

# University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

## Nuclear Engineering Program

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9-29-82

Director, Division of Reactor Licensing  
U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D. C. 20555

Dear Sir:

Item: Reportable Occurrence; Operation of reactor after failure to renew Operator License.

### Event:

This is to report that the University of Illinois TRIGA reactor was operated on occasions from January 3, 1982 to May 5, 1982 under the supervision of a Reactor Operator whose license had expired on January 2, 1982. This resulted from an oversight by the facility and an incorrect assumption by the individual. The oversight by the facility administration partially resulted in an earlier occurrence of the same type. The Reactor Supervisor had been notified in March, 1982 that his SRO license had expired and that there were only two licensed operators at that time. One of these was a Senior Reactor Operator and the second a Reactor Operator. In reality, the license of the Reactor Operator had expired at that time and for unknown reasons the records of these individuals were not immediately checked. The individual involved assumed that his license would be automatically renewed upon completion of the requalification tests.

In checking the records, it is estimated that the individual with the expired license was directly in charge of the operation of the TRIGA for about 50 hours during the above period. Part of this time was strictly a supervisory nature when the Reactor Supervisor was in charge of education and training of Nuclear Engineering students at the University of Illinois.

### Safety Significance

The individual involved is a graduate student who uses the TRIGA for obtaining data to complete his research in working for a PhD in Nuclear Engineering. For this data collection, the TRIGA may be operated up to 16 hours per day. Because of the times involved, it was prudent for him to obtain an Operator's License so that he could be in charge of the operations during part of this time. During these times, his faculty advisor was in charge of assuring that the data being collected was correct. It might be noted that his faculty advisor previously passed a NRC Senior Operator Exam. However, because of other duties his license was not renewed.

The individual involved recently completed a requalification written exam for the facility and received an overall score of 89%. Since the times when he assumes direct responsibility for the operations are not on a set schedule, he receives an oral review of the operations in progress previous to assuming control. In 1981, he was directly responsible for operations for over 90 hours which included all types of operating modes. He successfully completed both written and oral requalification tests during that year. Based on the above, there should have been no difficulty in obtaining a renewal of the license if an application had been submitted.

Based on the above, it is felt that there was no safety significance to this event.

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Corrective Action

The individual is filing another application for a license. Until this is resolved, a second licensed operator will be present during all times that he may be manipulating the controls of the reactor.

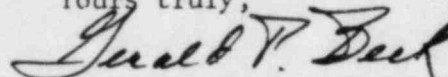
To avoid a recurrence of this event two measures have been implemented. A list of current qualified operators has been posted on the control room bulletin board which includes the expiration date of the license. This was done previously, however, the expiration date of the license was not indicated. The Nuclear Reactor Committee, after reviewing the event, passed a motion to include all current licensed operators and the expiration date of their licenses in the January and July monthly reports.

Comments

There was no intent on the part of the facility to allow this to occur. The oversight was recognized when another operator was preparing a renewal for his license and in the process checked the dates on the other licenses.

The fact that notices of impending renewals are no longer being sent to individuals and the facilities contributed to the error. This was previously done by the Operator Licensing Branch of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Yours truly,



Gerald P. Beck, Reactor Supervisor  
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