

Home / Breaking

[http://www.somdnews.com/breaking/terror-attack-calls-lusby-nuke-plant-safety-into-question/article\\_f2de8e18-ca8c-55f7-a011-c824fc4bd204.html](http://www.somdnews.com/breaking/terror-attack-calls-lusby-nuke-plant-safety-into-question/article_f2de8e18-ca8c-55f7-a011-c824fc4bd204.html)

FEATURED

TOP STORY

## Terror attack calls Lusby nuke plant safety into question

By TAMARA WARD [tward@somdnews.com](mailto:tward@somdnews.com) Twitter: [@CalRecTAMARA](https://twitter.com/CalRecTAMARA) Mar 26, 2016



STAFF PHOTO BY TAMARA WARD

Reactor at Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant.

The recent news of a planned attack on nuclear plants in Brussels has raised concern over whether America's nuclear reactors are easy targets for terrorists, but Lusby nuclear plant officials say the local plant is safe.

Exelon Generation's Calvert Cliffs Nuclear Power Plant was singled out in a Fox News Insider broadcast Friday, due in part to its proximity to the nation's capital. The report said nuclear power plants in the United States are vulnerable to ground-based and water-borne attacks.

"Our design basis threat is specific to those two things. We have to protect against those," said Tuane Young, manager of site security. "We are no soft target."

A design basis threat, also known as DBT, is the threat against which an asset must be protected.

The nearly 2-mile scenic trek from Route 4 down Calvert Cliffs Parkway would mislead one to think anyone could just pull up to the two nuclear reactors at the plant with ease. According to Young, that is very far from the truth.

"Due to its location and the network of barrier systems in place, perimeter fencing and manned vehicle checkpoints are not required to keep our plant, our workers and our community safe," stated Young. "Calvert's robust defenses include highly trained paramilitary personnel qualified in antiterrorism techniques; state-of-the art cameras and detection systems; military grade weaponry; and a network of engineered barrier systems and fences to repel unauthorized access."

"Manned vehicle checkpoints are not required at many U.S. nuclear facilities," said Young. "We search every vehicle that comes into the [protected] area. All personnel, all materials, all vehicles have to be searched ... no exception."

The multi-level security checkpoint for visitors rivals any major international airport, with layer upon layer of screenings to ensure one doesn't bring in dangerous physical or chemical weapons, or bring out any nuclear contaminants.

Plant employees were not exempt from scrutiny and were also required to go through a magnetometer to check for metal, as well as an explosive detector. Everyone is under constant camera surveillance from the moment they turn onto the parkway leading to the plant.

While most of the plant's security personnel have logged many years of experience in the military and law enforcement before coming to Calvert Cliffs, they are still required to keep their skills up to date.

“When an employee is hired on the security organization, they go through initial training in excess of 360 hours before they ever get to pick up a gun and come out here. Then continually training annually is over 160 [hours]. They are constantly training,” said Young.

“We carry a couple of different weapon systems and we have to qualify on both day and night and a tactical course of fire,” shared Young. “We are practicing, practicing, practicing throughout the year as required by the [Nuclear Regulatory Commission].”

While Young wouldn't reveal the weapons systems or where the plant's security forces are deployed, or allow photos of any of the security apparatuses on the 1,500-acre campus, he did acknowledge the plant adjusts its security strategy based upon events worldwide.

“Patrols are out there 24/7. If we feel we want to increase our presence at a specific location for deterrence, we make that decision based upon situations,” said Young.

The security fleet, for all of Exelon's 23 nuclear reactors nationwide, is tied in with the Department of Homeland Security's National Terrorism Advisory System, which issues timely alerts about terrorist threats to the public, government agencies, first responders, airports and other critical infrastructures like the Calvert Cliffs plant.

According to Young, NRC and homeland security held a security advisory committee meeting March 23 in the wake of the March 22 terrorist attacks in Brussels to brief all nuclear plant security forces.

Neil Sheehan, NRC public affairs officer, confirmed the agency is aware of the attacks in Brussels and subsequent events, and is monitoring the situation as information becomes available.

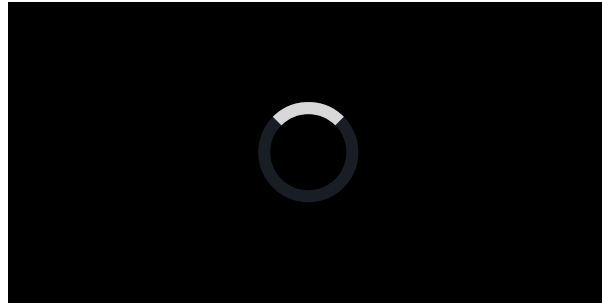
“U.S. nuclear power plants are maintaining their existing robust security posture at this time. Plants conduct ongoing access authorization and behavior observation programs for any personnel with unescorted access to a plant site,” shared Sheehan. “We have no specific, credible threat to prompt us to take additional steps.”

Despite the good news of no imminent danger to the plant, Young says his fleet is always ready.

“[For] the design basis threat that we are required to protect against, we are in that posture daily. We have a protective strategy that supports our land-based, vehicle-borne threat all of the time,” said Young. “We don't have relaxed security at a nuclear power.”

There are also numerous water barriers and buoys and a host of security along the Chesapeake Bay to guard the plant against water-borne attacks.

Young revealed Exelon has a law enforcement response plan with the Calvert County Sheriff's Office and Maryland State Police to protect Calvert Cliffs and the local community. In fact, both agencies met with Young and his team Friday to review the response plan.



“We have a plan in place, but we constantly review it to see if changes are needed based on recent threats,” Sheriff Mike Evans (R) confirmed Monday. “It’s fluid.”

Evans said the plan is reviewed monthly by the Special Operations Team.

During an emergency at Calvert Cliffs, the county Division of Emergency Management would ramp up the county’s Emergency Operations Center.

“Our response to a nuclear event at the plant is [dictated] by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. They have certain requirements that we have to meet to have an approved plan in place,” said Alfred Jeffery, county emergency management specialist. “We have a radiological emergency plan for Calvert County, Dorchester County and St. Mary’s, which are within in our 10-mile emergency planning zone.”

In addition to Exelon’s plant security, the sheriff’s office and Maryland State Police, Jeffery said during an emergency event at the plant the Division of Emergency Management would be in close coordination with Maryland’s departments of Energy, Environment and Emergency Management, as well as a host of other state and local private and public partners via the county’s Emergency Operations Center.

Coordination to keep the residents of Calvert County safe is not just a local law enforcement effort. The Federal Bureau of Investigations is also involved.

“FBI frequently visits the site ... and has a response plan also for this area and Baltimore,” said Young.

The bureau is scheduled to visit within the next week, according to the plant’s top security officer, to review the agency’s own plan with him.

Young said he is vested in the Lusby plant and is confident in his security team.

“My family lives here. I have been in security for 33 years, 10 years of nuclear weapons security in the military,” said Young. “This is safest place I’ve ever worked in my life. I am not saying that because I am an employee. I’m passionate about what I do, as well as our security force. They are here to protect the public from any threat and I trust they will do it without second guessing.”

---

*Twitter: @CalRecTAMARA*