



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

May 10, 2022

MEMORANDUM TO: Andrea D. Veil, Director
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

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SUBJECT: EXPANSION OF RISK-INFORMED PROCESS FOR
EVALUATIONS (LOW SAFETY SIGNIFICANCE ISSUE
RESOLUTION RECOMMENDATION 5)

Purpose

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of the update that the staff has made to expand the Risk-Informed Process for Evaluation (RIPE) (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) Accession No. ML21006A324). You were informed on June 30, 2021, of the expansion to RIPE that allows licensees that have adopted additional specific risk-informed initiatives, to use the NRC's streamlined review process (ADAMS Accession Package No. ML21180A011). The NRC staff has further expanded RIPE to allow its application to license amendments involving a change to technical specifications (TSs). This expansion has not substantively changed RIPE, and it continues to meet the same process constraints and attributes that were identified in the previous issuances with the exception of excluding TSs.

As you are aware, RIPE is a process for addressing issues of very low safety significance that are within the licensing basis of a plant and require resolution. RIPE continues to leverage previous risk-informed approaches allowing for a more efficient review of submittals in addressing very low safety significant issues, and thereby enabling both the NRC and licensee resources to greater focus on regulatory issues of higher safety significant issues. The expansion of RIPE continues to enable the efficient and predictable review of licensing actions for very low safety significant issues consistent with the NRC's Principles of Good Regulation. Staff will continue outreach with industry and other interested parties to explore other areas where expansion of RIPE may be appropriate.

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Background

Risk-informed and performance-based approaches provide for greater focus on regulatory issues of higher safety significance, enable more efficient use of agency resources, and reduce unnecessary regulatory burden. RIPE establishes a process that leverages current regulations and risk initiatives to allow for a streamlined NRC review process of plant-specific exemption requests or license amendment requests. RIPE is designed for licensees that have a robust probabilistic risk assessment (PRA) and integrated decision-making panel (IDP) to support a risk-informed assessment of the very low safety significant issue from both a quantitative and qualitative standpoint. To implement RIPE, licensees must have adopted:

- Either Technical Specifications Task Force (TSTF) Traveler TSTF-505, “Provide Risk Informed Extended Completion Times – RITSTF [Risk-Informed TSTF] Initiative 4b” (or Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) 06-09, “Risk-Informed Technical Specifications Initiative 4b, Risk Managed Technical Specifications (RMTS) Guidelines”), or TSTF-425, “Relocate Surveillance Frequencies to Licensee Control – RITSTF Initiative 5b (or NEI 04-10, “Risk-Informed Technical Specifications Initiative 5b, Risk-Informed Method for Control of Surveillance Frequencies”); and
- Either Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Section 50.69, “Risk-informed categorization and treatment of structures, systems and components for nuclear power plants,” or a RIPE IDP, as documented in NEI guidance, “NEI Guidelines for the Implementation of the Risk-Informed Process for Evaluations Integrated Decision-Making Panel” (ADAMS Accession No. ML20245E147).

Further Expansion of RIPE

The limitation that excludes license amendments involving changes to TSs has been removed from RIPE.

Path Forward

The new revision of Guidelines for Characterizing the Safety Impact Issues expands the previous safety characterization guidance to accommodate TS revisions in license amendment requests using RIPE. In addition, the associated and supporting Temporary Staff Guidance document was revised to accommodate the review of TS changes for license amendment requests submitted under RIPE.

Licensees choosing to submit RIPE requests should use the NRC’s, “Guidelines for Characterizing the Safety Impact of Issues,” Revision 2 (ADAMS Accession No. ML22088A135) or industry guidance, when available. The NRC staff will review these submittals using the guidance in TSG-DORL-2021-01, Revision 2 (ADAMS Accession No. ML22088A136).

If you have any questions, please contact either Antonios Zoulis at (301) 415-1209 or via e-mail at Antonios.Zoulis@nrc.gov or William Orders at (301) 415-3329 or via e-mail at William.Orders@nrc.gov.

Enclosures:

1. Guidelines for Characterizing the Safety
Impact of Issues, Revision 2
(ADAMS Accession No. ML22088A135)
2. Revised Temporary Staff Guidance
TSG-DORL-2021-01, Revision 2, "Expanded
Risk-Informed Process for Evaluations"
(ADAMS Accession No. ML22088A136).

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ADAMS Accession Nos.:
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Enclosure 1: ML22088A135
Enclosure 2: ML22088A136

***via e-mail**

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