

UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
OFFICE OF NUCLEAR REACTOR REGULATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20555-0001

April 19, 2023

**NRC REGULATORY ISSUE SUMMARY 2023-01
PREPARATION AND SCHEDULING OF OPERATOR LICENSING EXAMINATIONS**

ADDRESSEES

All holders of, or applicants for, a power reactor operating license or construction permit under Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 50, "Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities," except those that have certified that they have permanently ceased operations and permanently removed all fuel from the reactor vessel.

All holders of, or applicants for, a power reactor early site permit or a combined license under 10 CFR Part 52, "Licenses, Certifications, and Approvals for Nuclear Power Plants."

INTENT

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing this regulatory issue summary (RIS) to inform addressees that the NRC staff needs updated information on projected site-specific operator licensing examination schedules and on the estimated number of applicants planning to take operator licensing examinations. This information will help the NRC plan its resources more effectively. This RIS supersedes in its entirety RIS 2022-01, "Preparation and Scheduling of Operator Licensing Examinations," dated February 17, 2022 (Agencywide Documents Access and Management System Accession No. ML21361A026), and requires no action or written response on the part of addressees. Addressee actions to collect and transmit the requested information are strictly voluntary.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Subpart E, "Written Examinations and Operating Tests," of 10 CFR Part 55, "Operators' Licenses," contains the relevant NRC regulations for operator licensing examinations. In particular, 10 CFR 55.40, "Implementation," permits nuclear power reactor facility licensees to prepare, proctor, and grade the written examinations required by 10 CFR 55.41, "Written examination: Operators," and 10 CFR 55.43, "Written examination: Senior operators," subject to certain conditions. Under 10 CFR 55.40, facility licensees may also prepare the NRC-administered operating tests required by 10 CFR 55.45, "Operating tests," subject to certain conditions. Under 10 CFR 55.40(c), facility licensees that choose not to prepare, proctor, and grade their own written examinations and prepare their own operating tests must request, in writing, that the NRC prepare, proctor, and grade the written examinations and operating tests.

In RIS 2022-01, the NRC asked power reactor facility licensees to voluntarily submit proposed schedules of examinations they intended to prepare and to estimate the number of applicants planning to take onsite examinations in calendar years (CYs) 2023–2026. This RIS requests that licensees voluntarily update the examination schedules for CYs 2024–2027.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

The review, approval, administration, and documentation of an examination is a resource-intensive process for the NRC. The NRC uses nearly twice as many resources for an examination if it must also author that examination. To efficiently use these resources, the NRC annually schedules examinations for a minimum of the following 3 years. Therefore, the NRC requests that power reactor facility licensees voluntarily provide proposed examination schedules for CYs 2024–2027, an estimated number of applicants, and whether the licensee or the NRC will prepare the examination. Licensees should be prepared to modify their proposed examination dates to build a level examination schedule that does not result in peak examination periods for the NRC throughout a CY. The NRC regional offices will coordinate with the facility on examination schedule changes. Licensees should also be aware that NRC staff from a different region may conduct their examination based on regional resource considerations.

The NRC requests that each licensee provide the information described below using NRC Form 536, “Operator Licensing Examination Data” (Enclosure). NRC Form 536 is also available on the NRC website at <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML1308/ML13083A179.pdf>.

Proposed Examination Preparation Schedule

Licensees should determine the number of examinations they intend to prepare and the number of examinations they will request the NRC to prepare during CYs 2024–2027. For examinations that facility licensees will prepare, the NRC will assume that each examination includes the written examination and the operating test unless the licensee specifies otherwise. Joint NRC and licensee examination development is permitted and should be coordinated with the applicable NRC regional office. For each desired examination, licensees should determine the expected number of applicants to be tested and enter the proposed primary and alternate dates of the examination. Licensees should choose primary and alternate dates at least 1 month apart to provide the NRC the necessary flexibility to ensure that staff resources will be available. If requesting more than one examination per CY, licensees should fill in the applicable columns, as appropriate, through CY 2027.

Schedule Changes

The NRC has scheduled staff for examinations based on responses to RIS 2022-01. The NRC staff maintains an updated schedule that is linked on the NRC public website at <https://www.nrc.gov/reactors/operator-licensing/examination.html>. Licensees should notify the applicable NRC regional office by letter of any required schedule changes that occur after submission of the RIS response. Failure to do so may result in cancellation or postponement of the examination until sufficient NRC staff resources can be scheduled.

The NRC staff attempts to level the examination schedule by having one examination per region per month. Therefore, for examination requests not already shown on the schedule, licensees should request examination dates such that no other examinations are scheduled in the same region in the same month. If a licensee requests an additional examination when the region has already scheduled an examination that month, then the licensee should expect to communicate with the NRC staff to determine how the examination can be supported, which may include selecting an alternate examination administration date.

VOLUNTARY RESPONSE

The NRC asks addressees that choose to submit the information requested in NRC Form 536 to do so within 30 days of receiving this RIS. Addressees may submit responses electronically to the Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation (NRR) contact and the appropriate region contact listed at the end of this document. Alternatively, addressees may direct responses to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, ATTN: Document Control Desk, Washington, DC 20555-0001, and send a copy of the response to the applicable NRC regional office, ATTN: Operations Branch.

