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**NCI CONDEMNS SECURITY BREACH
AT DUKE POWERS OCONEE PLANT**

The Nuclear Control Institute (NCI) is deeply disturbed by the March incident, at Duke Energy's Oconee plant, in which a contract worker with a criminal record was granted unescorted access to the protected area of the plant. This incident occurred because the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) continues to allow nuclear plant licensees to grant temporary unescorted access to contract workers before the FBI is able to complete background investigations and fingerprint checks, which typically take about 30 days. NRC's incident report about the security breach is available on NCI's website at <http://www.nci.org/pdf/nrc4902.pdf>

NCI calls on the NRC and all nuclear power plant licensees to halt the practice of granting unescorted access to any individual before completion of a thorough background check, not only for domestic criminal activities but also for signs of affiliation with international terrorist organizations.

"The Oconee security breach clearly shows that neither the Nuclear Regulatory Commission nor Duke Energy has learned the lessons of September 11," said NCI's scientific director, Dr. Edwin Lyman. "We're lucky that the individual who was improperly granted unescorted access to the vital areas of the plant was apparently a petty criminal and not an al Qaeda terrorist bent on causing a meltdown. Unless NRC puts a stop to the outrageous practice of granting such access to individuals before they are vetted for criminal activities and terrorist ties, we may not be so lucky the next time."

More information about the risks of nuclear terrorism are available on NCI's website at <http://www.nci.org/nuketerror.htm>