

May 4, 2016

MEMORANDUM TO: Maurin Scheetz, Acting Chief
Operator Licensing and Training Branch
Division of Inspection and Regional Support
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

FROM: Eric J. Cushing, Reactor Operations Engineer */RA/*
Operator Licensing and Training Branch
Division of Inspection and Regional Support
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulations

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF THE MARCH 31, 2016, PUBLIC MEETING WITH
THE NUCLEAR ENERGY INSTITUTE'S LICENSED OPERATOR
FOCUS GROUP

On March 31, 2016, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff held a public meeting with the Nuclear Energy Institute's (NEI) Licensed Operator Focus Group (LOFG). The meeting was held to provide the opportunity for the LOFG and members of the public to comment on proposed changes to NUREG 1021, "Operator Licensing Examination Standards for Power Reactors," regarding: (1) the elimination of the informal NRC staff review process for examination failures, (2) changes to the Generic Fundamentals Examination (GFE) schedule, and (3) changes to the NRC initial examination preparation timeline. This meeting was the latest in a series of meetings intended to promote efficiency, effectiveness, and open communications with regard to initial operator licensing. Representatives of the NRC and the industry agreed that this meeting was useful for the exchange of information and agreed to continue the periodic meetings.

Enclosures:

1. List of Attendees
2. Agenda
3. Discussion Topics
4. Additional Changes NUREG-1021
Revision 11 Presentation

CONTACT: Eric Cushing, NRR/DIRS/IOLB
(301) 415-1064

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NAME	ECushing	MScheetz
DATE	04/22/2016	05/4/2016

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List of Attendees – Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) / Nuclear Energy Institute's Licensed Operator Focus Group (NEI LOFG) March 31, 2016	
Name	Organization
Scott Sloan	NRC
John Munro	NRC
David Muller	NRC
Larry Vick	NRC
Tim Kolb	NRC
Theresa Buchanan	NRC
Jake Dolecki	NRC
David Allsopp	NRC
Eric Cushing	NRC
Maurin Scheetz	NRC
Jeff Cruz	NRC
Gregg Ludlam	NEI LOFG
Chuck Sizemore	NEI LOFG
Russel Joplin	NEI LOFG
Scott Bauer	NEI
Roger Jones	Duke Energy
Ed Rau	Duke Energy
Aaron Forsha	Duke Energy
Ken Kowalik	Duke Energy
Roy Vogel	Exelon Corporation
Eric Hipp	Exelon Corporation
Travis Ouret	NextEra Energy
John Terry	Pilgrim Nuclear Generating Station

Dave Hick	PVNGS
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Name	Organization
Gary Ohmstede	Southern Nuclear Company
Matt Henson	Southern Nuclear Company
James Dugas	Southern Nuclear Company
Deann Raleigh	Curtis-Wright Corporation
Robert Meyer	Public/Professional Reactor Operator Society

AGENDA FOR THE CATEGORY 2 PUBLIC MEETING WITH THE NUCLEAR ENERGY
INSTITUTE'S (NEI) LICENSED OPERATOR FOCUS GROUP (LOFG)

Wednesday, March 31, 2016, 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM EST
NRC One White Flint North, Room O4B06
11555 Rockville Pike
Rockville, MD 20852

Time	Topic	Speaker
1:00 p.m.	Introductions and Openings	NRC/NEI
1:20 p.m.	Discuss ES-501 and ES-502 changes	NRC
2:30 p.m.	Discuss changes to the GFE guidance and ES-201 timeline	NRC
3:30 p.m.	Public Comments	Public
4:00 p.m.	Adjourn	

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

The NRC Staff presented to the meeting attendees proposed changes to select sections of NUREG-1021, "Operator Licensing Examination Standards for Power Reactors."

Initial Post-Examination Activities (ES-501) Changes

The staff presented and discussed with the attendees the following proposed changes to NUREG-1021, Section ES-501:

- eliminating the informal NRC staff review process for examination failures
- extending the post-examination comment period for facility licensees and applicants from five working days to twenty calendar days
- requiring a facility position on all post-examination comments submitted by applicants
- clarifying guidance to ensure applicants are medically fit prior to issuing a license
- updating guidance for electronic filing for hearing requests
- specifying that all exam information will be placed in the NRC's Agencywide Document Access and Management System (ADAMS)

The Nuclear Energy Institute's Licensed Operator Focus Group (NEI LOFG) suggested that eliminating informal NRC staff reviews may raise costs because an applicants' only option to contest the results will be to request a hearing. The NRC stated that around 7 informal reviews are conducted each year and zero hearings in a year since they are typically resolved before the hearing. The NRC stated that hearings are not expected to increase due to the added requirement for the facility licensees to provide a position for each applicant comment which is expected to result in a higher quality of post-exam submittals and that applicants always have the option to retake the exam in 2 months rather than going through the process of a hearing.

The NEI LOFG raised a concern that extending the post-examination comment period to 20 calendar days would delay issuing licenses. The NRC stated that most post-examination comments are from the written examination and that NRC examiners would not wait the 20 calendar days to start documenting the results of the operating test. The NRC stated that with the facility licensee providing a position for each applicant comment should increase the quality of post-exam submittals, and the decisions should be made well before the current 75 day goal for an informal NRC staff review. Additionally, the NRC clarified that the process of holding licenses in abeyance would be discontinued for those applicants that received a minimal passing score as specified in the current process which allows for an informal NRC staff review, thereby issuing some licenses sooner than in the past.

Application Denials and Hearings (ES-502) Changes

The NRC has proposed adding additional guidance to ES-502 that explains options for an applicant for any type of application denial, specifies actions and the timeline for re-applications, eliminates the informal NRC staff review, and specifies that the NRC will conduct operator licensing hearings in accordance with 10 CFR part 2.

General Fundamental Exam (GFE) Changes

The NRC discussed with the NEI LOFG a proposal to reduce the number of offerings of the GFE from 4 per fiscal year to 2 per fiscal year by 2018. The LOFG proposed 3 GFE offerings in calendar year 2017, because narrowing down the number of offerings too quickly may cause the industry problems with scheduling applicants for the subsequent site-specific portion of NRC operator licensing examinations. The NRC staff said that 3 GFE in calendar year 2017 may be acceptable, with 2 GFE offerings in fiscal year 2018 and thereafter. The LOFG commented that letting the industry administer the GFE program or eliminating the GFE entirely could be possible options for the NRC to consider. The NRC staff responded that eliminating the GFE entirely would require a rule change and that this rule change would probably be low priority.

Initial Operator Licensing Examination Process (ES-201) Changes

Representatives of the industry proposed a revision to Form ES-201-1, "Examination Preparation Checklist," to provide an improved examination schedule that better supports the process of examination development and to avoid last minute changes to exams during the approval process. Essentially, it provides the licensee more time to prepare the exam and establishes the date of receipt for the exam outline much earlier. The NRC provided comments on the proposed timeline and that the new timeline makes some improvements without adding workload.



Additional Changes NUREG-1021 Revision 11

Operator Licensing & Training Branch
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

March 31, 2016



Agenda

- ES-501: Initial Post Exam Activities
- ES-502: Application Denials (and Hearings)
- ES-205: Generic Fundamentals Exam Administration
- ES-201-1: Industry Proposed Timeline
- Revision Schedule
- Public Comments

ES-501 Changes

- Elimination of the informal staff review process
- Provide additional time for licensees/applicants to submit post-exam comments (20 calendar days)
- All post-exam comments require a facility position

ES-501 Changes

- Clarify guidance to ensure applicants are medically fit prior to issuing a license
- Outcome: license issued or denial letter sent
- Update guidance for electronic filing for hearing request

ES-501 Changes

- Specify that ALL exam information will be placed in ADAMS
- Updates to all attachments:
 - RO and SRO licenses
 - Denial letter
 - Post Exam Comment examples
 - Simulator Fidelity report

