

April 25, 2000

Mr. Phil McCollough, Director
Accreditation Division
Institute of Nuclear Power Operations
700 Galleria Parkway, NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30339-5957

Dear Mr. McCollough:

Enclosed in this letter is the summary of the February 28, 2000, coordination meeting between the NRC and INPO. I believe that we have appropriately characterized the discussions that took place at the meeting.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at (301) 415-1004 or Dave Trimble at (301) 415-2942.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Bruce A. Boger, Director
Division of Inspection Program Management
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure: As stated

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ACCESSION#: **ML003701239**

TEMP=NRR-106

See previous concurrence

DOCUMENT NAME: G:\IOHS\ASHLEY\2000 COORDINATION MEETING PACKAGE.WPD

OFC	IOHS/IOLB	IOHS/IOLB	IOLB/DIPM/NRR	DIR/DIPM/NRR
NAME	M Ashley	D Trimble	H Christensen	B Boger
DATE	03/31/00*	04/17/00	04/17/00	04/25/00

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SUMMARY OF THE FEBRUARY 28, 2000 NRC/INPO COORDINATION MEETING ON TRAINING-RELATED ISSUES

On February 28, 2000, a periodic NRC/Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO) coordination meeting on training-related issues was held at the NRC Headquarters, Rockville, MD. Such meetings are conducted in accordance with the NRC/INPO Memorandum of Understanding dated December 24, 1996. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss items of mutual interest concerning INPO's training program accreditation process. Participants included representatives of the NRC's Division of Inspection Program Management and INPO's Accreditation Division. The list of meeting attendees is provided as Attachment 1. The meeting agenda is provided as Attachment 2. A summary of the discussions related to each agenda topic covered during the meeting follows.

Opening Remarks/Organizational Changes

Introductions of the NRC/INPO personnel present were conducted. After the introductions were completed, organizational changes since the last coordination meeting, at both the NRC and INPO, were discussed. The INPO staff also noted, however, that additional changes were anticipated within the next few weeks and would be effective in April.

Summary of Changes in the Accreditation Process

INPO described the outcomes of their pilot effort to incorporate the accreditation review process into the plant evaluation process. The two processes were combined to reduce the burden on facilities and to allow a broader look at the issues. The plant evaluation process continues to be two weeks in length; however, personnel from INPO's Accreditation Division now evaluate the accredited training programs during that same visit. Accreditation review efforts, while looking at all 12 accredited programs, will focus on either the Operations or Technical programs. INPO indicated that they were satisfied that the combined evaluations were working well. During calendar year 2000, INPO will be using more combined teams and anticipates that by the end of the year the combined team approach will be fully implemented.

INPO also discussed insights about training gained through accreditation activities. INPO considers that training in the industry is generally successful. This conclusion is based on the fact that only about 6% of the programs presented to the Accrediting Board are placed on probation. INPO noted that technical training programs are more likely to be placed on probation than the operator training programs. This may be related to the fact that the operator programs come under greater scrutiny from the NRC staff through the operator licensing process.

ENCLOSURE

On a related note, changes in the levels of training staff have been noted during accreditation visits. Some sites have experienced up to a 20% reduction in training staff over the last 5 years.

INPO Accreditation and Training Initiatives for 2000

INPO discussed the following items:

1. INPO is involved in an effort to accredit the operator training programs at a nuclear power plant in South Africa.
2. INPO is investigating the possibility of certifying vendor training programs in the future since mergers may result in more training being purchased.
3. INPO is cooperating with industry efforts to share common training in a cost effective manner.

Changes to 10 CFR 55.31, How to Apply for a License

NRC discussed: (1) proposed changes to 10 CFR 55.31 that would allow significant control manipulations necessary for license candidate eligibility to be performed either on a plant-referenced simulator or the plant and (2) the most recent change to the ANSI 3.5 standard related to simulators and simulator testing. In order to use a simulator for control manipulations it is important that the simulator experience replicates the control room experience as much as possible.

NRC Observations of Inadequate Implementation of the Systems Approach to Training

NRC discussed the observations made by inspectors related to implementation of the systems approach to training (SAT). NRC noted that several recent operator examination failures were the result of not analyzing changes being made to the training program to determine the impact on the effectiveness of the program. INPO noted that SAT problems identified through accreditation activities have remained fairly consistent in number and type over the years. INPO noted that the implementation of SAT appears to depend most on management emphasis on following the SAT principles and the number of training staff members. Reduced staffing in the training area can lead to relaxation on following the SAT process. However, INPO has not noted any significant change in the industry's implementation of SAT.

