



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NEW NRC GUIDELINES PUBLISHED TODAY ARE FIRST STEP TOWARD ALLOWING SECURITY PERSONNEL TO POSSESS ENHANCED WEAPONS AT NUCLEAR FACILITIES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission issued guidelines today making effective a section of the Atomic Energy Act that authorizes the NRC to allow the licensees and certificate holders of NRC-regulated facilities to apply for permission for their security personnel to possess and use certain “enhanced weapons.” These weapons are machineguns, short-barreled shotguns or short-barreled rifles. These guidelines have been approved by the U.S. Attorney General as required by the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

Previously, with limited exceptions, only federal, state or local law enforcement could lawfully possess machineguns.

As indicated in the guidelines, an NRC licensee or certificate holder will have to apply for NRC approval in order to exercise the new authority. As part of the approval process, the NRC would first designate the nuclear facilities, radioactive material or other property eligible for such authority. As part of the application, the licensee or certificate holder is required to update the applicable security plan, training and qualification plan, and contingency response plan, to reflect this new weaponry. In addition, the licensee or certificate holder is required to submit a weapons safety assessment evaluating the impact of the potential use of these weapons. The security personnel of those facilities whose duties require access to any weapon will be subject to a fingerprint check and a firearms background check by the U.S. Attorney General.

The licensee or certificate holder will also need to comply with applicable U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives requirements relating to enhanced weapons.

The guidelines will be followed by a rulemaking regarding enhanced weaponry and firearms background check requirements, and the public will have an opportunity to comment. Licensees and certificate holders not currently allowed to possess enhanced weapons may not obtain and use them before the rulemaking is final.

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