

No. 95-62
Tel. 301/415-8200
Internet:OPA@NRC.GOV

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
(Monday, May 8, 1995)

NRC AMENDS REGULATIONS GOVERNING
RENEWAL OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANT LICENSES

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is amending its regulations governing the renewal of operating licenses for nuclear power plants to provide a more stable and predictable regulatory process for license renewal.

As amended, the regulations will give more credit to the agency's existing regulatory oversight process and licensee maintenance programs by narrowing the number of systems, structure and components that have to be reviewed during the license renewal process.

Operating licenses for nuclear power plants are issued for terms of up to 40 years, and may be renewed for an additional 20 years if NRC requirements are met. So far, no operating plants have reached the end of their initial 40-year license term and no licensees have applied for license renewal.

The overall regulatory philosophy of the amended rule will continue to stress safety-related maintenance during the initial license term with the license renewal review focusing on the management of the adverse effects of aging from operation during the period of extended operation.

The amendments to the regulations include:

(1) Deletion of the term "age-related degradation unique to license renewal."

(2) Replacement of the definition of "system, structures and components important to license renewal" with a section that defines the set of plant systems, structures and components that would be within the scope of license renewal reviews. They are:

-- Safety-related systems, structures and components that are relied on to remain functional during and following events such as loss of off-site power and hurricanes in order to ensure: (a) the integrity of the reactor coolant pressure boundary, (b) the capability to shut down the reactor and maintain it in a safe

shutdown condition and (c) the capability to prevent or mitigate the consequences of accidents that could result in potential off-site radiation exposures comparable to those in the Commission's reactor siting regulations.

-- Non-safety-related systems, structures and components that support the function of a safety-related system, structure or component whose failure could prevent satisfactory accomplishment of any of the functions described above.

-- Systems, structures and components relied on to perform a function that demonstrates compliance with Commission's regulations for protection against fires, loss of off-site power and certain other occurrences.

(3) Revision of the requirements for performing the integrated plant assessment which is as part of the license renewal application. This revised assessment (which gives greater credit to existing licensee programs) identifies which of the above structures and components will be subject to an aging management review. For each of these identified structures and components, the renewal applicant will have to demonstrate that the effects of aging will be managed so that the intended function of the structure or component will be adequately maintained for the extended period of operation.

The amendments to Part 2, 51 and 54 of the Commission's regulations will become effective on June 7.

#

The Office of Public Affairs is offering daily press releases via internet. If you are interested, please send email to OPA@NRC.GOV or call Gladi Ordaz, 301/415-8200, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555.