

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555

May 22, 1987

NRC INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 87-22: OPERATOR LICENSING REQUALIFICATION
EXAMINATIONS AT NONPOWER REACTORS

Addressees:

All research and nonpower reactor facilities.

Purpose:

The purpose of this information notice is to inform recipients of practices involving the requalification examinations for renewal of reactor operator and senior reactor operator licenses, that have been found to be contrary to existing NRC requirements. It is expected that recipients will review this information for applicability to their operator requalification programs and consider action as appropriate to preclude similar practices at their facilities. However, suggestions contained in this notice do not constitute NRC requirements; therefore, no specific action or written response is required.

Description of Circumstances:

NRC recently identified three nonpower reactor licensees who make a practice of giving take-home or on-shift requalification examinations. Generic Letter 83-17, issued on April 8, 1983, addressed the use of take-home and on-shift examinations as a means of determining an applicant's individual performance as part of the requalification program. This generic letter was issued as a result of an investigation into a case of cheating, in which an individual had submitted another person's work in response to some examination questions. The generic letter states, "In particular, unproctored examination(s), take-home quizzes and on-shift tests allow ample opportunity for cheating which could go undetected and, therefore, are not an acceptable means for certifying individual performance." (See Attachment 1.)

Discussion:

The integrity of the requalification examination is essential because it is used to certify that the operator's performance is adequate to warrant renewal of his or her license. As a result of the recent discovery of inadequate examination practices, the NPC initiated detailed reviews of examination practices at the three facilities. Processing of license renewal requests from these facilities were held in abeyance pending the completion of these reviews.

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No specific action or written response is required by this information notice. If you have questions about this matter, please contact the Regional Administrator of the appropriate NRC regional office or this office.

Charles E. Rossi, Director
Division of Operational Events Assessment
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Technical Contacts: Donald Kirkpatrick, NRR
(301) 492-8166

Tony Mendiola, NRR
(301) 492-9695

Attachments:

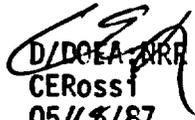
1. Generic Letter 83-17
2. List of Recently Issued Information Notices

*SEE PREVIOUS CONCURRENCES

*OGCB:DOEA:NRR
DKirkpatrick
04/23/87

*LOLB:NRR
JHannon
05/05/87

*LOLB:NRR *PPMB:ARM
TMendiola MHarwell
05/05/87 05/01/87


D/DOEA-NRR
CERossi
05/18/87
*C/OGCB:DOEA:NRR
CHBerlinger
05/08/87

LIST OF RECENTLY ISSUED
INFORMATION NOTICES 1987

Information Notice No.	Subject	Date of Issuance	Issued to
87-21	Shutdown Order Issued Because Licensed Operators Asleep While on Duty	5/11/87	All nuclear power facilities holding an OL or CP and all licensed operators.
87-20	Hydrogen Leak in Auxiliary Building	4/20/87	All nuclear power facilities holding an OL or CP
86-108 Sup. 1	Degradation of Reactor Coolant System Pressure Boundary Resulting from Boric Acid Corrosion	4/20/87	All PWR facilities holding an OL or CP.
86-64 Sup. 1	Deficiencies in Upgrade Programs for Plant Emergency Operating Procedures.	4/20/87	All nuclear power facilities holding a CP or OL.
85-61 Sup. 1	Misadministrations to Patients Undergoing Thyroid Scans	4/15/87	All licensees authorized to use byproduct material
87-19	Perforation and Cracking of Rod Cluster Control Assemblies	4/9/87	All Westinghouse power PWR facilities holding an OL or CP
87-18	Unauthorized Service on Teletherapy Units by Non-licensed Maintenance Personnel	4/8/87	All NRC licensees authorized to use radioactive material in teletherapy units
87-17	Response Time of Scram Instrument Volume Level Detectors	4/7/87	All GE BWR facilities holding an OL or CP
87-16	Degradation of Static "0" Ring Pressure Switches	4/2/87	All LWR facilities holding an OL or CP

OL = Operating License
CP = Construction Permit

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05/05/87

LOLB:NRR *PPMB:ARM
TMendiola MHarwell
05/ /87 05/01/87

Hub Miller
Concurrences
by phone
5/18/87
D/DOEA/NRR
CERossi
05/18/87
C/OGCB:DOEA:NRR
CHBerlinger
05/8/87 *CB*

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04/ /87

April 8, 1983

TO ALL POWER AND NON-POWER REACTOR LICENSEES, APPLICANTS FOR AN OPERATING LICENSE AND HOLDERS OF A CONSTRUCTION PERMIT

Gentlemen:

Subject: Integrity of the Requalification Examinations for Renewal of Reactor Operator and Senior Reactor Operator Licenses (Generic Letter 83-17)

Recently, an investigation was completed which determined that a senior official at a nuclear power plant certified to the NRC that a licensed individual had successfully completed the licensed operator requalification program, when in fact, that individual had cheated by submitting another person's work in response to some examination questions.

Such an individual has not successfully completed the requalification program and has not discharged his licensed responsibility in a safe and competent manner, as required by 10 CFR 55. Furthermore, it should be noted that cheating on examinations which are used to certify individuals to the NRC will result in an automatic denial of a license application or license renewal and could result in more severe penalties.

The purpose of this letter is to highlight the need for you to ensure that the validity of the certifications required by 10 CFR Part 55 and the integrity and honesty of the requalification program are adequately addressed in facility procedures. You should review your procedures on this subject to ensure that an applicant's individual performance can be determined. Your procedures should include provisions to detect and prevent instances of cheating. In particular, unproctored examination, take-home quizzes and on-shift tests allow ample opportunity for cheating which could go undetected and, therefore, are not an acceptable means for certifying individual performance. While some portions of examinations may be conducted in an open-book format (e.g. use of steam tables on thermodynamics problems or use of facility procedures and drawings during oral examinations), adequate monitoring provisions are essential to ensure that the persons being evaluated are working independently and are using only authorized instructional or reference materials.

No submittals of procedures or results of your procedure reviews are required by this letter; however, we will review these procedures as a part of our audits of the licensed reactor operator and senior reactor operator requalification programs.

Original signed by

Darrell G. Eisenhut, Director
Division of Licensing