

UNITED STATES  
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20555-0001

December 27, 2007

**NRC REGULATORY ISSUE SUMMARY 2007-29  
CLARIFIED GUIDANCE FOR LICENSED OPERATOR  
WATCH-STANDING PROFICIENCY**

**ADDRESSEES**

All holders of operating licenses for nuclear power reactors, except those who have permanently ceased operations and have certified that fuel has been permanently removed from the reactor vessel.

**INTENT**

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing this regulatory issue summary (RIS) to clarify watch-standing proficiency requirements for holders of reactor operator (RO) and senior reactor operator (SRO) licenses at power reactor facilities. This RIS summarizes the clarifications contained in Section ES-605 of Supplement 1 to Revision 9 of NUREG-1021, "Operator Licensing Examination Standards for Power Reactors." Supplement 1 to Revision 9 of NUREG-1021 was issued on October 19, 2007. This RIS requires no action or written response on the part of the addressees.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

NRC requirements for licensed operator watch-standing proficiency are set forth in Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) paragraph 55.53(e). Previous clarifications regarding watch-standing proficiency are contained in NUREG-1262, "Answers to Questions at Public Meetings Regarding Implementation of Title 10, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 55 on Operators' Licenses," pp.71-81. (NUREG-1262 is available through the NRC's Public Electronic Reading Room at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nureqs/staff/sr1262/>.)

Since the publication of NUREG-1262, the NRC has continued to identify instances of licensed operators not properly maintaining watch-standing proficiency. Watch-standing proficiency issues were discussed in public meetings held with the Nuclear Energy Institute in January and November of 2005, and on September 28, 2006. (Minutes from the three public meetings are available through NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html> with ADAMS Accession Numbers of ML050670251, ML060170090, and ML062780425.) Clarified guidance for watch-standing proficiency was included in Section ES-605 of Draft Supplement 1 to Revision 9 of

**ML072900620**

NUREG-1021 (ADAMS accession number ML071580694), which was issued for public comment on May 22, 2007, and noticed in the *Federal Register* (72 FR 28728).

## **SUMMARY OF ISSUE**

Section ES-605 of Supplement 1 to Revision 9 of NUREG-1021 provides clarified guidance regarding proficiency watches for maintaining an operator's license active. In summary, Section ES-605 provides the following clarifications in regard to watch-standing proficiency:

- (1) An allowance to credit watch-standing proficiency hours for certain licensed RO and SRO shift crew positions that are in excess of those required by a facility's technical specifications. However, in order to credit standing watch in such excess crew positions toward the required proficiency hours, a facility licensee must have in place specific administrative controls, and any individual serving in an excess crew position must be meaningfully and fully engaged in the functions and duties of a licensed RO/SRO.
- (2) If a facility licensee cannot justify excess crew positions for proficiency credit, each licensed operator would have to rotate into a licensed shift crew position required by technical specifications for at least seven 8-hour or five 12-hour shifts per calendar quarter, in order to maintain their license active. Sufficient administrative controls, including documenting watch-standing proficiency hours, must be in place.
- (3) In order to maintain the supervisory portion of an SRO license active, a SRO must stand at least one complete watch (8- or 12-hour shift) per calendar quarter in an SRO-only supervisory position. The remainder of complete watches required in a calendar quarter may be performed in either a credited SRO or RO position.
- (4) If a licensed SRO stands all of his or her required proficiency watches in a SRO-only supervisory position, the RO portion of the license is still considered active.
- (5) Individuals who are licensed on two (or more) similar units at a facility are not required to maintain proficiency on each of the similar units. Performing the required number of shifts per calendar quarter on a single unit maintains the license active for all similar units identified on an individual's license.

For the complete wording of these clarifications, a copy of Supplement 1 to Revision 9 of NUREG-1021 has been mailed to each power reactor site manager, and is also available through the NRC's Electronic Reading Room at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1021/>.

## **BACKFIT DISCUSSION**

This RIS and the associated Supplement 1 to Revision 9 of NUREG-1021 do not represent a new or different staff position regarding watch-standing proficiency. This RIS requires no action or written response. Therefore, it is not a backfit under 10 CFR 50.109. Consequently, the staff did not perform a backfit analysis.

## **FEDERAL REGISTER NOTIFICATION**

A notice of opportunity for public comment on this RIS was not published in the *Federal Register* because it is informational and pertains to a staff position that does not represent a departure from current regulatory requirements and practice. Furthermore, the clarified guidance summarized in the RIS was previously issued for public comment in Draft Supplement 1 to Revision 9 of NUREG-1021, Section ES-605, and stakeholder feedback was considered in developing the final version of the guidance.

## **CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT**

This RIS is not a rule as designated by the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 801-886) and is not subject to the Act.

## **PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT**

This RIS does not contain new or amend information collection requirements subject to the Paperwork Reduction act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.). Existing requirements were approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), approval number 3150-0018.

### Public Protection Notification

The NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a request for information or an information collection requirement unless the requesting document displays a currently valid OMB control number.

## **CONTACT**

Please direct any questions about this matter to the technical contacts listed below.

*/RA/*

Michael J. Case, Director  
Division of Policy and Rulemaking  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Technical Contacts: Nancy L. Salgado, NRR  
301-415-2942  
E-mail: [nls@nrc.gov](mailto:nls@nrc.gov)

David Muller, NRR  
301-415-1412  
E-mail: [dsm3@nrc.gov](mailto:dsm3@nrc.gov)

George M. Usova  
301-415-1064  
E-mail: [gmu@nrc.gov](mailto:gmu@nrc.gov)

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Michael J. Case, Director  
Division of Policy and Rulemaking  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Technical Contacts:	Nancy L. Salgado, NRR 301-415-2942 E-mail: <a href="mailto:nls@nrc.gov">nls@nrc.gov</a>	David Muller, NRR 301-415-1412 E-mail: <a href="mailto:dsm3@nrc.gov">dsm3@nrc.gov</a>
	George M. Usova 301-415-1064 E-mail: <a href="mailto:gmu@nrc.gov">gmu@nrc.gov</a>	

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