



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

June 6, 1994

MEMORANDUM FOR: Albert F. Gibson, Director
Division of Reactor Safety, RII

FROM: Bruce A. Boger, Director
Division of Reactor Controls
and Human Factors
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT: ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE OPERATOR
LICENSING PROGRAM IN REGION II

During the week of February 14, 1994, the Operator Licensing Branch (HOLB) conducted a review of the administration of the operator licensing program in Region II. David Lange, Chief, Program Development and Review Section, HOLB, was the review team leader; he was assisted by Tracy Walker, from Region I, and Lawrence Vick and Debra McCain from HOLB. I was the NRR management representative for the review team and participated in the exit briefing on February 17, 1994. The review covered operator licensing activities during the period from March 19, 1993, to February 18, 1994.

The review team evaluated the Region's adherence to program guidance contained in NUREG-1021, "Operator Licensing Examiner Standards," and other pertinent program guidance, and the effectiveness with which the Region has implemented the operator licensing program. To more closely adhere to the format used for the NRR assessment of the regional inspection program, a revised version of HOLB Manual Chapter (MC) 310 was used in performing this review. The revised MC 310 evaluates the effectiveness of the operator licensing program in seven functional areas by assigning an overall rating of "significant strength," "satisfactory," or "needs improvement" for each area. The review team also followed up on the evaluation of the initial licensing examinations conducted at the St. Lucie Nuclear Plant during the week of October 25, 1993. The on-site evaluations were conducted in accordance with HOLB Manual Chapter 320.

Six of the functional areas were assessed as satisfactory; one area, operating test review, was assessed by the review team as an area that needs improvement.

Overall, the operator licensing program is being conducted in accordance with the Examiner Standards and no improper licensing functions were identified. The first enclosure discusses the review team's evaluation for each of the seven functional areas identified in Manual Chapter 310. The second enclosure discusses some additional observations made by the review team that do not constitute generic concerns or program vulnerabilities.

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ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE REGION II OPERATOR LICENSING PROGRAMBACKGROUND

The review team evaluated the Region's adherence to program guidance contained in NUREG-1021, "Operator Licensing Examiner Standards," and other pertinent program guidance, and the effectiveness with which the Region has implemented the operator licensing program. To more closely adhere to the format used for the NRR assessment of the regional inspection program, a revised version of HOLB Manual Chapter (MC) 310 was used in performing this review. The revised MC 310 evaluates the effectiveness of the operator licensing program in seven functional areas by assigning an overall rating of "significant strength," "satisfactory," or "needs improvement" for each area.

Assessment of these areas is drawn from information from the on-site evaluation of the initial licensing examinations conducted by HOLB at the St. Lucie Nuclear Plant during the week of October 25, 1993. This on-site evaluation was conducted in accordance with HOLB Manual Chapter 320. In addition, the review team evaluated four initial operator licensing examinations (Browns Ferry, Surry, Robinson, and Farley), three requalification examinations (Grand Gulf, Harris, and Catawba), and four requalification program inspections (Crystal River, Brunswick, Turkey Point, and Sequoyah) that were conducted by the Region during the review period. The examinations and inspections were evaluated to verify compliance with the Examiner Standards (ES) and TI 2515/117, "Licensed Operator Requalification Program Evaluation," respectively. The examinations and inspections were found to be of good quality and administered in accordance with the Examiner Standards and inspection procedure guidance.

1. EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The Examination Administrative Requirements Assessment is completed in conjunction with the examinations selected for review. This assessment reviews pre and post examination security agreements, license applications, examination record retention, examination results notification, and the official examination report.

The master examination files were well organized with only isolated instances of missing items. Examination security agreements were executed in accordance with the Examiner Standards. The connection between report details and summary findings is clearly made in the examination reports.

The review team assigned an overall rating of satisfactory to this functional area.

2. OPERATING TESTS

The Operating Test Assessment uses selected examinations to assess regional performance in administration of operating tests. This assessment reviews the adequacy of the facility walk-through portions of operating tests, the adequacy of the integrated plant operations portions of operating tests, and the retention of operating test records.