Implementation of NUREG 1021, Revision 8, Examination Standards

NRC reviewed the various changes that were incorporated into the most recent revision to the examination standard. In a related area, INPO indicated that they plan to issue new guidelines covering the initial training and qualification of licensed operators. The document

re-incorporates information related to education and experience requirements for reactor operators and senior reactor operators which was removed several years ago.

INPO Operator License Examination Question Bank Project Status

INPO discussed progress in obtaining and incorporating questions into an industry-wide exam bank. A working group has been formed to perform validations and quality checks on the information being put into the system. INPO indicated that the NRC will be provided a CD-ROM of the information when the initial round of inputs are complete.

Implications of Withdrawing Accreditation

INPO lead a discussion about the implications of withdrawing accreditation from training programs. INPO indicated that withdrawal of accreditation is intended only for extreme cases. These extreme cases might include sustained poor performance, a lack of effort to meet the accreditation objectives, or an unresponsiveness to correct the identified issues. INPO also discussed the ramifications to the individual utility should their accreditation be withdrawn. INPO was interested in understanding the possible responses from the NRC should a plant have its accreditation withdrawn.

NRC indicated that the response would depend on the specific reasons for the accreditation being withdrawn. The NRC's first response would be to review all reports and correspondence between the utility and INPO related to the withdrawal of the accreditation. Possible NRC responses include conducting an inspection, requiring retesting of the licensed operators, and/or requesting an explanation from the licensee. The response would be determined by the safety significance of the underlying issues leading up to the withdrawal of accreditation.

Operator Retention Issues

NRC identified that there have been some instances where operators are leaving the nuclear industry to work in other areas where the pay is comparable. INPO indicated that they were also aware of those instances but that it did not appear to be a significant concern.

No other items were discussed. The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 PM.

NRC/INPO TRAINING COORDINATION MEETING

NRC Headquarters

Rockville, MD

February 28, 2000

PARTICIPANTS

NAME	ORGANIZATION
NRC	
Bruce Boger	NRR/DIPM
Harold Christensen	NRR/DIPM/IOLB
David Timble	NRR/DIPM/IOLB
Mary Ann Ashley	NRR/DIPM/IOLB
Fred Guenther	NRR/DIPM/IOLB
John Munro	NRR/DIPM/IOLB
Rick Pelton	NRR/DIPM/IOLB
Dave Muller	NRR/DIPM/IOLB
INPO	
Fred Tollison	Executive Vice President – Training and Executive Director of the National Academy for Nuclear Training
Phil McCullough	Director – Accreditation Division
Bill Fitzpatrick	Manager – Training Evaluation
Steve Weiss	Manager - Accreditation Evaluation

AGENDA
 NRC/INPO TRAINING COORDINATION MEETING
 NRC Headquarters
 FEBRUARY 28, 2000
 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

Time	Topic	Discussion Lead
8:30 a.m.	Organizational Updates	INPO and NRC
9:00 a.m.	Update on combined plant and accreditation evaluations	INPO
9:30 a.m.	INPO Accreditation and Training Initiatives for 2000	INPO
10:00 a.m.	Change to 10 CFR 55.31, How to Apply for a License (5 significant control manipulations)	NRC
10:20 a.m.	NRC Observations of inadequate implementation of SAT	NRC
10:40 a.m.	Implementation of NUREG 1021, Rev 8, Examination Standards	NRC
11:15 a.m.	Operator License Examination Question Bank Project Status	INPO
12:00 - 1:00	Lunch	
1:00 p.m.	Implications of withdrawing accreditation	INPO
2:00 p.m.	Impact of industry consolidation of training and accreditation	INPO
2:30 p.m.	Operator retention issues	INPO and NRC
3:00 p.m.	Adjourn	

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MEETING PACKAGE .WPD

SUBJECT: LETTER TO PHIL MCCOLLOUGH RE: MEETING SUMMARY

ORIGINATOR: M. ASHLEY

SECRETARY : R. CARMON

DATE: MARCH 23, 2000

ROUTING LIST

NAME	DATE
M. ASHLEY	
D. TRIMBLE	
D. Trimble (Acting Chief, IOLB)	
B. BOGER	