ES-502 Changes

- Section explains options for an applicant for any type of application denial
- Specifies actions and timeline for re-applications
- Elimination of informal staff review
- NRC will conduct operator licensing hearings in accordance with 10 CFR Part 2

ES-205 Changes

- Generic Fundamentals Exam offered:
 - 4 times in CY 2016 (Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec)
 - 2 times in CY 2017 and on (Mar, Sep)

Industry proposal ES-201-1 Exam Prep Checklist

Target Date*	Task Description (Reference)	Target Date*	Task Description (Reference)
-330 (180)	1. Examination administration date confirmed (C.1.a; C.2.a and b)	-75 (45)	11. Review completed on (10) and feedback provided to licensee (C.3.f)
-300 (150)	2. NRC chief examiner and facility contact assigned (C.1.d; C.2.f)	-75 (60)	12. Proposed written exam or operating test (as agreed by facility and chief examiner) and all applicable forms and reference material due (C.1.e, f, g and h; C.3.d)
-300 (150)	3. Facility contact briefed on security and other requirements (C.2.c)	-60 (45)	13. Review completed on (12) and feedback provided to licensee (C.3.f)
-270 (150)	4. NRC developed written examination outline, ES-401-1/2 or ES-401N-1/2, and ES-401-3 or ES-401N-3, sent to facility contact (must be on exam security agreement) (C.1.e-f, C.2.h, C.3.d and e)	-60 (60)	14. Preliminary waiver/excusal requests due (C.1.m; C.2.i; ES-202)
-270 (150)	5. Corporate notification letter sent (C.2.e)	-45 (21)	15. Examination approved by NRC supervisor for facility licensee review (C.2.h; C.3.f and g)
-240 (120)	6. Reference material due for NRC prepared exams, only (C.1.e; C.3.c; Attachment 3)	-45 (21)	16. Examinations reviewed with facility licensee (C.1.j and k; C.2.g and h; C.3.g)
120 (90)	7. Operating examination outline(s) and other checklists due, including Forms ES-201-2, ES-201-3, ES-301-1, ES-301-2, ES-301-5, ES-D-1, as applicable (C.1.e and f; C.3.d).	-30 (30)	17. Preliminary license applications (NRC Form 398's) and waiver/excusal requests due (C.1.m; C.2.ig; ES-202)
-105	8. Facility pre-submittal (sample) due (ES-401/401N E.2.c). Not applicable for NRC prepared exams.	-30 (7)	18. Proctoring/written exam administration guidelines reviewed with facility licensee (C.3.k)
-105 (85)	9. Operating examination outline(s) reviewed by NRC and feedback provided to facility licensee (C.2.h; C.3.e). NRC provides feedback on pre-submittal (sample) (ES-401/401N E.2.c). Not applicable for NRC prepared exams.	-21 (14)	19. Written examinations and operating tests approved by NRC supervisor (C.2.j; C.3.h)
-90 (60)	10. Proposed operating test or written exam (as agreed by facility and chief examiner) and all applicable forms and reference material due (C.1.e, f, g and h; C.3.d)	-21 (7)	20. Request facility licensee management feedback on the examination. (C.2.l)
		-14 (14)	21. Final license applications due and Form ES-201-4 prepared (C.1.m; C.2.j and k; ES-202)
		-7 (7)	22. Final applications reviewed; 1 or 2 (if >10) applications audited to confirm qualifications / eligibility; and examination approval and excusal/waiver letters sent (C.2.k; Attachment 5; ES-202, C.2.f; ES-204)
		-7 (7)	23. Approved scenarios and job performance measures distributed to NRC examiners (C.3.i)

Revision 11 schedule

- March 18th: 3 additional sections posted to Docket NRC 2016-0006
- April 5th: 60 day public comment period ends
- Anticipate extension to April 30th to comment on new sections posted
- ~Sept 15, 2016: Publish NUREG 1021 Rev 11 final



Comments and Questions

