

# Withdrawn

NRC Generic Letter 1989-17, "Planned Administrative Changes to the NRC Operator Licensing Written Exam Process," dated September 6, 1989, has been withdrawn.

ADAMS Accession Number: ML031140236

See *Federal Register* notice dated October 25, 2016

81 FR 73448



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

September 6, 1989

**TO:** ALL HOLDERS OF OPERATING LICENSES OR CONSTRUCTION PERMITS FOR PRESSURIZED WATER REACTORS (PWRs) AND BOILING WATER REACTORS (BWRs) AND ALL LICENSED OPERATORS.

**SUBJECT:** PLANNED ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TO THE NRC OPERATOR LICENSING WRITTEN EXAMINATION PROCESS - GENERIC LETTER 89-17

A review of the operator licensing process identified significant improvements that could be realized by modifying the way in which the written examination is administered. One improvement is the separate administration of the section of the written examination that tests the examinees' knowledge of the fundamental principles applicable to all PWR or BWR plants.

This separate section of the written examination will be referred to as the Generic Fundamentals Examination Section (GFES) of the initial licensing examination. The GFES is designed to test the knowledge of material contained in the Components and Theory section of the initial written license examinations that were administered between February 1, 1982, and October 1, 1989, to both Reactor Operator (RO) and Senior Reactor Operator (SRO) applicants.

The NRC administered a pilot testing program for the GFES to both PWR and BWR volunteers in all five regions. These examinations were constructed from a bank of questions, generated jointly by NRC and the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations (INPO), designed to support the GFES. The examinations were designed to be totally objective and machine-gradable, thereby allowing a prompt turnaround time for grading the examinations and generating individual item statistics. In addition, the NRC sent out feedback forms to all applicants who took the first pilot GFES, as well as to facility trainers and testing specialists. The results of a review of the item statistics and the feedback forms were used as constructive feedback to modify individual questions and validate the reliability of the GFES examination process.

Individuals participating in the GFES pilot program were allowed to either accept their score on the GFES and have it substituted for their score on the applicable section of their licensing written examination, or to take the full three sections of the written licensing examination. The NRC has concluded the pilot program for validating the GFES and will implement the GFES to test license applicants' knowledge of fundamental theory and components beginning after October 1, 1989.

For implementation of the new GFES, the NRC will modify the timing of steps to be taken for applying for a Reactor Operator or a Senior Reactor Operator license to operate a PWR or BWR reactor. Applicants for an Operator or Senior Operator License at Fort St. Vrain and non-power reactors will not be affected by the implementation of the GFES.

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After October 1, 1989, the first step in applying for a license under 10 CFR Part 55, Subpart D - Applications (55.31(a)(3)), will be for an authorized representative of the facility to submit a written request that the GFES of the written examination be administered to the applicant. The NRC will not be administering the fundamentals section (Section 1 for RO and Section 4 for SRO) in conjunction with the site-specific written examination after October 1, 1989, except as negotiated with the NRC regional offices up to but not beyond November 1, 1989.

NRC will also establish within the Operator Licensing Examiner Standards (NUREG-1021) eligibility requirements for taking the GFES.

Personnel wishing to register for the GFES must be enrolled in a facility-sponsored training program, the completion of which will satisfy the eligibility requirements for a Reactor Operator or a Senior Reactor Operator license.

The examinee will be allowed to take the GFES of the written licensing examination before completion of all training required for a license. Submittal of a complete application for a license (NRC Form 398) before taking this section of the examination will not be required. However, the NRC will require a written request from an authorized representative of the facility licensee by which the applicant will be employed that the fundamentals section of the written examination be administered.

The second step in applying for a license will be for the applicant to demonstrate proficiency in the material tested by the GFES. The applicant will be able to demonstrate this proficiency by having passed either of the two following examinations for the reactor type for which a license is sought.

1. An NRC-administered GFES on PWRs or BWRs.
2. An NRC written licensing examination for PWRs or BWRs administered between February 1, 1982, and October 1, 1989, completion of which resulted in licensing as a Reactor Operator or Senior Reactor Operator.

PLEASE NOTE: This requirement does not include NRC-administered Instructor Certification Examinations or Requalification Examinations.

The third step will be submittal of a license application (NRC Form 398). Applicants for an operator or senior operator license will be required to document successful completion of the GFES on their application, NRC Form 398 (date passed), or successful completion of the fundamentals section of an NRC written examination administered between February 1, 1982, and October 1, 1989, as a result of which he or she received an NRC license.

