

Nuclear power is safe.

SECURITY. Safety is the nuclear industry's highest priority. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is a strong independent regulator and holds nuclear power plants to the highest security standards. Nuclear plants are the most secure industrial facilities in the country, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

V.C. Summer employs a well-armed and highly trained force of security officers dedicated to protecting the plant. This talented and professional work force receives comprehensive integrated training and education, and is fully qualified within rigorous standards. The security programs are tested annually.

Nuclear power plants are large, well-built concrete and steel structures. Each plant has intrusion detection systems, vehicle barrier systems and surveillance capabilities. According to studies conducted by both the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Electric Power Research Institute, containment structures that house the reactors are designed to withstand the impact of a wide-body commercial aircraft.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT. Buildings containing nuclear equipment are specially built to ensure radioactive by-products are safely contained. In addition to backup systems that monitor and regulate what goes on inside the nuclear reactor, nuclear power plants also use a series of physical barriers to prevent the escape of radioactive materials, such as the cladding on fuel rods, the heavy steel reactor vessel, and the steel-reinforced concrete containment structure. Plant personnel also monitor various aspects of the surrounding environment such as fish, water, air and plants, to ensure radiation stays in its place.

As for storage of used fuel, V.C. Summer currently uses a wet storage pool. The company has managed used nuclear fuel and other nuclear waste by-products safely and efficiently for nearly 30 years. The fuel-handling building was constructed with 4-foot-thick walls made of steel-reinforced concrete. The building was designed to withstand earthquakes, tornadoes and hurricanes, and is protected by a highly trained and heavily armed security force. V.C. Summer's current fuel pool has enough capacity to safely store used fuel through 2017. SCE&G will add dry storage by 2015. These robust, steel-lined, concrete containers are one of the storage methods used by nuclear stations across the U.S.

As it has done safely for years with the current unit, SCE&G will store the used fuel from the additional units on site. The new nuclear units will have their own fuel storage facilities — there will be no connection to the current fuel pool. Dry storage is an option for longer term storage for the new units as well. While SCE&G supports the construction of a permanent federal repository for used nuclear fuel, the company can safely store the used fuel, which is a solid material, for as long as necessary.