

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION
OFFICE OF NEW REACTORS
WASHINGTON, DC 20555-0001

April 29, 2014

**NRC REGULATORY ISSUE SUMMARY 2014-05
PREPARATION AND SCHEDULING OF
OPERATOR LICENSING EXAMINATIONS**

ADDRESSEES

All holders of, or applicants for, a power reactor operating license or construction permit under Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 50, "Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities," except those that have certified that they have permanently ceased operations and fuel has been permanently removed from the reactor vessel.

All holders of, or applicants for, a power reactor early site permit or a combined license under 10 CFR Part 52, "Licenses, Certifications, and Approvals for Nuclear Power Plants."

INTENT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing this regulatory issue summary (RIS) to inform addressees of the NRC staff's need for updated information on projected site-specific operator licensing examination schedules, as well as on the estimated number of applicants planning to take operator licensing examinations and the NRC's generic fundamentals examinations (GFEs). This information will help the NRC to use its resources more effectively. This RIS requires no action or written response on the part of addressees. Addressee actions to collect and transmit the information requested are strictly voluntary.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Subpart E, "Written Examinations and Operating Tests," of 10 CFR Part 55, "Operators' Licenses," contains the relevant NRC regulations. In particular, 10 CFR 55.40, "Implementation," permits nuclear power reactor facility licensees to prepare, proctor, and grade the written examinations required by 10 CFR 55.41, "Written Examination: Operators," and 10 CFR 55.43, "Written Examination: Senior Operators," subject to certain conditions. Under 10 CFR 55.40, facility licensees may also prepare the NRC-administered operating tests required by 10 CFR 55.45, "Operating Tests." Under 10 CFR 55.40(c), facility licensees that choose not to prepare their own examinations and operating tests must request in writing that the NRC prepare the examinations and operating tests.

In RIS 2013-06, "Preparation and Scheduling of Operator Licensing Examinations," dated June 7, 2013, the NRC asked power reactor licensees to voluntarily submit proposed schedules of examinations they intended to prepare and to estimate the number of applicants to be tested for onsite examinations and GFEs in calendar years (CYs) 2015 through 2018. This RIS

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requests that licensees voluntarily update examination schedules and applicant estimates for CYs 2016 through 2019.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

The NRC uses nearly twice as many resources to prepare an examination as to review, approve, administer, and document a licensee prepared examination. The number of examinations administered by licensees fluctuates annually. Consequently, the NRC has found it helpful to request an annual update of the operator licensing examination needs of power reactor facility licensees. Moreover, with the anticipated number of new operator positions that will need to be filled for new plants, the differences in upcoming years could be significant. Therefore, the NRC requests that licensees evaluate their response to this RIS in this light, particularly for the later years. The update should include an estimate of the number of applicants to be examined and should indicate if the licensee or the NRC will prepare the exam. In their responses, those utilities not planning to construct a new plant should consider the impact of licensed operators moving between utilities to fill the anticipated openings in the future. This information will help the NRC budget its resources. The NRC regional offices will continue to coordinate specific examination dates with the training managers of affected facility licensees.

The NRC requests that each licensee provide the following information using NRC Form 536, "Operator Licensing Examination Data" (NRC Form 536 is available on the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/forms/>):

A. Proposed Examination Preparation Schedule

Estimate the number of examinations you intend to prepare and the number of examinations you will request the NRC to prepare during CYs 2016 through 2019. For examinations that facility licensees will prepare, the NRC will assume that each examination includes the required outline, the written examination, and the operating test, unless the licensee specifies otherwise. Joint NRC and licensee examination development is permitted and should be coordinated with the NRC regional office. You should notify the applicable NRC regional office, by letter, of any required schedule changes that arise after submission of your RIS response for agreement to, and coordination of, changes to examination administration.

B. Initial Operator License Examinations

For each desired examination, estimate the number of applicants to be tested and enter the proposed primary and alternate dates of the examination. If you are requesting more than one examination per CY, fill in the applicable columns as appropriate through CY 2019.

C. Proposed Generic Fundamentals Examination Schedule

Estimate by month the number of applicants who plan to take the GFE in CYs 2016 and 2017. As the industry has requested, the NRC now administers the GFE four times per year.

VOLUNTARY RESPONSE

The NRC asks addressees choosing to submit the information requested in NRC Form 536 to do so within 30 days of receiving this RIS. Direct your response to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, ATTN: Document Control Desk, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and send a copy of the response to the applicable regional office. You may submit responses electronically.

BACKFITTING AND ISSUE FINALITY

This RIS requests the addressees to inform the NRC of the dates and number of operator licensing examinations and the NRC's generic fundamentals examinations in CY 2016-2019 and whether the licensee or the NRC will prepare the exams. The RIS requires no action or written response. Any action on the part of addressees to collect and transmit operator licensing examination data in accordance with the request contained in this RIS is strictly voluntary. Therefore, this RIS does not represent backfitting as defined in 10 CFR 50, 109(a)(1), nor is it otherwise inconsistent with any issue finality provision in 10 CFR Part 52. Consequently, the NRC staff did not perform a backfit analysis.

FEDERAL REGISTER NOTIFICATION

The NRC did not publish in the *Federal Register* a notice of opportunity for public comment on this RIS because it pertains to an administrative aspect of the regulatory process that involves the voluntary submission of information on the part of addressees.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

This RIS is not a rule as designated by the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 801-808) and, therefore, is not subject to the Act.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT

This RIS contains information collections that are subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). These information collections were approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), approval number 3150-0131. The burden to the public for these information collections is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the information collection.

PUBLIC PROTECTION NOTIFICATION

The NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a request for information or an information collection requirement unless the requesting document displays a currently valid OMB control number.

CONTACT

Please direct any questions about this matter to the technical contacts listed below.

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