



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION**
REGION IV
1600 EAST LAMAR BOULEVARD
ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011-4511

December 21, 2022

Mr. John Dent, Jr.
Vice President and Chief Nuclear Officer
Nebraska Public Power District
Cooper Nuclear Station
72676 648A Avenue
P.O. Box 98
Brownville, NE 68321

SUBJECT: COOPER NUCLEAR STATION – NRC EXAMINATION REPORT
05000298/2022302

Dear Mr. Dent:

On December 14, 2022, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) completed an initial operator license examination at Cooper Nuclear Station. The enclosed report documents the examination results and licensing decisions. The preliminary examination results were discussed on November 17, 2022, with Bill Chapin, General Manager of Plant Operations, and other members of your staff. A telephonic exit meeting was conducted on December 14, 2022, with Mr. Andy Vaughn, Simulator and Training Support Superintendent, who was provided the NRC licensing decisions.

The examination included the evaluation of two applicants for reactor operator licenses, two applicants for instant senior reactor operator licenses, and one applicant for upgrade senior reactor operator license. The license examiners determined that all five of the applicants satisfied the requirements of 10 CFR Part 55, and the appropriate licenses have been issued. There were no post-examination comments submitted by your staff. Enclosure 1 contains details of this report.

No findings were identified during this examination.

J. Dent

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Sincerely,



Signed by Gepford, Heather
on 12/21/22

Heather J. Gepford, PhD, Chief
Operations Branch
Division of Operating Reactor Safety

Docket: 50-298
License: DPR-46

Enclosures:
Examination Report 05000298/2022302
w/attachment: Supplemental Information

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U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
Examination Report

Docket Number: 05000298

License Number: DPR-46

Report Number: 05000298/2022302

Enterprise Identifier: 000500/05000298/L-2022-OLL-0032

Licensee: Nebraska Public Power District

Facility: Cooper Nuclear Station

Location: Brownville, Nebraska

Inspection Dates: November 15, 2022, to December 14, 2022

Inspectors: K. Clayton, Senior Operations Engineer
J. Kirkland, Senior Operations Engineer
C. Osterholtz, Senior Operations Engineer

Approved By: Heather J. Gepford, PhD, Chief
Operations Branch
Division of Operating Reactor Safety

SUMMARY

Examination Report 05000298/2022302; November 15 – December 14, 2022; Cooper Nuclear Station; Initial Operator Licensing Examination Report

The NRC examiners evaluated the competency of two applicants for reactor operator licenses, two applicants for instant senior reactor operator license, and one applicant for upgrade senior reactor operator license at Cooper Nuclear Station.

The licensee developed the examinations using NUREG-1021, "Operator Licensing Examination Standards for Power Reactors," Revision 12. The written examination was administered by the licensee on November 22, 2022. The NRC examiners administered the operating tests on November 15-17, 2022.

The NRC examiners determined that all five of the applicants satisfied the requirements of 10 CFR Part 55, and the appropriate licenses have been issued.

A. NRC-Identified and Self-Revealing Findings

The written examination was determined to be outside of the acceptable quality range as identified in NUREG 1021.

B. Licensee-Identified Violations

None.

REPORT DETAILS

OTHER ACTIVITIES – INITIAL LICENSE EXAM

.1 License Applications

a. Scope

The NRC examiners reviewed all license applications submitted to ensure each applicant satisfied relevant license eligibility requirements. The NRC examiners also audited two of the license applications in detail to confirm that they accurately reflected the subject applicant's qualifications. This audit focused on the applicant's experience and on-the-job training, including control manipulations that provided significant reactivity changes.

b. Findings

No findings were identified.

.2 Examination Development

a. Scope

The NRC examiners reviewed integrated examination outlines and draft examinations submitted by the licensee against the requirements of NUREG-1021. The NRC examiners conducted an onsite validation of the operating tests.

b. Findings

The NRC examiners provided outline, draft examination, and post-validation comments to the licensee. The licensee satisfactorily completed comment resolution prior to examination administration.

The written examination was determined to be outside of the acceptable quality range identified in NUREG-1021. There were 29 questions (29 percent) that required significant modification or were replaced as a result of the NRC examiner review.

Flaws included noncredible distracters, K/A mismatch, subsets, cueing, incorrect stem focus, no correct answer, stem focus, and SRO-only questions that were not written at SRO-only knowledge level (such as procedure selection). Future written examination submittals need to incorporate lessons learned.

.3 Operator Knowledge and Performance

a. Scope

The NRC examination team administered the various portions of the operating tests to required applicants from November 15-17, 2022.

On November 22, 2022, the licensee proctored the administration of the written examinations to all five applicants. The licensee staff graded the written examinations, analyzed the results, and presented their analysis to the NRC on November 28, 2022.

b. Findings

No findings were identified.

All five applicants passed the written examination and all parts of the operating test. The final examinations and post-examination analysis and comments may be accessed in the ADAMS system under the accession numbers noted in the attachment.

The examination team noted one generic weakness associated with applicant performance on the operating test. The applicants displayed a weakness in diagnosing a feedwater instrument failure's impact on 3-element control of reactor vessel level during a scenario. Post-examination analysis revealed eight generic weaknesses associated with applicant performance on the written examination. Specifically, the following questions had a miss rate of greater than 50%: Questions 21, 53, 60, 78, 84, 90, 94, and 95. These weaknesses were captured in the licensee's corrective action program as Condition Reports CR-CNS-2022-06481 and CR-CNS-2022-06482. Copies of all individual examination reports were sent to the facility training manager for evaluation and determination of appropriate remedial training.

.4 Simulation Facility Performance

a. Scope

The NRC examiners observed simulator performance with regard to plant fidelity during examination validation and administration.

b. Findings

No findings were identified.

.5 Examination Security

a. Scope

The NRC examiners reviewed examination security for examination development during both the onsite preparation week and examination administration week for compliance with 10 CFR 55.49 and NUREG-1021. Plans for simulator security and applicant control were reviewed and discussed with licensee personnel.

J. Dent

Findings

No findings were identified.

EXIT MEETINGS AND DEBRIEFS

Exit Meeting Summary

The chief examiner presented the preliminary examination results to Mr. Bill Chapin, General Manager for Plant Operations, and other members of your staff on November 17, 2022. A telephonic exit was conducted on December 14, 2022, between Mr. K. Clayton, chief examiner, and Mr. A. Vaughn, Superintendent, Simulator and Training Support.

The licensee did not identify any information or materials used during the examination as proprietary.

J. Dent

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

KEY POINTS OF CONTACT

Licensee Personnel

B. Chapin, General Manager of Plant Operations
A. Vaughn, Superintendent, Simulator and Training Support
C. Edgington, Exam Author

NRC Personnel

A. Siwy, Senior Resident Inspector

ADAMS DOCUMENTS REFERENCED

Accession No. ML22350A017 - FINAL WRITTEN EXAMS
Accession No. ML22350A016 - FINAL OPERATING TEST
Accession No. ML22350A045 - POST-EXAMINATION ANALYSIS-COMMENTS