



**UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV
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ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011-8064**

December 4, 2000

Randal K. Edington, Vice President - Operations
River Bend Station
Entergy Operations, Inc.
P.O. Box 220
St. Francisville, Louisiana 70775

**SUBJECT: RIVER BEND STATION - NRC INITIAL EXAMINATION REPORT
NO. 50-458/00-301**

Dear Mr. Edington:

On November 9, 2000, the NRC completed initial examinations at River Bend Station. The enclosed report documents the examination results, which were discussed with Mr. Dwight Mims, General Manager, Plant Operations, and other members of your staff on November 9, 2000.

The examinations included an evaluation of six applicants for reactor operator licenses and six applicants for senior operator licenses. We determined that four applicants for operator and six applicants for senior operator licenses satisfied the requirements of 10 CFR Part 55, and nine of the appropriate licenses have been issued. One of the licenses is currently on hold based on the borderline written examination score. This license is on hold depending upon any changes that might result from informal reviews or appeals from proposed license denials, as required by NUREG-1021, "Operator Licensing Examination Standards for Power Reactors," Revision 8, Section ES-501, paragraph D.3.c, page 6. Two applicants for a reactor operator license were evaluated as having failed the written examination and proposed denials of license have been issued.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.790 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and enclosure will be available electronically for public inspection in the NRC Public Document Room or from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's document system (ADAMS). ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/ADAMS/index.html> (the Public Electronic Reading Room).

Sincerely,

/RA/

John L. Pellet, Chief
Operations Branch
Division of Reactor Safety

Entergy Operations Inc.

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Docket No.: 50-00458

License No.: NPF-47

Enclosure:

NRC Inspection Report No.
50-00458/00-301

cc w/enclosure:

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ENCLOSURE

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV

Docket No.: 50-00458
License No.: NPF-47
Report No.: 50-458/00-301
Licensee: Entergy Operations, Inc.
Facility: RBS
Location: St. Francisville, La.
Dates: October 30 through November 9, 2000
Examiners: M. E. Murphy, Senior Operations Engineer, Operations Branch
T. F. Stetka, Senior Operations Engineer, Operations Branch
R. E. Lantz, Operations Engineer, Operations Branch
L. Miller, Senior Operations Engineer, Operations Branch, Region II
Approved By: John L. Pellet, Chief
Operations Branch
Division of Reactor Safety

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

IR 05000458-00-301; on 10/30-11/9/2000; Entergy Operations, Inc.; River Bend Station; Initial Licensed Operator Examinations.

NRC examiners evaluated the competency of six applicants for reactor operator licenses and six applicants for senior operator licenses at the River Bend Station. The facility developed the written and operating examinations using NUREG-1021, "Operator Licensing Examination Standards for Power Reactors," Revision 8, Supplement 1. The written examinations were administered to all applicants on October 27, 2000, by facility proctors in accordance with instructions provided by the chief examiner. The NRC examiners administered the operating tests on October 30 through November 9, 2000.

Cross-Cutting Issues: Human Performance

- Two of the 12 applicants failed the written examination. All 12 applicants passed the operating examination.

Report Details

4. OTHER ACTIVITIES

4OA4 Initial License Examination

.1 Operator Knowledge and Performance

a. Inspection Scope

The licensee developed the written and operating examinations using facility training and operations staff on the security agreement to prepare and validate the examinations. On October 27, 2000, the licensee proctored the administration of the written examination to all 12 applicants. The licensee staff graded the written examinations, analyzed the results, and presented their evaluation and post-examination comments for examination revision to the NRC on November 9, 2000.

The examination team administered the various portions of the operating examination to the 12 applicants on October 30 through November 9, 2000. Each of the 6 reactor operator applicants participated in two or three dynamic simulator scenarios and received a control room and facility walkthrough test, which consisted of 10 system tasks. The 3 senior operator applicants seeking instant senior operator licenses participated in two or three dynamic simulator scenarios and received a control room and facilities walkthrough test, which consisted of 10 system tasks. The 6 applicants seeking an upgrade from reactor operator to senior operator also participated in two or three dynamic simulator scenarios and received a control room and facilities walkthrough test, which consisted of 5 system tasks. Additionally, the examination team tested each applicant on five subjects in four administrative areas with administrative tasks.

b. Findings

Ten of the 12 applicants passed the written examinations. The final determination was made using the final answer key and incorporating comments resulting from licensee and NRC post-examination analysis. The average score for the reactor operator applicants was 83.6 percent and ranged from 77 to 92 percent. Scores for the senior operator applicants ranged from 85 to 97 percent with an average of 90.0 percent. The overall class average was 86.8 percent.

During the post-examination review, the licensee recommended that five questions should be modified to accept additional or different answers from the written examination as given. The licensee's post-examination comments are located in the ADAMS system under Accession No. ML003773927. The chief examiner reviewed the technical basis for the proposed changes and concurred with the licensee's recommendations in all but one case, which is discussed below.

The licensee recommended that choices A and C be accepted as correct answers to Question 7 (both reactor operator and senior operator as shown in ADAMS document Accession No. ML003773924). The question dealt with suppression pool level and heat

capacity. Procedure EOP-0002 was a handout for the applicants' use during the examination, and contained both the heat capacity temperature limit and pressure suppression pressure limit curves. Upon review of the licensee's analysis and supporting documentation, the chief examiner determined that there was only one correct answer, which was C. The applicants should have applied both curves in determining the minimum suppression pool level, which could only be choice "C."

The text of the examination questions and key may be accessed in the ADAMS system under Accession Nos. ML003773630 and ML003773630.

