

September 24, 1996

Mr. Leon R. Eliason
Chief Nuclear Officer & President-
Nuclear Business Unit
Public Service Electric & Gas
Company
Post Office Box 236
Hancocks Bridge, NJ 08038

SUBJECT: EXEMPTION FROM REQUIREMENTS OF 10 CFR PART 55, OPERATORS' LICENSES, SALEM NUCLEAR GENERATING STATION, UNITS 1 AND 2 (TAC NOS. M95366 AND M95367)

Dear Mr. Eliason:

The Commission has issued the enclosed exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR Part 55, "Operators' Licenses." This exemption permits the issuance of senior operator licenses to 6 individuals who have not met the requirements of 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5) but have had previous licensed senior operator experience. Pursuant to 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5), operator license applicants are required to perform at least five significant control manipulations which affect reactivity or power level on the facility for which the license is sought.

A copy of the exemption is being forwarded to the Office of Federal Register for publication.

Sincerely,

/s/

John F. Stolz, Director
Project Director I-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-272/311

Enclosure: Exemption

cc w/encl: See next page

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NAME	MO'Brien	LOlshan:smm	JStolz	CPW	SVarga	RZimmerman	WRussell
DATE	7/8/96	7/8/96	7/15/96	7/17/96	7/17/96	7/17/96	7/24/96

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John F. Stolz".

John F. Stolz, Director
Project Director I-2
Division of Reactor Projects - I/II
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Docket Nos. 50-272/311

Enclosure: Exemption

cc w/encl: See next page

Mr. Leon R. Eliason
Public Service Electric & Gas
Company

Salem Nuclear Generating Station,
Units 1 and 2

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

In the Matter of)	
)	
PUBLIC SERVICE ELECTRIC AND)	Docket Nos. 50-272
GAS COMPANY (PSE&G))	and 50-311
PECO ENERGY COMPANY)	
DELMARVA POWER AND LIGHT)	
COMPANY)	
ATLANTIC CITY ELECTRIC COMPANY)	
)	
(Salem Nuclear Generating)	
Station, Units 1 and 2))	

EXEMPTION

I.

The Public Service Electric and Gas Company, et al. (PSE&G, the licensee) is the holder of Facility Operating License Nos. DPR-70 and DPR-75, which authorize operation of the Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1 and 2, respectively. The licenses provide, among other things, that the licensee is subject to all rules, regulations, and orders of the U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (the Commission) now or hereafter in effect.

The facilities consist of two pressurized water reactors, Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Units 1 and 2, at the licensee's site located in Salem County, New Jersey.

II.

Pursuant to 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5), each licensed operator applicant is required to perform at least five significant control manipulations which affect reactivity or power level on the facility for which the license is sought. In addition, for a facility which has completed preoperational

testing and is in an extended shutdown which precludes manipulation of the control of the facility, the Commission may process the application and may administer the required written examination and operating test, but may not issue the license until the required evidence of control manipulations is supplied.

III.

By letter dated May 10, 1996, as supplemented by letters dated June 20, 1996, and July 9, 1996, the licensee requested an exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5) for 10 applicants for operator and senior operator licenses. The requested exemption would allow issuance of operator and senior operator licenses to the applicants prior to their performance of the required control manipulations. Performance of the control manipulations on the Salem facility has not been possible since both Units 1 and 2 have been shutdown for approximately 1 year for extensive upgrades of both equipment and personnel. In lieu of performing the control manipulations on its facility, the licensee requests acceptance of satisfactory performance of simulated control manipulations on its certified, plant-referenced simulator, since all of the applicants have significant and extensive commercial nuclear power plant experience, although only six of the 10 applicants have previously been licensed and performed reactor controls manipulations. The licensee further committed to the performance of the required control manipulations by each applicant on the Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Unit 2, prior to or at the time the unit achieves 100 percent power following the current plant outage. The requested relief would constitute a one-time exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5).

In support of its request for exemption, the licensee stated that the 10 applicants have significant commercial nuclear power plant experience - from 5 to 22 years - and leadership capabilities important to improve the quality of the staff. They have received additional simulator training on their certified, plant-referenced simulator, including the performance of simulated control manipulations beyond the number required by 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5). The licensee stated that the seven senior operator applicants conducted control manipulations at other facilities and that six of these applicants have also performed licensed senior operator duties within approximately the last 2 years. Finally, the licensee asserts that the 10 applicants have the specific leadership characteristics, determined through a rigorous screening and interview process, considered vital for reliable shift performance. The licensee further stated that failure to grant the exemption would not serve an underlying purpose of the rule in that the safety of nuclear power plant operations would not be improved and the increased level of experience of the operators available would enhance safe restart of Unit 2.

The licensee concludes that the proposed alternate qualifications and training will not adversely affect the capabilities of the operator and senior operator applicants, and it is in the public interest to grant the exemption since inclusion of these individuals on the operations staff will facilitate the increased level of safety as part of the Salem Restart Action Plan.

IV.

The underlying purpose of 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5) is to ensure that applicants for operator and senior operator licenses have some minimum level of actual

on-the-job training and experience manipulating the controls in the power plant control room prior to license issuance. The six previously licensed senior operator applicants possess recent significant licensed senior operator experience at other pressurized water reactors and have successfully conducted actual control manipulations. By their previous licensed experience, they have demonstrated that they possess the required levels of practical skills and abilities needed to safely operate a nuclear plant. Because of their considerable licensed operating experience and the additional training provided on the Salem certified, plant-referenced simulator, the lack of manipulations of the actual controls of the Salem facility is not significant. Furthermore, the six applicants will complete the manipulations prior to or at the time that Unit 2 achieves 100% power following the current outage. Therefore, the NRC staff has concluded that the licensee's proposed use of simulated control manipulations for these six senior operator applicants, combined with their prior experience, meets the intent of the requirement of 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5) to have actual experience manipulating the controls in the power plant control room prior to licensing. Meeting the requirement for the completion of the control manipulations on the actual plant for all of the licensed operator applicants would significantly delay issuance of licenses for these applicants, with a resultant adverse effect on the facility licensee's operating crew experience level without a net benefit to safety, and would otherwise have a detrimental effect on the public interest. This one-time exemption will allow additional experienced licensed senior operator support during the upcoming Salem Unit 2 restart, which will provide a safety enhancement during plant startup operations and testing.

V.

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's request and has concluded that issuance of this exemption will not endanger life or property and will have no significant effect on the safety of the public or the plant.

Accordingly, the Commission has determined, pursuant to 10 CFR 55.11, that this exemption as described in Section III (for the six senior operator license applicants with previous licensed senior operator experience - Messrs Armando, Downey, Fitzgerald, Jackson, Gumbert and Soens) is authorized by law, will not endanger life or property, and is otherwise in the public interest. Therefore, the Commission hereby grants a one-time exemption from the requirements of 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5) to the six senior operator license applicants with previous licensed senior operator experience prior to their performance of at least five significant control manipulations which affect reactivity or power level on the Salem Nuclear Generating Station. Each of the six applicants named above shall have completed at least five significant control manipulations which affect reactivity or power level on the Salem Nuclear Generating Station, Unit 2, prior to or at the time of the unit achieving 100% power following the current outage, or they shall be removed from licensed duties.

The exemption request is denied for the four applicants with no prior licensed operating experience since simulator training alone is not deemed to be an acceptable alternative to 10 CFR 55.31(a)(5).

Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.32, the Commission has determined that the granting of this exemption will have no significant impact on the environment (61 FR 49501).

This exemption is effective upon issuance.

FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

Original Signed By
WILLIAM T. RUSSELL

William T. Russell, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

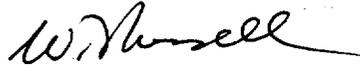
Dated at Rockville, Maryland
this 24th day of September 1996

OFFICE	PDI-2/AA	PDI-2/PM	PDI-2/D	OGC	D:DRPE	ADP/D	NRR/D
NAME	M. Brien	L. O'han:smm	J. Stoltz	CPD	S. Varga	R. Zimmerman	W. Russell
DATE	7/16/96	7/16/96	7/16/96	7/17/96	7/21/96	7/25/96	7/24/96

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FOR THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION



William T. Russell, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Dated at Rockville, Maryland
this 24th day of September 1996