

Civil Nuclear Constabulary – History

THE 1950's

On 1st August 1954, the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) assumed control of establishments, which until then had been part of the Ministry of Supply. They were policed by the War Department and Admiralty Constabularies.

The United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority Constabulary (UKAEAC) was formed on 1st April 1955 with an initial strength of 320. It took over responsibility for policing all UKAEA establishments except Woolwich Common and Foulness.

THE 1960'S

UKAEAC's Strength reduced in the 1960's in response to a reduction in commitments arising from the concentration of Authority work on a smaller number of sites and the introduction of a policy of containing classified documents and processes within designated areas on sites.

THE 1970'S

In 1971, the transfer of several UKAEA establishments to the newly established British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) did not change the UKAEAC's commitments. The Atomic Energy Authority Act 1971 enabled the UKAEAC to continue to police the establishments transferred to BNFL with the same powers as before. By virtue of the schedule to the 1971 Act, the UKAEA was also empowered to provide constables at the premises of other specified companies such as Urenco.

An organisational change, which did have a major effect, however, was the transfer in 1973 of the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston to the Ministry of Defence. The UKAEAC detachment there was absorbed into the MOD police, which led to a large reduction in the size of the UKAEAC.

The general increase in terrorist activity in the early 1970's necessitated the introduction of additional physical security measures at UKAEA and BNFL sites. These were complemented by the decision by ministers to introduce armed protection by the UKAEAC at sites with special nuclear materials (SNM) and to provide armed escorts for the movements of SNM between establishments. The result was the Atomic Energy Authority (Special Constables) Act 1976, which provided that:-

- UKAEAC officers were deemed to be Crown Servants for the purposes of Section 54 of the Firearms Act 1968. This put them on the same footing as Home Office police forces with regard to firearms and enabled them to hold firearms without needing individual firearms certificates issued under the Firearms Act 1968;
- UKAEAC officers would retain their powers as constables throughout Great Britain while escorting movements of SNM and when taking necessary action consequent upon any unlawful removal of nuclear matter. This meant they could exercise their powers in any place where it appeared to

them expedient to go to safeguard nuclear matter or to pursue persons they believed to have removed or attempted to remove it unlawfully.

THE 1980'S

The changes to the UKAEAC and its operational environment during the 1970's and 1980's added to the level of professional skills required by the UKAEAC and increased its duties. They called for additional guard and control duties; use of more police dogs; carrying of firearms on site, the armed escort of nuclear matter; the introduction and use of sophisticated communications equipment; closer liaison with public and parliamentary attention.

They also increased the range and complexity of the UKAEAC management task and put a new emphasis on supervision, training, tactical planning, communications and public relations.

The 1990's

The Standing Committee on Police Establishments (SCOPE) was formed to provide a structured and speedy framework for the assessment of police staffing requirements. It is chaired by the Director of the Office of Civil Nuclear Security (OCNS) on behalf of HM Government. The committee takes account of the national and international standards for the protection of nuclear material and guidance set by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in relation to the police use of firearms.

The inspection carried out by HMIC resulted in a vote of confidence in the standards of service and reliability of the Force. Particularly commended was the professionalism of the men and women entrusted with policing nuclear establishments.

The 2000's

In April 2005, the Civil Nuclear Constabulary (CNC) evolved from the previous UKAEAC. The CNC was established by the Energy Act 2004 which describes the primary function of the Constabulary as the protection of licensed nuclear sites which are not used wholly or mainly for defence purposes, and safeguarding nuclear material in Great Britain and elsewhere. As such the remit of the CNC now extends to protecting nuclear electricity generating station sites and also nuclear material in transit, both within the UK and internationally.

The specialist role of the CNC is to provide enhanced protection for the civil nuclear industry, in particular using non-lethal methods and firearms, to deter potential terrorist or sabotage acts, to defend against any such act if launched, to deny unauthorised access to nuclear materials, and to recover a stable security situation in the event of such acts occurring.