The review team evaluated documentation associated with the initial operating tests administered and determined that the test outlines and scenarios comply with the Examiner Standards' requirements. The administrative topics evaluated were appropriate for the applicants' license levels. The walk-through examinations covered a variety of systems and events, and there was good correlation between tasks and questions which ensures that the appropriate representation of system knowledge is evaluated.

Review of operating test results was not always done in accordance with the Examiner Standards. ES-303 requires an independent review of the operating test results and ES-501 specifically requires a review by an independent examiner if the chief examiner administered the operating test. In two instances no independent review of the documentation was performed in those instances where the chief examiner had administered the operating test. Discussions with the examiners revealed that most of them clearly understood this requirement. However, a few examiners did not know of or did not understand the need for independent review.

This concern regarding the independent review of operating test results was identified during the previous regional office review. In response to a report of interaction (ROI) submitted by Region II, HOLB reiterated the program office position stated in the Examiner Standards. The Region's corrective action to ensure that an independent review of the operating test results is performed was not effective. The concern identified with documentation and review of operating test results indicates that regional management needs to place more emphasis on oversight in this area.

The review team assigned an overall rating of needs improvement to this functional area.

3. WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

The Written Examination Assessment uses the same examination packages as in the review of the operating tests to assess regional performance in administration of written examinations. This assessment reviews the adequacy of the written examination reviews and the quality assurance process for the written examinations.

The review team evaluated four written examinations and determined that they were administered and graded in accordance with the Examiner Standards. Discussions with the examiners and section chief indicated that the examination prereviews with the facility were conducted in accordance with ES-201.

The review team noted that the quality assurance sheets (Form ES-401-2) for three of the examinations that were reviewed were not signed by the regional reviewer, chief examiner, and section chief prior to review by the facility as required by ES-401.

The review team assigned an overall rating of satisfactory to this functional area.

4. OPERATOR REQUALIFICATION PROGRAM

The Operator Requalification Program Assessment reviews requalification program examinations and inspections. This assessment evaluates administrative controls and procedures, program evaluation procedures, requalification program record retention, and the conduct of requalification program inspections.

The review team evaluated the three requalification examinations and four program inspections noted previously and concluded that the Region was in compliance with the applicable requirements of the Examiner Standards and inspection guidelines.

The review team noted that the results of the requalification program inspections were well-documented. The final inspection reports were of high quality and included a level of detail that provided an accurate assessment of the facility licensees' requalification program. The insights that the Region gained while implementing TI 2515/117 contributed to the development of the final version of Inspection Procedure 71001.

The review team assigned an overall rating of satisfactory to this functional area.

5. REGIONAL OPERATIONS

The Regional Operations Assessment reviews the communication interface between the Region and Headquarters, the Region's method of disseminating program office guidance, scheduling of examinations, interfacing with contractors, handling waiver requests, reviewing of medical evaluation forms, and processing license denial appeals.

The review team evaluated the regional operations aspects of the operator licensing program. This review included regional/headquarters interaction, scheduling of examinations, contractor monitoring, waivers of license requirements, medical issues, and the license denial and appeal process.

The section chief has scheduled examinations at least six months in advance and has requested appropriate contractor support. Contractor evaluation forms have been completed for each examination using contractor support and contractor performance was appropriately documented.

Waivers of licensing requirements were handled in accordance with the Examiner Standards and applicants were notified in writing of waiver disposition.

During the appraisal period, the Region had denied seven applications based on examination results and only received one informal appeal, which resulted in the denial being sustained. This is considered excellent and indicates that the examination failures are well-documented.

The review team assigned an overall rating of satisfactory to this functional area.

6. LICENSING ASSISTANT ACTIVITIES

The Licensing Assistant Activities Assessment reviews licensing assistant activities, docket management and office procedures, and the accuracy and timeliness of regional OLTS data.

A sample of dockets was reviewed for required operator licensing tracking system (OLTS) entries. OLTS entries were up to date within one week of the review date. Beginning in May, 1993, the Region started to receive renewal applications. Several of the renewal dockets were checked to ensure that proper correspondence was being filed to support license renewal. All dockets reviewed were found to be complete, with all information accurately reflected. All NRC Form 396 data reviewed was found to be accurate and current. All reviewed licenses stated medical restrictions in an accurate and appropriate manner. All docket files and correspondence were easily located and well organized.

