

# MIT NUCLEAR REACTOR LABORATORY

AN MIT INTERDEPARTMENTAL CENTER

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U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
Washington, D.C. 20555

50-020

Attn.: Document Control Desk

Subject: Amendment No. 42 to Renewed Facility Operating License No. R-37 for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Research Reactor regarding the Nuclear Safety System Digital Upgrade (EPDI No. L-2016-LLA-0003)

This letter supersedes a similar letter dated 31 March 2020. The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) issued Amendment No. 42 to Renewed Facility Operating License No. R-37 for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Research Reactor (MITR) on 4 December 2019 with an implementation deadline of 180 days. The MITR had planned to install the new Digital Nuclear Safety System (NSS) during the month of April 2020.

Because of the ongoing restrictions from the COVID-19 public health emergency, MIT is hereby requesting an extension of the implementation deadline to be 180 days, starting from when the MITR is re-opened for normal business, with all MITR staff members who are vital for the implementation project permitted to return to work. Currently, MIT is closed with the exception of essential personnel. There is a state-wide emergency order by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts requiring closure of physical workspaces and facilities by all business and other organizations that do not provide designated "COVID-19 Essential Services". Plans to re-open the MIT campus are still being formulated with input from civil authorities, but re-opening will likely take place in phases based upon a range of criteria such as research priorities; sizes of departments, labs, and centers; COVID-19 test results; and perhaps the ages of personnel. Therefore, the timing of the MITR's re-opening is currently quite uncertain.

It is important that all personnel critical to the implementation project can return to work to be sure that the transition is ready to proceed. Furthermore, upon re-opening of the MITR, there will be other reactor objectives that may be time-sensitive such as Requalification and On-the-Job Training for licensed operators, performance of Technical Specification required surveillance tests and calibrations with the MITR both shut down and at power, performance of a refueling outage and subsequent restart of the reactor, operation of the MITR for backlogged research and utilization, calibration of the DWK 250s once the reactor returns to thermal equilibrium, a subsequent maintenance outage to complete NSS wiring changes, and testing prior to restart with the upgraded NSS. A 180-day implementation deadline extension from the date of full staff complement will accommodate these various extra priorities and needed tasks prior to

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implementation. Safety and regulatory compliance will thereby be maintained for recovery operations and implementation of the new digital nuclear safety system.

MIT is committed to this upgrade and will be making the license amendment transition a top priority once the declared state of emergency has been rescinded and MIT fully reopens for routine business.

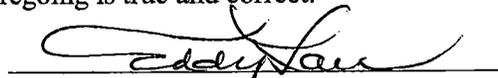
Sincerely,



Edward S. Lau, NE  
Assistant Director of Reactor Operations  
MIT Research Reactor

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on 22 April 2020  
Date

  
Signature

- cc: USNRC – Senior Project Manager  
Research and Test Reactors Licensing Branch  
Division of Licensing Projects  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation
- USNRC – Senior Reactor Inspector  
Research and Test Reactors Oversight Branch  
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