

COVID-19 Related Request for Exemption from Part 26 Work Hours Requirements

Submitted: Jan 19, 2022

1. Submitter Name/Title:

Matthew S. Cox, Licensing Section Leader

2. Email Address

Please enter the email address for which you would like to receive communications regarding this request.

Matthew.Cox@aps.com

3. Organization

Arizona Public Service Co.

4. Plant Name

Palo Verde

5. Plant Unit(s): 1,2,3

6. Need By Date

2022-01-21

7. Docket Number(s)

Example: 05000313

05000528, 05000529, and 05000530

8. License Number(s)

Example: DPR-51

NPF-41, NPF-51, and NPF-74

9. NRC Licensing Project Manager

S. LINGAM

10. Statement that the licensee above can no longer meet the work hour controls of 10 CFR 26.205(d) for certain personnel or groups of personnel specified in 10 CFR 26.4(a) because of site specific issues as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency (PHE).

As a result of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) public health emergency (PHE), Arizona Public Service Company (APS) is requesting NRC approval to utilize the alternative work hour controls delineated in the NRC's March 28, 2020 letter (ML20087P237) and November 10, 2020 letter (ML20261H515) for Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station (PVNGS) for the covered workers noted below.

The alternative controls will support maintaining staffing requirements as a result of the recent increase in personnel absence due to COVID-19 positive test results or contact tracing quarantines that cannot be accommodated by the current work hour control requirements of 10 CFR 26.205(d)(1) through (d)(7) to support plant operational safety and security. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has determined that the community transmission rate is high in Maricopa County (where PVNGS is located) and all the surrounding counties in Arizona. The number of cases in Maricopa County has increased with a positivity rate of 36.11% in the last 7 days (through January 15, 2022) and similar increases have been seen in neighboring counties. This increase in cases could impact the station's ability to meet the work hour controls of 10 CFR 26.205(d) in maintaining minimum staffing and ensuring adequate qualified individuals specified in 10 CFR 26.4(a)(1) through (a)(5) are available to complete necessary operations, tests, inspections, and maintenance in a manner that supports nuclear safety and security. APS has determined that implementing the alternative work hour controls for the covered workers would allow PVNGS to proactively take steps to ensure added flexibility is available to facilitate further worker and community protection and ensure safe operation during the period of the exemption.

Exemption from the 10 CFR 26.205(d)(1) through (d)(7) requirements is intended to prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 and to mitigate its effect should PVNGS staffing be significantly impacted. PVNGS intends to use the alternative controls, where necessary, to efficiently perform operation, inspection, maintenance, and testing activities that cannot be performed in accordance with the CDC recommendations related to social distancing, mask usage, worker screening, and limiting close proximity work. The alternative controls will be used to mitigate the staffing impacts should personnel absences challenge required staffing levels. As the US Departments of Homeland Security and Energy have stated in their guidance, the electric grid and nuclear plant operation make up the nation's critical infrastructure, similar to the medical, food, communications, and other critical industries. The PVNGS operation must be

conducted such that the plant is available when needed to support the critical infrastructure.

In accordance with the NRC Letter from H. Nieh to NEI, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Planned Actions Related to the Requirements for Work Hour Controls During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Public Health Emergency, dated March 28, 2020 (ML20087P237) and NRC Letter from H. Nieh to NEI, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission Updated Planned Actions Related to Certain Requirements for Operating and Decommissioning Reactor Licensees During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Public Health Emergency, dated November 10, 2020 (ML20261H515), the following work groups would begin phasing in the site-specific alternative controls, as necessary, to minimize transition issues:

- 10 CFR 26.4(a)(1) Operators
- 10 CFR 26.4(a)(2) Health Physics and Chemistry
- 10 CFR 26.4(a)(3) Fire Team Advisor (Operations fire brigade member)
- 10 CFR 26.4(a)(4) Maintenance
- 10 CFR 26.4(a)(5) Security

11. List of personnel or groups of personnel specified in 10 CFR 26.4(a) for which the licensee will maintain current work hour controls under 10 CFR 26.205(d)(1)-(d)(7).

N/A

12. List and description of alternative controls for the management of fatigue to address site specific issues as a result of the COVID-19 PHE.

PVNGS site-specific COVID-19 PHE fatigue-management controls are consistent with the constraints outlined in the referenced NRC letters and their attachments and enclosures. PVNGS will continue to follow the fatigue management controls, behavioral observation requirements, and self-declaration allowances in accordance with the current work-hour control program and station procedure 01DP-0AP17, Managing Personnel Fatigue. The requirements of 10 CFR 26.33, Behavioral observation; 10 CFR 26.209, Self-declarations; and 10 CFR 26.211, Fatigue assessments, remain in effect during the period of the exemption. These requirements provide reasonable assurance that should personnel become impaired due to fatigue, requirements and processes are in place to identify the impairment through observation by plant staff or by worker self-declaration, and to assess and address instances of impairment through fatigue assessments.

13. Date when the licensee will begin implementing its site-specific COVID-19 PHE fatigue-management controls for personnel specified in 10 CFR 26.4(a)

2022-01-21

14. The time when the licensee will begin implementing its alternative controls for the management of fatigue for personnel (or group of personnel) specified in 10 CFR 26.4(a).

00:00

15. Statement that the licensee's site specific alternative controls for the management of fatigue are consistent with the minimum alternative controls listed below.

PVNGS site-specific COVID-19 PHE fatigue-management controls are consistent with the constraints outlined in the referenced NRC letters, dated March 28, 2020, and November 10, 2020.

16. Does Licensee continue to meet the requirements of 10 CFR 26.33, "Behavioral observation"; 10 CFR 26.209, "Self declarations"; and 26.211, "Fatigue assessments."

Yes

17. The alternative controls include the following, as a minimum:

- 1. Individuals will not work more than 16 work-hours in any 24-hour period and**

- not more than 86 work-hours in any 7-day period, excluding shift turnover;
2. A minimum 10-hour break is provided between successive work periods;
 3. 12-hour shifts are limited to not more than 14 consecutive days;
 4. A minimum of 6-days off are provided in any 30-day period; and
 5. Changes in actions to meet requirements for behavioral observation for both acute and cumulative fatigue and self declaration during the period of the exemption as appropriate due to potential for increased worker fatigue.

Yes

18. Additional Information:

Use the area below to provide any additional information related to your exemption request.

Upon NRC approval, PVNGS would implement the alternative controls described in the referenced NRC letters for the management of fatigue on January 21, 2022, for an initial period of 60 days. Near the end of the 60-day period, if COVID-19 pandemic conditions persist at the site affecting staffing requirements and the efforts to maintain CDC, state, and local recommendations related to social distancing, worker screening, and limiting close-proximity work, as well as the response to the COVID-19 challenges in the immediate community of PVNGS, an additional request may be submitted to extend the 60-day implementation period of the exemption.

Three previous PVNGS exemptions from select requirements of 10 CFR Part 26 due to the potential impact of COVID-19 were approved by the NRC and in effect between April 16, 2020, through June 15, 2020 (ML20107F835), November 2, 2020, through January 1, 2021 (ML20303A015), and January 2, 2021, through March 2, 2021 (ML20357A055).