The review team assigned an overall rating of satisfactory to this functional area.

7. RESOURCE UTILIZATION

The Resource Utilization Assessment is used to assess the Region's staffing level, efficiency of examiner utilization, and examiner training programs.

The Region has nine certified examiners and one examiner in training. Seven of the examiners have completed inspector qualification. This is considered excellent and should provide the examiners with career advancement opportunities and enable the Region to meet its requalification inspection goal.

The examiner training program for the one examiner in training was reviewed and complied with all aspects of the operator licensing program guidance for examiner certification. All examiners have continued to maintain certification by administering examinations and attending refresher training.

The Region has effectively met program objectives and administers the scheduled examinations while remaining within the authorized staffing levels. The Region has provided the examiners the opportunity to participate in other regional initiatives and inspections. During discussions with examiners and from reviews of examination reports, the review team noted that examiners are following up during examination trips on previous weaknesses and findings related to training and examination of operators. The Region is appropriately using the best qualified people to follow up on these inspection findings.

The review team assigned an overall rating of satisfactory to this functional area.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

These additional observations and comments are based on isolated findings that the review team determined do not constitute generic concerns or regional program vulnerabilities.

1. EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

No additional comments.

2. OPERATING TESTS

Although the documentation of most operating test results was excellent, the review team noted a few instances in which the documentation of unsatisfactory performance did not meet the requirements of ES-303. For example, some specifics on incorrect actions, consequences, and references were not adequately documented on the ES-303-1 forms.

3. WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

No additional comments.

4. OPERATOR REQUALIFICATION PROGRAM

No additional comments.

5. REGIONAL OPERATIONS

No additional comments.

6. LICENSING ASSISTANT ACTIVITIES

No additional comments.

7. RESOURCE UTILIZATION

The review team reviewed the corrective actions taken by the Region for last year's review findings. One of last year's findings was that the Region needs to monitor more closely the time between examiner audits. The review team found that two examiners had not received their 1993 annual audit by the section chief as required by HOLB Manual Chapter 170, "Examiner Qualification and Refresher Training." The section chief had scheduled the audits for fiscal year 1994, however, one examiner will exceed the time requirement by five months and the other by seven months. After further discussion with the section chief, the review team noted that the reduction in requalification examinations and the regional initiative for combining the two operator licensing sections has limited the section chief's ability to conduct the required audits. The review team determined that alternatives for conducting audits of examiners need to be assessed. The Operator Licensing Branch will review the examiner audit requirement and develop alternatives to address scheduling and resource demands for regional supervisors regarding the auditing of their examiners.

June 8, 1994

If you have any questions concerning the review results, please call me or Bob Gallo at 301-504-1004 and 301-504-1031 respectively.

Original signed by

Bruce A. Boger, Director
Division of Reactor Controls
and Human Factors
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosures:
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cc: A. Thadani

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RGallo

CThomas

BBoger

DATE: 03/14/94*

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MEMORANDUM FOR: Albert F. Gibson, Director
Division of Reactor Safety, RII

FROM: Bruce A. Boger, Director
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Six of the functional areas were assessed as satisfactory; one area, operating test review, was assessed by the review team as an area that needs improvement.

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COPY: YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO	YES NO

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The regional operator licensing functions evaluated during this review period were implemented satisfactorily. The licensing functions were conducted in accordance with the Operator Licensing Examiner Standards (NUREG-1021) and no improper licensing functions were identified. However, as discussed in section 2 of enclosure 1, the team determined that the area of operating test reviews needed improvement. Additional observations made by the review team are provided in enclosure 2.

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The regional operator licensing functions evaluated during this review period were implemented satisfactorily. The licensing functions were conducted in accordance with the Operator Licensing Examiner Standards (NUREG-1021) and no improper licensing functions were identified. The team did, however, identify that improvements were needed in the area of operating test reviews and regional audits of examiners. Specific details of this review are delineated in the enclosure; discussions of the areas needing improvement are found in sections 2 and 7.

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