for those individuals requiring escorts.

Sandia National Laboratories conducted testing that demonstrated that the hand geometry equipment possesses strong performance characteristics. Details of the testing performed are in the Sandia report, "A Performance

Evaluation of Biometric Identification Devices," SAND91--0276 UC--906 Unlimited Release, June 1991. Based on the Sandia report and the licensee's experience using the current photo picture identification system, the false acceptance rate for the proposed hand geometry system would be at least equivalent to that of the current system. To assure that the proposed system will continue to meet the general performance requirements of 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5), the licensee will implement a process for testing the system. The site security plan will also be revised to allow implementation of the hand geometry system and to allow employees and contractors with unescorted access to keep their picture badges in their possession when leaving the Palisades site.

IV.

For the foregoing reasons, the NRC staff has determined that the proposed alternative measures for protection against radiological sabotage meet the same high assurance objective and the general performance requirements of 10 CFR 73.55. In addition, the staff has determined that the overall level of the proposed system's performance will provide protection against radiological sabotage equivalent to that which is provided by the current system in accordance with 10 CFR 73.55.

Accordingly, the Commission has determined that, pursuant to 10 CFR 73.5, this exemption is authorized by law, will not endanger life or property or the common defense and security, and is otherwise in the public interest. Therefore, the Commission hereby grants the following exemption:

The requirement of 10 CFR 73.55(d)(5) that individuals who have been granted unescorted access and are not employed by the licensee are to return their picture badges upon exit from the

protected area is no longer necessary. Thus, these individuals may keep their picture badges in their possession upon leaving the Palisades site. The exemption is granted on the condition that the licensee implements a system testing process and revises the site security plan as discussed in Section III above.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that the granting of this exemption will not have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment (62 FR 22975).

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Original signed by
Samuel J. Collins

Samuel J. Collins, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Dated at Rockville, Maryland,
this 14th day of May, 1997.

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| DATE | 5/8/97 | | 5/8/97 | | 3/31/97 | | 4/7/97 | | 5/2/97 | |
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| DATE | 4/18/97 | | 4/24/97 | | 5/1/97 | | | | | |

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