

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

August 27, 2003

**NRC REGULATORY ISSUE SUMMARY 2003-14
PREPARATION AND SCHEDULING OF
OPERATOR LICENSING EXAMINATIONS**

ADDRESSEES

All holders of operating licenses for nuclear power reactors, except those who have permanently ceased operations and have certified that fuel has been permanently removed from the reactor vessel.

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 and estimated numbers of applicants planning to take operator licensing examinations and the NRC's generic fundamentals examinations (GFEs). This information will help the NRC to more effectively plan the use of its resources. This RIS requires no action or written response on the part of addressees. Any action on the part of addressees to collect and transmit the information noted herein is strictly voluntary.

BACKGROUND

On April 23, 1999, the NRC published a notice in the *Federal Register* (64 FR 19868) amending 10 CFR Part 55, "Operators' Licenses," to allow nuclear power facility licensees to prepare, proctor, and grade the written examinations required by 10 CFR 55.41 and 55.43, provided certain conditions are satisfied. The amendment also allows facility licensees to prepare the NRC-administered operating tests required by 10 CFR 55.45. Pursuant to 10 CFR 55.40(c), facility licensees that elect not to prepare their own examinations and operating tests must request in writing that the examination and operating tests be prepared by the NRC.

Regulatory Information Summary (RIS) 2002-09, "Preparation and Scheduling of Operator Licensing Examinations," issued June 6, 2002, requested that facility licensees submit proposed schedules of examinations that they intended to prepare and to estimate the number of applicants to be tested in both site examinations and GFEs in calendar years (CYs) 2003 through 2006. This RIS supercedes RIS 2002-09; the objective is to update examination schedules and applicant estimates for CYs 2004 through 2006, and add an estimate for CY2007.

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SUMMARY OF ISSUE

Facility-developed and NRC-developed examinations call for significantly different resource commitments on the part of the NRC. Experience has shown that the NRC can review, approve, administer, and document a facility-prepared examination utilizing approximately half the resources it takes to prepare for an NRC-prepared examination. This fact, coupled with year-to-year fluctuations in the total number of examinations, significantly impacts the NRC resources needed to accommodate licensees' requests for exams. Consequently, the NRC has found it helpful to request an annual update of power reactor facility licensees' initial operator licensing examination needs. This update should include an estimate of the number of applicants to be examined and whether the licensee or the NRC will prepare the exam. This information will help the NRC budget and schedule its resources. The NRC regional offices will continue to coordinate specific examination dates with the training managers of affected facility licensees.

The NRC is requesting that each licensee provide the following information using NRC Form 536, "Operator Licensing Examination Data" (Attachment 1):

A. Proposed Examination Preparation Schedule

Estimate the number of examinations you intend to prepare and estimate the number of examinations you will request the NRC to prepare during CYs 2004 through 2007. For examinations that are prepared by facility licensees, the NRC will assume that each examination includes the required outline, written examination(s), and operating test(s), unless otherwise specified (shared examination development is permitted and should be coordinated with the appropriate NRC regional office).

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 examination. If you are requesting more than one examination per calendar year, split the applicable column or use additional forms, as necessary, to cover all the examinations through CY 2007.

C. Proposed Generic Fundamentals Examination Schedule

Estimate the number of applicants who plan to take the GFE in CYs 2004 and 2005 by examination month. As requested by the industry, the GFE will be administered 4 times yearly starting in CY 2004.

VOLUNTARY RESPONSE

Addressees that choose to submit the information identified in NRC Form 536 are asked to do so within 30 days after receipt of this RIS. NRC Form 536 is available on the NRC Web site at [Http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/forms/](http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/forms/). It may be filled out, printed, and mailed, but cannot be saved or submitted electronically at the present time. Your response should be directed to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, ATTN: Document Control Desk, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and a copy of the response should be sent to the applicable regional office.

BACKFIT DISCUSSION

This 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 guidance contained in this RIS is strictly voluntary. Therefore, this is not a backfit under 10 CFR 50.109, and the staff did not perform a backfit analysis.

FEDERAL REGISTER NOTIFICATION

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

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT

This RIS contains a voluntary information collection that is subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). This voluntary information collection is covered by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) clearance number 3150-0131, which expires on July 31, 2005. The public reporting burden for this voluntary information collection (NRC Form 536) 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. Send comments regarding this burden estimate to the Records Management Branch (T-6 E6), U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by Internet electronic mail to bjs1@nrc.gov, and to the Desk Officer, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, NEOB-10202 (3150-0131), Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503.

Public Protection Notification

If a means used to impose an information collection does not display a currently valid OMB clearance number, the NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, the information collection.

If you have any questions about this matter, please contact one of the technical contacts listed below or the appropriate Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation project manager.

/RA/

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Attachments:

1. NRC Form 536, "Operator Licensing Examination Data"
2. List of Recently Issued NRC Regulatory Issue Summaries

NRC FORM 536 <small>(5-2003)</small>		U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION		APPROVED BY OMB: NO. 3150-0131		EXPIRES: 07/31/2005		
OPERATOR LICENSING EXAMINATION DATA				<small>Estimated burden per response to comply with this voluntary information collection request: 1 hour. This information collection is used to plan budgets and resources for operator examinations. Send comments regarding burden estimate to the Records Management Branch (T-6 E6), U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by internet e-mail to infocollects@nrc.gov, and to the Desk Officer, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, NEOB-10202, (3150-0131), Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503. If a means used to impose an information collection does not display a currently valid OMB control number, the NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, the information collection.</small>				
FACILITY						NRC REGION		
A. PROPOSED EXAMINATION PREPARATION SCHEDULE								
PROPOSED NUMBER	CY ____	CY ____	CY ____	CY ____	CY ____	CY ____	CY ____	
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF LICENSEE-PREPARED EXAMINATIONS								
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF NRC-PREPARED EXAMINATIONS								
B. INITIAL OPERATOR LICENSE EXAMINATIONS								
PROPOSED NUMBER	CY ____	CY ____	CY ____	CY ____	CY ____	CY ____	CY ____	
NUMBER OF REACTOR OPERATORS								
NUMBER OF SENIOR REACTOR OPERATORS - INSTANT								
NUMBER OF SENIOR REACTOR OPERATORS - UPGRADE								
NUMBER OF SENIOR REACTOR OPERATORS - LIMITED								
PROPOSED DATES								
PRIMARY DATE								
ALTERNATE DATE								
C. PROPOSED GENERIC FUNDAMENTALS EXAMINATION (GFE) SCHEDULE								
PROPOSED NUMBER	CY ____				CY ____			
	MARCH	JUNE	SEPTEMBER	DECEMBER	MARCH	JUNE	SEPTEMBER	DECEMBER
ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CANDIDATES								