



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV
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ARLINGTON, TEXAS 76011-4005

January 12, 2006

James J. Sheppard, President and
Chief Executive Officer
STP Nuclear Operating Company
P.O. Box 289
Wadsworth, TX 77483

SUBJECT: SOUTH TEXAS PROJECT, UNITS 1 AND 2 - NRC EXAMINATION
REPORT 05000498/2005301; 05000499/2005301

Dear Mr. Sheppard:

On November 18, 2005, the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) completed an initial operator licensing examination at the South Texas Project, Units 1 and 2. The enclosed report documents the examination findings, which were discussed on November 18, 2005, with Mr. James Mertink, Operations Manager, and other members of your staff.

The examination included an evaluation of 3 applicants for operator licenses and 9 applicants for a senior operator license. The written and operating examinations were developed using NUREG-1021, "Operator Licensing Examination Standards for Power Reactors," Revision 9. The license examiners determined that all 12 applicants satisfied the requirements of 10 CFR Part 55, and the appropriate licenses have been issued.

No findings of significance were identified.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.390 of the NRC's "Rules of Practice," a copy of this letter and its 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/reading-rm/adams.html> (the Public Electronic Reading Room).

Sincerely,

/RA/

Anthony T. Gody, Chief
Operations Branch
Division of Reactor Safety

Dockets: 50-498; 50-499
Licenses: NPF-76; NPF-80

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ENCLOSURE

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
REGION IV

Dockets.: 50-498; 50-499

License: NPF-76; NPF-80

Report No.: 50-498/2005-301; 50-499/2005-301

Licensee: South Texas Project Nuclear Operating Company

Facility: South Texas Project Electric Generating Station

Location: FM 521 - 8 miles west of Wadsworth
Wadsworth, Texas 77483

Dates: November 14-18, 2005

Inspectors: Michael Murphy , Senior Operations Engineer, Operations Branch
Paul Gage, Senior Operations Engineer, Operations Branch
Steve Garchow, Operations Engineer, Operations Branch
Alfred Sanchez, Resident Inspector, Projects Branch A

Accompanying Personnel: B. Larson, Operations Engineer, Operations Branch

Approved By: Anthony T. Gody, Chief
Operations Branch
Division of Reactor Safety

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

ER 05000498/2005-301; 05000499/2005-301 on 11/14-18/2005; South Texas Project, initial operator licensing examination.

NRC examiners evaluated the competency of three applicants for operator licenses and nine applicants for a senior operator license. The NRC developed the written examination and the licensee developed the operating examination using NUREG-1021, "Operator Licensing Examination Standards for Power Reactors," Revision 9. The licensee provided proctors for the administration of the written examination to all applicants on November 11, 2005, in accordance with instructions provided by the chief examiner. The NRC examiners administered the operating test on November 14-18, 2005.

A. NRC-Identified and Self-Revealing Findings

No findings of significance were identified.

B. Licensee-Identified Violations

No findings of significance were identified.

REPORT DETAILS

4. OTHER ACTIVITIES

4OA4 Initial License Examination

.1 Operator Knowledge and Performance

a. Examination Scope

The NRC examination team administered the operating test to the 12 applicants on November 14-18, 2005. The reactor operator applicants participated in two dynamic simulator scenarios, a control room and facilities walkthrough test consisting of 11 system tasks, and an administrative test consisting of 1 task in each of four areas. The 5 senior operator applicants seeking an instant license participated in two dynamic simulator scenarios, a control room and facilities walkthrough test consisting of 10 system tasks, and an administrative test consisting of one task in each of five areas. The 4 senior operator applicants seeking an upgrade license participated in one dynamic simulator scenario, a control room and facilities walkthrough consisting of 5 system tasks, and an administrative test consisting of 1 task in each of five areas.

On November 11, 2005, the licensee proctored the administration of the written examinations to all 12 applicants and forwarded the proposed grades together with the performance analysis to the NRC for approval.

b. Findings

Twelve applicants passed all parts of the examinations. For the written examinations, the average score for all applicants was 90.0 percent. The applicant scores ranged from 84.0 to 95.0 percent. The SRO applicant average scores were 89.7 percent, and the RO applicant average scores were 91.1 percent.

The licensee conducted a performance analysis for the written examinations with emphasis on four questions missed by half or more of the applicants. After reviewing the licensee's analysis, the examiners agreed with the licensee's conclusions that one question had more than one correct answer. The recommended change had no impact of changing a passing grade to a failure or a failing grade to passing.

The licensee's recommendation and the NRC response follow:

Senior Operator Question 94

The licensee recommended that both Answers A and D be accepted as correct. The stem of the question asked where the minimum fire brigade staffing was defined. The original correct answer was "A - the Technical Requirements Manual (TRM)." The licensee proposed that Answer D - The Conduct of Operations Manual was also correct. They provided a copy of page 36 of the Conduct of Operations Manual, which states under Shift Manning that the "minimum shift manning requirement . . . is . . . 5 fire brigade members. . . ."

NRC Response: The NRC examiners agreed with the licensee's conclusion that Question 94 had more than one correct answer.

The answer key was corrected. All remaining questions were valid and no training deficiencies were identified.

.2 Initial Licensing Examination Development

The NRC developed the written and the licensee developed the operating test in accordance with NUREG-1021, Revision 9. Licensee facility training and operations staff involved in examination development were on a security agreement.

.2.1 Operating Examination Outline and Examination Package

a. Examination Scope

The licensee staff submitted the operating examination outlines on June 20, 2005. The chief examiner reviewed the submittal against the requirements of NUREG-1021, Revision 9. The draft operating examination package was received by the NRC on October 3, 2005. Examiners reviewed the examination against the requirements of NUREG-1021, Revision 9, and provided comments to the licensee on October 11, 2005. The chief examiner conducted an onsite validation of the examinations and provided further comments during the week of October 24, 2005.

b. Findings

Examiners approved the initial operating examination outline with minor comments and advised the licensee to proceed with the operating examination development.

The chief examiner determined that the operating examination initially submitted by the licensee staff was within the range of acceptability expected for a proposed examination.

No findings of significance were identified.

.2.2 Simulation Facility Performance

a. Scope

The examination team observed simulator performance with regard to plant fidelity during the examination validation and administration.

b. Findings

No findings of significance were identified.

2.3 Examination Security

a. Scope

The examiners reviewed examination security both during the onsite preparation and examination administration weeks. Written plans for simulator security and applicant control were reviewed and discussed with licensee personnel. In addition, the chief examiner sampled historical records of the applicants to verify the accuracy of data on their license applications, in accordance with Examiner Standard 202.C.2.e of NUREG-1021, Revision 9.

b. Findings

No findings of significance were identified.

4OA6 Meetings, Including Exit

On November 18, 2005, the examiners presented the examination results to Mr. James Mertink and other members of your staff who acknowledged the findings. The inspectors confirmed that proprietary information was not provided or reviewed during the examination process.

ATTACHMENT

KEY POINTS OF CONTACT

Licensee personnel

J. Calvert, Operations Training Manager
A. Culver, Operations Training Instructor
M. DeFrees, Operations Training Supervisor
J. Mertink, Operations Manager
R. Savage, Licensing Engineering Specialist