



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20555

SAFETY EVALUATION BY THE OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION
RELATED TO AMENDMENT NO. 2 TO FACILITY OPERATING LICENSE NPF-35
CATAWBA NUCLEAR STATION, UNIT 1
DUKE POWER COMPANY
NORTH CAROLINA ELECTRIC MEMBERSHIP CORPORATION
SALUDA RIVER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

INTRODUCTION

By letter dated August 28, 1985, (addressed to Mr. H. R. Denton, NRR), Duke Power Company (the licensee) proposed to change the facility Technical Specifications to permit an exception to examination prerequisites for six candidates for senior reactor operator (SRO) licenses. These prerequisites are contained in a March 28, 1980 staff letter which is referenced in Technical Specifications Section 6.3, "Unit Staff Qualifications" and Section 6.4, "Training." By letter dated August 28, 1985 (addressed to Mr. B. A. Wilson, Region II), the licensee has identified the six SRO candidates and described the experience and training that qualify them for a waiver of the experience requirement in the examination prerequisites specified in Technical Specification 6.3.

EVALUATION

The NRC staff has reviewed the licensee's submittal dated August 28, 1985. The Technical Specifications Section 6.3, "Unit Staff Qualifications" and Section 6.4, "Training" require, among other things, that the licensee's unit operating staff meet or exceed the requirements specified in Sections A and C of Enclosure 1 to the NRC letter dated March 28, 1980. The requested amendment would permit waiver of the experience requirements contained in Section A. No change has been requested relating to the Requalification Programs contained in Section C. Section A of Enclosure 1 states in part that an applicant for senior reactor operator (SRO) license should have 4 years of responsible power plant experience and that this experience should be obtained as a control room operator in either fossil or nuclear power plants or as a power plant staff engineer. A maximum of two years of this experience may be fulfilled by academic or related technical training. This experience requirement is one of the guidelines established by the staff to implement a requirement in 10 CFR Part 55 of the Commission's rules that an applicant for an operator license provide evidence to the NRC that he or she has learned to operate the controls of the facility in a safe and competent manner. In general, the NRC requires that evidence of a combination of experience and training be provided in order to be deemed eligible to sit for an NRC examination. Although standard guidelines have been established in the NRC staff's March 28, 1980, letter, waivers may be granted on a case-by-case basis if the NRC staff determines that an equivalency to the standard guidelines exists.

This determination is based upon an evaluation of the applicant's academic training, technical training relevant to reactor operation and work experience. Whether or not a waiver of part of the eligibility requirements is granted, all applicants for SRO licenses must pass an NRC administered SRO examination. Passing this examination, together with each applicant's academic training, technical training relevant to reactor operation and work experience relevant to reactor operation as well as control room experience, provides the staff with reasonable assurance that a candidate has sufficient knowledge to operate a nuclear reactor in a safe and competent manner.

The NRC staff has reviewed the training and experience of the six SRO candidates described in the licensee's August 28, 1985, letter. The six SRO candidates are highly trained at Catawba Unit 1, each has held a reactor operator license for more than one year and each was required to pass the SRO license examination. Each of the six candidates has a minimum of 6½ years of experience on-site at Catawba, during which each has been actively involved in preoperational testing and checkout, startup testing, and operator training. Catawba Unit 1, which received a fuel loading and precriticality testing license in July 1984, a low power license in December 1984, and a full power license in January 1985, has not been in operation long enough to provide an opportunity for these reactor operators to have 4 years of control room operating experience. However, each applicant's work-related experience and training more than offsets the amount by which his experience falls short of the stated guidelines. Based on this review, the staff finds that each of the six candidates has a combination of training and experience which is equivalent to that recommended in the standard guidelines of staff's March 28, 1980, letter.

The staff concludes that the guidelines recommending 4 years of responsible power plant experience can be waived for the six SRO candidates identified in the licensee's August 28, 1985, letter. The staff further concludes that the qualifications of each of these six candidates, as excepted from the staff guidelines, meet the experience requirements of 10 CFR 55.10(a)(6). Therefore, the exception to Technical Specification 6.3 is acceptable.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION

The amendment involves changes in administrative procedures or requirements in the license. Accordingly, the amendment meets the eligibility criteria for categorical exclusion set forth in 10 CFR Section 51.22(c)(10). Pursuant to 10 CFR 51.22(b) no environmental impact statement or environmental assessment need be prepared in connection with the issuance of the amendment.

CONCLUSION

The Commission made a proposed determination that the amendment involves no significant hazards consideration which was published in the Federal Register (50 FR 46212) on November 6, 1985, and consulted with the state of South Carolina. No public comments were received, and the state of South Carolina did not have any comments.

We have concluded, based on the considerations discussed above, that: (1) there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will not be endangered by operation in the proposed manner, and (2) such activities will be conducted in compliance with the Commission's regulations, and the issuance of the amendment will not be inimical to the common defense and security or to the health and safety of the public.

Principal Contributors: B. Boger, Operator Licensing Branch, DHFT
T. Syzmanski, Operator Licensing Branch, DHFT
Kahtan N. Jabbour, PWR Project Directorate #4, DPWR-A

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