BACKFITTING AND ISSUE FINALITY

This RIS requests the addressees to inform the NRC of the dates and number of operator licensing examinations for CYs 2024–2027 as well as whether the licensee or the NRC will prepare the examinations. This RIS asks the addressees to voluntarily provide information to assist the NRC in the administrative tasks of scheduling and conducting operator licensing examinations. This constitutes information collection and reporting and is not within the purview of the Backfit Rule, in accordance with 10 CFR 50.109, “Backfitting,” or any of the issue finality provisions in 10 CFR Part 52. In addition, this RIS does not require any action or written response from the addressees. Any action on the part of addressees to collect and transmit operator licensing examination data in accordance with the request contained in this RIS is strictly voluntary. For these reasons, the NRC staff did not perform a backfit analysis for this RIS or further address any issue finality criteria in 10 CFR Part 52.

FEDERAL REGISTER NOTIFICATION

The NRC did not publish in the *Federal Register* a notice of opportunity for public comment on this RIS because it concerns an administrative aspect of the regulatory process that involves the voluntary submission of information by addressees.

CONGRESSIONAL REVIEW ACT

This RIS is not a rule as defined in the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 801–808).

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT

This RIS contains voluntary information collections that are subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. § 3501 et seq.). The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved these information collections under approval number 3150-0131. The burden to the public for these information collections is estimated to average 45 minutes per response. Send comments about this information collection to the FOIA, Library, and Information Collections Branch, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by email to Infocollects.Resource@nrc.gov, and to the Desk Officer, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, NEOB-10202 (3150-0131), Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503.

Public Protection Notification

The NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the document requesting or requiring the collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.

CONTACT

Please direct any questions about this matter to the technical contacts listed below.

/RA/

Russell Felts, Director
Division of Reactor Oversight
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Note: NRC generic communications may be found on the NRC public website, <http://www.nrc.gov>, under NRC Library/Document Collections.

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| Technical Contacts: | Lauren Nist, NRR 301-415-6043 Email: lauren.nist@nrc.gov | Jeff Correll, NRR 301-415-2414 Email: jeffrey.correll@nrc.gov |
| | Donald Jackson, RI 610-337-5306 Email: donald.jackson@nrc.gov | Thomas Stephen, RII 404-997-4703 Email: thomas.stephen.@nrc.gov |
| | April Nguyen, RIII 630-829-9587 Email: april.nguyen@nrc.gov | Heather Gepford, RIV 817-200-1156 Email: heather.gepford@nrc.gov |

Enclosure:
NRC Form 536

NRC REGULATORY ISSUE SUMMARY 2023-01, "PREPARATION AND SCHEDULING OF OPERATOR LICENSING EXAMINATIONS," DATE: April 19, 2023


ADAMS Accession No.: ML23025A219

***via email**

EPID No.

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|--------|--------------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| OFFICE | RE:IOLB:DRO* | C:IOLB:DRO* | D:DORL:NRR* | OE* |
| NAME | JCorrell | LNist | BPham | JPeralta |
| DATE | 3/2/23 | 3/2/23 | 3/28/23 | 3/13/23 |
| OFFICE | PM:IOEB:DRO | BC:IOEB:DRO* | D:DRO:NRR | |
| NAME | PClark | LRegner | RFelts | |
| DATE | 4/4/23 | 4/17/23 | 4/19/23 | |

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY

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| NRC FORM 536 (01-2021) | U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  OPERATOR LICENSING EXAMINATION DATA | APPROVED BY OMB: NO. 3150-0131 <small>Estimated burden per response to comply with this voluntary information collection request: 45 minutes. This information collection is used to plan budgets and resources for operator examinations. Send comments regarding burden estimate to the FOIA, Library, and Information Collections Branch (T-6 A10M), U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20565-0001, or by e-mail to InfocollctsResource@nrc.gov, and the OMB reviewer at: OMB Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, (3150-0131), Attn: Desk Officer for the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, 725 17th Street NW, Washington, DC 20603; e-mail: ira_submission@omb.eop.gov. The NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless the document requesting or requiring the collection displays a currently valid OMB control number.</small> | EXPIRES: 01/31/2024 |
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| FACILITY | NRC REGION |
| | |

A. PROPOSED EXAMINATION PREPARATION SCHEDULE

| PROPOSED NUMBER | CY _____ | CY _____ | CY _____ | CY _____ |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ESTIMATED NUMBER OF LICENSEE-PREPARED EXAMINATIONS | | | | |
| ESTIMATED NUMBER OF NRC-PREPARED EXAMINATIONS | | | | |

B. INITIAL OPERATOR LICENSE EXAMINATIONS

| PROPOSED NUMBER | CY _____ | CY _____ | CY _____ | CY _____ |
|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| NUMBER OF REACTOR OPERATORS | | | | |
| NUMBER OF SENIOR REACTOR OPERATORS - INSTANT | | | | |
| NUMBER OF SENIOR REACTOR OPERATORS - UPGRADE | | | | |
| NUMBER OF SENIOR REACTOR OPERATORS - LIMITED | | | | |
| PROPOSED DATES | | | | |
| PRIMARY DATE | | | | |
| ALTERNATE DATE | | | | |