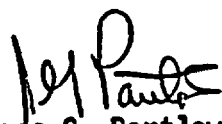
Following submittal of a license application (NRC Form 398), the applicant will be required to pass the site specific section of the initial licensing written examination, which test the candidate on material required for the safe, day-to-day operation of the specific plant for which a license is sought. This section of the initial licensing examination will be referred to as the Site-Specific Examination Section (SSES) of the written examination and will test the material currently tested in Sections 2 and 3 (for RO applicants) or Sections 5 and 6 (for SRO applicants) of the written licensing examination.

Implementation of the GFES will have no effect on the operating test portion of the licensing process. The passing grade for the GFES of the written examination will be 80 percent. The passing grade for the SSES of the written examination will remain at 80 percent. The grade for the GFES will not be averaged into the SSES grade.

NRC will administer BWR and PWR GFESs three times annually, on Wednesday of the first full week in February, June, and October. The next GFESs will be administered Wednesday, October 4, 1989, in five regional locations.

This generic letter will be followed by a change to the Operator Licensing Examiner Standards (NUREG-1021) promulgating the sequencing of the steps to be taken in the licensing written examination process, including specifics on submitting names for registration and procedures for implementation.

Sincerely,

  
James G. Partlow, Associate Director  
for Projects  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:  
List of Most Recently  
Issued NRC Generic  
Letters

Technical Contact: P. Doyle, Jr., NRR  
(301) 492-1047

## LIST OF RECENTLY ISSUED GENERIC LETTERS

Generic Letter No.	Subject	Date of Issuance	Issued To
89-17	PLANNED ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES TO THE NRC OPERATOR LICENSING WRITTEN EXAMINATION PROCESS - GENERIC LETTER 89-17	09/06/89	ALL HOLDERS OF OPERATING LICENSES OR CONSTRUCTION PERMITS FOR PWRs AND BWRs AND ALL LICENSED OPERATORS
89-16	INSTALLATION OF A HARDENED WETWELL VENT (GENERIC LETTER 89-16)	09/01/89	ALL GE PLANTS
88-20 SUPPLEMENT 1	GENERIC LETTER 88-20 SUPPLEMENT NO. 1 (INITIATION OF THE INDIVIDUAL PLANT EXAMINATION FOR SEVERE VULNERABILITIES 10 CFR 50.54(f))	08/29/89	ALL LICENSEES HOLDING OPERATING LICENSES AND CONSTRUCTION PERMITS FOR NUCLEAR POWER REACTOR FACILITIES
89-15	EMERGENCY RESPONSE DATA SYSTEM GENERIC LETTER NO. 89-15	08/21/89	ALL HOLDERS OF OPERATING LICENSES OR CONSTRUCTION PERMITS FOR NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS
	CORRECT ACCESSION NUMBER IS 8908220423		
89-07	SUPPLEMENT 1 TO GENERIC LETTER 89-07, "POWER REACTOR SAFEGUARDS CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR SURFACE VEHICLE BOMBS"	08/21/89	ALL LICENSEES OF OPERATING PLANTS, APPLICANTS FOR OPERATING LICENSES, AND HOLDERS OF CONSTRUCTION PERMITS
89-14	LINE-ITEMS TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION IMPROVEMENT - REMOVAL OF 3.25 LIMIT ON EXTENDING SURVEILLANCE INTERVALS (GENERIC LETTER 89-14)	08/21/89	ALL LICENSEES OF OPERATING PLANTS, APPLICANTS FOR OPERATING LICENSES, AND HOLDERS OF CONSTRUCTION PERMITS
89-13	GENERIC LETTER 89-13 SERVICE WATER SYSTEMS PROBLEMS AFFECTING SAFETY-RELATED EQUIPMENT	7/18/89	LICENSEES TO ALL POWER REACTORS BWRs, PWRs, AND VENDORS IN ADDITION TO GENERAL CODES APPLICABLE TO GENERIC LETTERS

Following submittal of a license application (NRC Form 398), the applicant will be required to pass the site specific section of the initial licensing written examination, which test the candidate on material required for the safe, day-to-day operation of the specific plant for which a license is sought. This section of the initial licensing examination will be referred to as the Site-Specific Examination Section (SSES) of the written examination and will test the material currently tested in Sections 2 and 3 (for RO applicants) or Sections 5 and 6 (for SRO applicants) of the written licensing examination.

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Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY JAMES PARTLOW  
James G. Partlow, Associate Director  
for Projects  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Enclosure:  
List of Most Recently Issued  
Issued NRC Generic Letters

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(301) 492-1047

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