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# No boating in power plant zones

As a security measure, the Coast Guard has set up no-trespassing zones in waters near the Crystal River nuclear power plant.

By ALEX LEARY, Times Staff Writer  
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CRYSTAL RIVER -- In a sign that the threat of terrorism has not died, the Coast Guard has established no-trespassing zones in coastal waters near Florida Power's nuclear power plant.

The security areas, up to 3 miles from the reactor, were defined in late November -- although the rule was not published in the Federal Register until last week. They will be in effect until at least June 15.

Based on the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, "there is an increased risk that subversive activity could be launched by vessels or persons in close proximity to Florida Power Crystal River power plant," the Coast Guard said.

"This power plant provides critical energy to the Tampa area and contains extremely hazardous materials."

There have been no credible threats made against the power plant, said Lt. Dave McClellan, chief of port operations for the Coast Guard's Marine Safety Office in Tampa.

But because the Gulf of Mexico was already being patrolled in the aftermath of the jetliner attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, it made sense to establish a security zone, he said.

"You have more authority that way. We can basically tell a vessel: 'If you're in this area, you are in violation of the law. You need to leave.' "

People who refuse can be fined up to \$27,000. The Coast Guard said the restriction makes it easier to use force if a threat to the nuclear plant is determined.

The restricted areas, which encompass intake and discharge canals to the power plant, are popular with recreational anglers, particularly the discharge canal because fish flock to the warm water produced by the plant.

"I'm against any kind of closure when it comes to fishing, like manatee sanctuaries, but when it's national security, it doesn't bother me any," said Homosassa fishing guide Mike Locklear. "But it will hurt some of the local people when it gets real cold."

Already, some boats have shown up loaded with crab traps or fishing poles.

"They politely left after we discussed it with them," said Chief Petty Officer Mark Dalrymple of the Coast Guard station in Yankeetown.

He would not say how many boats are patrolling the area, only that the nuclear plant is being watched 24

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hours a day.

The Coast Guard is notifying boaters of the exact coordinates of the restricted zones through radio broadcasts. Some vessels may be able to enter the area, but only after getting permission.

Similar no-access zones have been established for Tampa's port, the Sunshine Skyway bridge and MacDill Air Force Base.

Florida Power spokesman Mac Harris said the utility welcomed the additional security.

"We agreed it makes sense for security and ease of patrolling."

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