

UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF INSPECTION AND ENFORCEMENT  
WASHINGTON, DC 20555

April 21, 1986

IE INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 86-27: ACCESS CONTROL AT NUCLEAR FACILITIES

Addressees:

All nuclear power reactor facilities holding an operating license (OL) or construction permit (CP), research and nonpower reactor facilities, and fuel fabrication and processing facilities using or possessing formula quantities of special nuclear material.

Purpose:

This information notice is provided to describe examples of significant physical security problems in the area of access control. It is expected that recipients will review the information for applicability to their facilities and consider actions, if appropriate, to preclude similar problems from occurring at their facilities. However, suggestions contained in this information notice do not constitute NRC requirements; therefore, no specific action or written response is required at this time.

Description of Circumstances:

In recent months, the number of incidents related to degraded access control at nuclear facilities appears to have increased considerably. Breakdowns in positive access control, especially those that could have allowed access into vital areas (VAs) and material access areas (MAAs), are among the most significant safeguards vulnerabilities that can occur at nuclear facilities.

Examples of the most frequent access control problems are:

- Weapons have been found on vehicles by security personnel during protected area exit searches instead of entry searches. Also, individuals already granted access have discovered that they mistakenly brought weapons on site via vehicle or package. In some cases, no entry search was conducted, while in others, a search was conducted but the weapon was not detected. Security personnel have asked drivers of vehicles if they had any weapons on their persons, but failed to ask if there were any weapons in the vehicles.
- Individuals have gained access to facilities by tailgating or by using someone else's badge. Also, individuals not authorized access to VAs and MAAs have tailgated into those areas. In many cases, they were not challenged by the person being tailgated or by personnel working in the area. Some violators displayed badges that clearly indicated they were not authorized to be in the area, while others did not even display a badge.

- VA and MAA doors have been found unsecured because they would not close properly. Also, these doors have been found taped or propped open for operational convenience. In other instances, the closure time for power-controlled VA and MAA doors has been excessive, inviting tailgating or unauthorized entries. Poor maintenance programs and inadequate compensatory measures have frequently compounded these problems.
- Guards being used as compensatory measures for VA and MAA barriers and/or security alarm systems, have been found asleep at their posts or have left their posts before barriers and/or alarm systems have been returned to an effective state of operation.
- Responses to protected area and VA and MAA alarms have been very untimely and, in some cases, no responses have been made.

In several of these cases, NRC has taken escalated enforcement action for failure to properly control access to the site protected area and VAs. Under the NRC Enforcement Policy, failure to control access such that contraband is introduced into the site protected area or individuals are allowed access to protected areas or VAs without proper authorization may be categorized as Severity Level III or higher violations. Depending on the particular circumstances of such incidents, a substantial civil penalty may be imposed.


Discussion:

The above examples of frequent access control problems indicate that many licensees may share some of the following program management problems:

- Failure to properly train and motivate security personnel and other employees in discharging their security-related responsibilities.
- Failure to place appropriate priorities on maintenance of security equipment.
- Poor security awareness or attitudes by employees.
- Poor access control procedures, especially concerning searches, issuance of badges, and use of turnstiles.

Human error, ineffective training, and poor attitudes towards the security program appear to be the most significant factors in the problem areas identified. NRC inspectors are directing more inspection effort in these areas, and violations will be processed in accordance with NRC Enforcement Policy.

No specific action or written response is required by this information notice. If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact the Regional Administrator of the appropriate NRC regional office, or this office.

  
Edward L. Jordan, Director  
Division of Emergency Preparedness  
and Engineering Response  
Office of Inspection and Enforcement

Technical Contact: N. Ervin, IE  
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Attachment: List of Recently Issued IE Information Notices

LIST OF RECENTLY ISSUED  
 IE INFORMATION NOTICES

Information Notice No.	Subject	Date of Issue	Issued to
86-26	Potential Problems In Generators Manufactured By Electrical Products Incorporated	4/17/86	All power reactor facilities holding an OL or CP
86-25	Traceability And Material Control Of Material And Equipment, Particularly Fasteners	4/11/86	All power reactor facilities holding an OL or CP
86-24	Respirator Users Notice: Increased Inspection Frequency For Certain Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus Air Cylinders	4/11/86	All power reactor facilities holding an OL or CP; research and test reactor facilities; fuel cycle licensees and Priority 1 material licensees
86-23	Excessive Skin Exposures Due To Contamination With Hot Particles	4/9/86	All power reactor facilities holding an OL or CP
86-22	Underresponse Of Radition Survey Instrument To High Radiation Fields	3/31/86	All power reactor facilities holding an OL or CP and research and test reactors
86-21	Recognition Of American Society Of Mechanical Engineers Accreditation Program For N Stamp Holders	3/31/86	All power reactor facilities holding an OL or CP and all recipients of NUREG-0040 (white book)
86-20	Low-Level Radioactive Waste Scaling Factors, 10 CFR Part 61	3/28/86	All power reactor facilities holding an OL or CP
86-19	Reactor Coolant Pump Shaft Failure At Crystal River	3/21/86	All power reactor facilities holding an OL or CP

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OL = Operating License  
 CP = Construction Permit