

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

June 14, 2004

**NRC REGULATORY ISSUE SUMMARY 2004-10
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 the 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 NRC prepare the examination and the operating tests.

Regulatory Information Summary (RIS) 2003-14, "Preparation and Scheduling of Operator Licensing Examinations," issued August 27, 2003, requested that facility licensees submit proposed schedules of examinations that they intended to prepare and estimate the number of applicants to be tested in both site examinations and GFEs in calendar years (CYs) 2004 through 2007. This RIS supersedes RIS 2003-14; the objective is to update examination schedules and applicant estimates for CYs 2005 through 2007 and add an estimate for CY 2008.

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SUMMARY OF ISSUE

The NRC uses about twice the resources to prepare an examination as it does to review, approve, administer, and document a facility-prepared examination. Furthermore, the total number of examinations administered by licensees fluctuates from year to year. Consequently, the NRC has found it helpful to request an annual update of power reactor facility licensees' initial operator licensing examination needs. The 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 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 on 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 2005 through 2008. For examinations that are prepared by facility licensees, the NRC will assume that each examination includes the required outline, the written examination, and the operating test, unless otherwise specified (joint NRC/licensee examination development is permitted and should be coordinated with the 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 2008.

C. Proposed Generic Fundamentals Examination Schedule

Estimate by examination month the number of applicants who plan to take the GFE in CYs 2005 and 2006. As requested by the industry, the GFE will be administered 4 times a year 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 of receiving this RIS. NRC Form 536 is available on the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/forms/>. 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 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 and involves the voluntary submission of information by addressees.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT

This RIS contains information collection requirements 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, approval number 3150-0131, which expires July 31, 2005.

The burden to the public for this voluntary information collection 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 or any other aspect of these information collections, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to the Records and FOIA/Privacy Services Branch (T-5 F52), U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by Internet electronic 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.

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.

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 <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>					
OPERATOR LICENSING EXAMINATION DATA								
FACILITY		NRC REGION						
A. PROPOSED EXAMINATION PREPARATION SCHEDULE								
PROPOSED NUMBER	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 ____					
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								

LIST OF RECENTLY ISSUED
 NRC REGULATORY ISSUE SUMMARIES

Regulatory Issue Summary No.	Subject	Date of Issuance	Issued to
2004-09	Status on Deferral of Active Regulation of Ground-water Protection At In Situ Leach Uranium Extraction Facilities	06/07/2004	All holders of materials licenses for uranium and thorium recovery facilities.
2004-08	Results of the License Termination Rule Analysis	05/28/2004	All holders of operating licenses for nuclear power reactors, research and test reactors, as well as decommissioning sites.
2004-07	Release of Final Review Standard (RS)-002, "Processing Applications for Early Site Permits"	05/19/2004	All holders of operating licenses for nuclear power reactors, all applicants for early site permits (ESPs), and all prospective vendors of nuclear power plants in the United States.
2004-06	Independent Survey of Power Reactor Licensees	04/16/2004	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.
2004-05	Grid Reliability and the Impact on Plant Risk and the Operability of Offsite Power	04/15/2004	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.

Note: NRC generic communications may be received in electronic format shortly after they are issued by subscribing to the NRC listserver as follows:

To subscribe send an e-mail to <listproc@nrc.gov>, no subject, and the following command in the message portion:

subscribe gc-nrr firstname lastname