

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

April 14, 1989

NRC INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 89-40: UNSATISFACTORY OPERATOR TEST RESULTS AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE REQUALIFICATION PROGRAM

Addressees:

All holders of operating licenses or construction permits for nuclear power reactors.

Purpose:

This information notice is being provided to alert addressees to problems associated with high failure rates for operators taking requalification examinations. It is expected that recipients will review the information for applicability to their facilities and consider actions, as applicable, to avoid similar problems. However, suggestions contained in this information notice do not constitute NRC requirements; therefore, no specific action or written response is required.

Description of Circumstances:

During the weeks of March 13, 1989, and March 20, 1989, requalification examinations were administered by the NRC to six crews of licensed operators at Turkey Point Units 3 and 4. Three of the six crews performed unsatisfactorily during the simulator portion of the operating test and 12 of the 24 licensed operators failed at least one portion (written examination, simulator test, or plant walk-through examination) of the NRC-administered requalification examinations. As a result, the Turkey Point Units 3 and 4 requalification programs were evaluated as unsatisfactory by the NRC. The number of licensed operators at the units currently is limited to the 27 licensed operators who have not failed either a facility or an NRC-administered examination within the past 12 months.

New crews have been formed using licensed operators who have not failed recent facility or NRC-administered examinations. Under the terms of a Confirmatory Action Letter issued by the Regional Administrator, Unit 3 has shut down to allow the facility licensee time to train the new crews in team performance. Unit 4 was already in a shutdown status for refueling. The NRC, in conjunction with the licensee, will perform an operational assessment of the new crews' performance before concurring in the decision to restart either unit.

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Discussion:

The NRC resumed administration of requalification examinations after conducting extensive pilot tests of a system for examining candidates in the work environment on job-relevant tasks of great safety significance. Facility licensees provide licensed senior operators to the NRC examination teams to share the quality assurance responsibilities and to concur in the importance and relevancy of the examinations. The examinations were field tested before administration by the examination team.

The NRC's confidence in the ability of facility licensees to ensure public health and safety depends upon the licensee's ability to administer an effective requalification program that maintains highly qualified, professional licensed operators and senior operators at the unit controls at all times. The importance of this aspect of licensee responsibility cannot be overstated.

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


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

Technical Contact: K. Perkins Jr., NRR
(301) 492-1031

Attachment: List of Recently Issued NRC Information Notices

LIST OF RECENTLY ISSUED
 NRC INFORMATION NOTICES

Information Notice No.	Subject	Date of Issuance	Issued to
89-39	List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement or Non-Procurement Programs	4/5/89	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
89-38	Atmospheric Dump Valve Failures at Palo Verde Units 1, 2, and 3	4/5/89	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
89-37	Proposed Amendments to 40 CFR Part 61, Air Emission Standards for Radionuclides	4/4/89	All U.S. NRC licensees.
89-36	Excessive Temperatures in Emergency Core Cooling System Piping Located Outside Containment	4/4/89	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
88-86, Supp. 1	Operating with Multiple Grounds in Direct Current Distribution Systems	3/31/89	All holders of OLs or CPs for nuclear power reactors.
89-35	Loss and Theft of Unsecured Licensed Material	3/30/89	All U.S. NRC byproduct, source and special nuclear material licensees.
89-34	Disposal of Americium Well-Logging Sources	3/30/89	All holders of an NRC specific license authorizing well-logging activities.
89-33	Potential Failure of Westinghouse Steam Generator Tube Mechanical Plugs	3/23/89	All holders of OLs or CPs for PWRs.
89-32	Surveillance Testing of Low-Temperature Overpressure-Protection Systems	3/23/89	All holders of OLs or CPs for PWRs.

OL = Operating License
 CP = Construction Permit

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FGuenther
4/5/89

*OLB:DLPQ
LWiens
4/6/89

*OLB:DLPQ
KPerkins
4/6/89

*TECH ED
BCalure
4/7/89

*DDIR:DLPQ
JZwolinski
4/7/89

*DIR:DLPQ
JWRoe
4/7/89

*OGCB/NRR
CBerlinger
4/7/89

D:DOEA/NRR
CERossi
4/10/89

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INFO NOTICE

#1
 4/7/89
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OFC	: OLB:DLPO	: OLB:DLPO	: OLB:DLPO	: TECH:ED	: DDIR:DLPO	: DIR:DLPO
NAME	: FGuenther:rh	: LWiens	: KPerkins	: B. Caluro	: JZwolinski	: JWRoe
DATE	: 4/5/89	: 4/6/89	: 4/6/89	: 4/7/89	: 4/7/89	: 4/7/89
OFC	: OGB/NRR	: DOEA/NRR	:	:	:	:
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DATE	: 4/7/89	: 1/89	:	:	:	: