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**\*\*\*FOR THE RECORD\*\*\***

## **Clarification of Security Regulations for Nuclear Power Plants**

There have been several recent news stories contending that security is lax at the nation's nuclear power plants. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, they are among the best-protected parts of our national infrastructure.

NRC requires nuclear power plant owners to take a graded approach to physical protection focusing on the areas most important to safety. For example, the area encompassing a nuclear power plant and its safety equipment is the Protected Area. NRC regulations require stringent access control measures before personnel and vehicles can enter a Protected Area. Within the Protected Area are the Vital Areas, which have even more access barriers and alarms to protect important equipment. All plants are required to have security checkpoints into the Protected Area. The outermost area, or the Owner-Controlled Area, does not have the same access control requirements and can be accessible by the public.

In the recent news stories, a reporter was able to drive onto the owner-controlled area, but was not able to enter the protected area. Being able to drive around a parking lot does not mean security has been breached or that there was a danger to the public.

Since the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, the NRC has required numerous security enhancements at the nation's nuclear plants. While the plants are secure, robust structures designed and built to withstand a variety of natural and man-made events, the agency ordered additional measures. For example, we strengthened requirements related to physical barriers, access controls, and intrusion detection and surveillance systems, as well as the existing well-trained and armed security officers. NRC regulations require plants be able to defend against an assault by multiple determined and capable adversaries attacking by land or water, truck bombs, boat bombs, insider threats and cyber attacks.

Finally, the NRC has an extensive security oversight program. The NRC reviews and approves a plant's security plan. NRC inspectors conduct onsite inspections of personnel and equipment on an on-going basis to ensure our requirements are met. Force-on-force security inspections are another part of this program. In these inspections, a specially trained mock adversary force "attacks" the facility. Should NRC inspectors find deficiencies, they are corrected or compensated for before the inspectors leave the site.

In total, NRC regulations and oversight ensure security at the 100 operating nuclear power plants, as well as Independent Spent Fuel Installations and decommissioning plants, is appropriate to protect the public health and safety.