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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
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**SECURITY ADVISORY FOR AFFECTED
OPERATING POWER REACTORS, CATEGORY I FUEL CYCLE FACILITIES, AND
INDEPENDENT SPENT FUEL STORAGE INSTALLATION LICENSEES**

SA 2025-04

SUBJECT: RECENT UNSAFE WEAPONS HANDLING INCIDENTS AT NRC LICENSED FACILITIES

PURPOSE

This security advisory details recent incidents involving unsafe weapons handling by U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) licensees and emphasizes the importance of compliance with existing regulatory requirements and guidance for safe weapons handling, operation, and storage. These incidents are of substantial concern to the NRC and licensees are encouraged to review the requirements and guidance in conjunction with existing safe weapons handling training programs and procedures to ensure safety of personnel and equipment.

BACKGROUND

The NRC is aware of three recent events at NRC-licensed facilities between October 2024 and February 2025 that involved “near miss” incidents and the unsafe use and handling of weapons and ammunition during training and exercise settings. Details of these incidents are provided below:

- In October 2024, during a training evolution, a security officer participating in an exercise responded to a simulated security event by retrieving a live firearm instead of a simulated drill firearm. A live weapon assigned to the security post had not been properly tagged and the controller did not verify tagging as required by procedure. The security officer participating in the exercise, located in a bullet resistant enclosure defensive position, charged the weapon thereby putting a live round in the chamber. The security officer was stopped by an exercise controller prior to taking any further actions. The weapon was placed into a safe configuration and the exercise was terminated. There were no injuries as a result of this incident.
- In January 2025, while conducting dry fire training with dummy training rounds, a security trainee was provided access to an unauthorized container of dummy rounds that was not procedurally allowed for use. The container had live rounds mixed in with dummy rounds and the trainee mistakenly loaded a live round into their magazine. When instructed to demonstrate firing the weapon, the trainee unexpectedly discharged a live round down range into the range berm. A post-incident review revealed that a live

round had been accidentally mixed in with the dummy rounds that had been distributed to the trainees. Additionally, the live round was not identified by the instructors distributing the training rounds or the trainee that loaded the round into their magazine. There were no injuries as a result of this incident.

- In February 2025, a licensee was conducting handgun familiarization training with a new class of security officer trainees inside a security training building. The trainees were practicing basic firearms manipulations (e.g., loading, unloading, marksmanship fundamentals, etc.) using training rounds before their first live fire training. The training rounds were distributed to the trainees from a bin designated and marked for dummy round storage only and the trainees were instructed to load them into their magazines. A live round had been accidentally introduced into the dummy training round storage bin and the instructor did not identify the live round while distributing them. The licensee's dummy rounds were similar in appearance to live rounds and did not have any distinctive markings. The trainee did not identify the live round while loading it into their magazine and began the firearms familiarization training as instructed. The trainee, pointing their weapon toward an interior wall, fired the weapon, and discharged a live round through a metal detector and two interior walls before the round embedded into an interior bathroom wall in close proximity to an individual exiting the restroom. There were no injuries as a result of this incident.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDANCE

Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 73, appendix B, "General Criteria for Security Personnel," section VI, (E)(1)(a), requires, in part, that armed members of the security organization be trained and qualified in accordance with the requirements of appendix B and their Commission-approved training and qualification plan. Appendix B, section VI, (E)(1)(d)(4) of 10 CFR Part requires, in part, that the Commission-approved training and qualification plan include safe weapons handling. Further, 10 CFR 73, appendix B, section VI, (C)(2)(3)(1)(5) requires tactical response drills and force-on-force exercises to be conducted safely and in accordance with site safety plans.

Regulatory Guide (RG) 5.75, Rev. 1, "Training and Qualification of Security Personnel at Nuclear Power Reactor Facilities," provides guidance to NRC licensees for safe weapons training and handling.¹ Specifically, RG 5.75 section 8.5 indicates that consistent with Section VI, paragraph E(1)(b)(1) of Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 73, training in safe weapons handling skills shall be developed for each type of weapon assigned to the licensee's armed security personnel. This training should address, at a minimum, the following firearms safety rules:

- (a) Treat all firearms as loaded at all times.
- (b) Always keep the firearm's muzzle pointed in the safest direction and never intentionally cross anything you are not prepared to shoot.

¹ The NRC issues regulatory guides to describe and make available to the public methods that the NRC staff considers acceptable for use in implementing specific parts of the agency's regulations, techniques that the staff uses in evaluating specific problems or postulated accidents, and data that the staff needs in reviewing applications for permits and licenses. Regulatory guides are not substitutes for regulations, and compliance with them is not required.

- (c) Always keep your trigger finger straight on the firearm's frame unless you are prepared to shoot.
- (d) Never place the selector level in the fire position unless you are ready to shoot.
- (e) Verify the position of the firearm's selector lever if your weapon is bumped.
- (f) Never handle firearms if you are taking any prescription or nonprescription drugs that could affect your ability to safely handle or shoot a firearm.
- (g) Always load and unload firearms in the designated loading and unloading area.
- (h) Never handle any firearm by the barrel.

Additionally, RG 5.75 provides the following guidance for range safety guidelines for NRC licensee firearms training programs:

- (a) Firearms range safety rules should be followed at all times.
- (b) Firearms range safety guidelines should incorporate industry operating experience and other related events.
- (c) Firearms range safety guidelines should also address armed officer safety.
- (d) Range safety rules should be reviewed before conducting any range activities.

Lastly, licensees should continuously foster the safe handling of firearms, including during pre-range activities in classrooms, at designated ranges, and in areas where personnel perform their duties. Firearms training should include how to safely carry, transport, and store assigned firearms and ammunition. Failure to adhere to regulatory requirements, NRC-approved physical security plans and policies, guidance for weapons safety practices, and range and classroom weapon safety rules, could lead to serious bodily harm or death of licensee personnel. Strict adherence to the requirements and guidance outlined above and attentiveness to compliance with existing weapons handling and training practices is critical.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The events described above did not require a physical security event notification under 10 CFR 73.1200. However, NRC safety-related event notifications requirements (e.g., 10 CFR 50.72(b)(2)(xi) or 10 CFR 72.75(b)(2)) may apply if a licensee notifies other government agencies, such as the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), of an event such as a negligent firearm discharge that results in an injury.

Backfitting Statement: This security advisory does not add, eliminate, or modify the structures, systems, or components of a power reactor or an independent spent fuel storage installation (ISFSI) or the procedures or organization required to operate a power reactor or ISFSI and, therefore, does not constitute backfitting as defined in 10 CFR 50.109, "Backfitting," or 10 CFR 72.62, "Backfitting."

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Public Protection Notification: The NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to a collection of information unless the document requesting or requiring the collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Approved by  Signed by Inverso, Tara
on 05/19/25
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