During the post-examination review, the licensee identified 11 written examination questions that were missed by 50 percent or more of the applicants responding to the question. The licensee determined that there were no generic weaknesses of the initial license training program based on its review of these 11 questions. The chief examiner reviewed the 11 written examination questions that were missed by 50 percent or more of the applicants and found the licensee's determination appropriate, based on the specific questions, applicant responses, and other items testing similar systems or areas.

All applicants passed the operating examinations. The applicants demonstrated adequate, but inconsistent use of 3-way communications because not all initial contacts and responses were acknowledged. Alarm response and peer checking were adequate.

Two of the 12 initial applicants failed the written examination.

.2 Initial Licensing Examination Development

The facility training staff developed the written and operating examinations in accordance with NUREG-1021, Revision 8, Supplement 1.

.2.1 Examination Outline and Examination Package

a. Inspection Scope

The facility licensee submitted the written and operating examination outlines on July 3, 2000. The chief examiner reviewed the submittal against the requirements of NUREG-1021, Revision 8, Supplement 1, and provided comments to the licensee on July 7, 2000. The facility licensee submitted the completed draft examination package on September 1, 2000. The chief examiner and a peer reviewer reviewed the draft submittal against the requirements of NUREG-1021, Revision 8, Supplement 1. The chief examiner conducted an onsite validation of the operating examinations and provided comments on the written examination during the week of October 2, 2000.

b. Findings

Region IV approved the initial examination outline with minor comments for enhancement and advised the licensee to proceed with the operating examination development.

The chief examiner determined that the written and operating examinations initially submitted by the licensee were within the range of acceptability expected for a proposed examination.

2.2 Simulation Facility Performance

a. Inspection Scope

The examiners observed simulator performance during both the validation and examination week.

b. Observations and Findings

No findings were identified.

2.3 Examination Security

a. Scope

The examiners reviewed examination security both during the onsite preparation week and examination administration weeks with respect to NUREG-1021 requirements.

b. Observations and Findings

No findings were identified.

40A5 Management Meetings

Exit Meeting Summary

The examiners presented the examination results to Mr. Dwight Mims, General Manager, Plant Operations and other members of the licensee management at the conclusion of the examination on November 9, 2000. The licensee acknowledged the findings presented.

The licensee did not identify as proprietary any information or materials examined during the inspection.

ATTACHMENT 1

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Licensee

D. Myers, Senior Licensing Specialist
R. Brian, Director, Engineering
M. Wyatt, Manager, Planning and Scheduling/Outage
M. Cantrell, Supervisor, Operations Training
B. Heikes, Supervisor, Simulator Support
R. Azzarello, Manager, Training and Emergency Preparedness
C. Bush, Assistant Manager, Operations
J. McGhee, Manager, Operations
D. Mims, General Manager, Plant Operations
J. East, Senior Operations Instructor
J. Fralick, Senior Operations Instructor
J. Hedgepeth, Nuclear Operator
M. Wagner, Supervisor, Training
J. Holmes, Manager, Technical Support

ADAMS DOCUMENTS REFERENCED

RB-Init Exam - 10/2000 - Licensee Postexamination Recommendations - Accession
No. ML003773924

RB-Init Exam - 10/2000 - Final Reference Examination and Answer Key - RO- Accession
No. ML00373625

RB-Init Exam - 10/2000 - Final Reference Examination and Answer Key - SRO- Accession No.
No. ML003773630

ATTACHMENT 2

NRC'S REVISED REACTOR OVERSIGHT PROCESS

The federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) revamped its inspection, assessment, and enforcement programs for commercial nuclear power plants. The new process takes into account improvements in the performance of the nuclear industry over the past 25 years and improved approaches of inspecting safety performance at NRC licensed plants.

The new process monitors licensee performance in three broad areas (called strategic performance areas): reactor safety (avoiding accidents and reducing the consequences of accidents if they occur), radiation safety (protecting plant employees and the public during routine operations), and safeguards (protecting the plant against sabotage or other security threats). The process focuses on licensee performance within each of seven cornerstones of safety in the three areas:

Reactor Safety	Radiation Safety	Safeguards
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Initiating Events•Mitigating Systems•Barrier Integrity•Emergency Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Occupational•Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Physical Protection

To monitor these seven cornerstones of safety, the NRC used two processes that generate information about the safety significance of plant operations: inspections and performance indicators. Inspection findings will be evaluated according to their potential significance for safety, using the Significance Determination Process, and assigned colors of GREEN, WHITE, YELLOW or RED. GREEN findings are indicative of issues that, while they may not be desirable, represent very low safety significance. WHITE findings indicate issues that are of low to moderate safety significance. YELLOW findings are issues that are of substantial safety significance. RED findings represent issues that are of high safety significance with a significant reduction in safety margin.

Performance indicator data will be compared to established criteria for measuring licensee performance in terms of potential safety. Based on prescribed thresholds, the indicators will be classified by color representing varying levels of performance and incremental degradation in safety: GREEN, WHITE, YELLOW, and RED. GREEN indicators represent performance at a level requiring no additional NRC oversight beyond the baseline inspections. WHITE corresponds to performance that may result in increased NRC oversight. YELLOW represents performance that minimally reduces safety margin and requires even more NRC oversight. And RED indicates performance that represents a significant reduction in safety margin but still provides adequate protection to public health and safety.

The assessment process integrates performance indicators and inspection so the agency can reach objective conclusions regarding overall plant performance. The agency will use an Action Matrix to determine in a systematic, predictable manner which regulatory actions should be taken based on a licensee's performance. The NRC's actions in response to the significance (as represented by the color) of issues will be the same for performance indicators as for inspection findings. As a licensee's safety performance degrades, the NRC will take more and increasingly significant action, which can include shutting down a plan, as described in the Action Matrix.

More information can be found at: <http://www.nrc.gov/NRR/OVERSIGHT/index.html>.