



NRC NEWS

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NRC FORMS OFFICE OF SECURITY TO STREAMLINE SECURITY, SAFEGUARDS AND INCIDENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is establishing an Office of Nuclear Security and Incident Response to consolidate and streamline selected NRC security, safeguards, and incident response responsibilities and resources. The newly created office will report to the Deputy Executive Director for Reactor Programs. The move is effective April 7.

The formation of the new office is one result of the Commission's ongoing top-to-bottom review of its safeguards and physical security program in the aftermath of last September's terrorist attacks.

Until now, the assignment of security responsibilities has been determined by the type of facility requiring protection. For example, the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards (NMSS) has been responsible for the security programs for protection of fuel cycle facilities, materials, transportation, disposal and certain waste-storage facilities, along with other regulatory activities relating to those facilities. Another organization, the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR), has been responsible for nuclear power plants and non-power reactors, decommissioning facilities, and certain spent fuel storage facilities. The NRC has concluded that a centralized security organization is a more effective and efficient way of organizing security activities.

Among the intended benefits of the consolidation are improved communications and coordination both within the agency and with external entities, including Federal and State agencies. The change will streamline communications, improve the timeliness and consistency of information, and provide a more visible point of contact and effective counterpart to the Office of Homeland Security, as well as other Federal agencies.

The consolidation will also integrate the NRC's management of classified information, unclassified but sensitive safeguards information, and secure communications facilities within one organization.

The new office's responsibilities will include:

- The current responsibilities of the Incident Response organization, which include managing the agency's operations center, developing and directing the NRC program for response to incidents, and interfacing with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other Federal organizations;
- Safeguards and security policy and oversight for nuclear reactors, decommissioning facilities, spent fuel storage installations, non-power reactors, uranium fuel fabrication facilities, mixed-oxide fabrication and processing facilities, other source material and use facilities, other special nuclear material facilities, enrichment facilities, associated waste processing facilities, and transportation activities;
- Material control and accounting and international safeguards activities of the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards;
- Technical support and coordination for safeguards licensing and rulemaking activities implemented by the Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards and the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation;
- Development and oversight of safeguards and security inspection programs carried out by headquarters and regional offices;
- Development of contingency planning and emergency response activities for safety and safeguards events;
- Coordination with intelligence and law enforcement communities;
- Threat assessment; and
- Administration of NRC counter-intelligence, secure telecommunications, and classification/declassification programs.

Resources for the functions to be consolidated in the proposed office, including about 90 staff members, will be transferred from existing NRC offices without an increase in the agency's FY 2002 and FY 2003 budgets.

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