



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

November 24, 1999

MEMORANDUM TO:

Wayne D. Lanning, Director  
Division of Reactor Safety, Region I

Bruce S. Mallett, Director  
Division of Reactor Safety, Region II

John A. Grobe, Director  
Division of Reactor Safety, Region III

Arthur T. Howell, Director  
Division of Reactor Safety, Region IV

FROM:

Bruce A. Boger, Director *BABoger*  
Division of Inspection Program Management  
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

SUBJECT:

SUPPLEMENTARY CHANGES TO REVISION 8 OF NUREG-1021, "OPERATOR LICENSING EXAMINATION STANDARDS FOR POWER REACTORS"

As indicated in SECY-98-266, "Final Rule - Requirements for Initial Operator Licensing Examinations," the NRC's ability to meet the examination demands and schedule needs of facility licensees depends largely on the number of licensees that elect to prepare their own examinations. The licensees' decisions are, in large part, driven by the relative costs and benefits associated with preparing the examinations versus having them prepared by the NRC. Therefore, we must remain receptive to industry feedback and recommendations regarding the examination process and make every effort to reduce the unnecessary regulatory burden of preparing the examinations, while maintaining safety, public confidence, efficiency, and effectiveness.

Since issuing the final rule in April 1999, each Regional Office has conducted an operator licensing workshop to review the changes in Revision 8 of NUREG-1021 and to solicit comments and questions regarding the revised examination process. Members of your staff have also participated in two meetings (on June 3 and November 4, 1999) with the DIPM staff and a Nuclear Energy Institute (NEI) operator licensing focus group established to address Revision 8 implementation issues. As a result of these workshops and meetings, we have identified two potential NUREG-1021 changes that we believe will reduce the unnecessary burden on facility licensees that elect to prepare their own examinations, improve efficiency and effectiveness, and maintain safety and public confidence. The first change would clarify the sampling guidelines for the written examination and eliminate the limits on the number of questions that can be repeated from prior examinations and quizzes. The second change would clarify the guidance regarding the documentation of examination quality issues in the NRC examination reports. Both proposed changes were discussed during our November 2 - 3, 1999, Operator Licensing Branch Chief (OLBC) counterparts meeting and the subsequent meeting with NEI; all attendees agreed, in principle, that the changes would be appropriate. Both changes (plus some additional minor clarifications that address questions raised during the Regional workshops) are reflected in redline/strikeout format in the attached excerpts from Revision 8 of NUREG-1021.

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PDR NUREG.

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The changes involving the documentation of examination quality concerns have already been addressed in a series of emails with your OLBC and will be implemented with a forthcoming report on interaction (ROI). We plan to implement the other changes on a trial basis as soon as Regional comments on the attachment have been addressed and NRR management approval is obtained. During the trial period, a *Federal Register* Notice will be issued to announce the proposed changes and solicit public comments. The changes will be finalized by publishing a supplement to Revision 8 of NUREG-1021 upon review and resolution of the stakeholder comments.

We have already provided an electronic copy of the attachment to your OLBC for review and comment. In order for us to meet the goal of implementing the changes in January 2000 as discussed during the November 4<sup>th</sup> meeting with NEI, please submit your formal comments by close of business on December 17, 1999. Please submit only one set of comments that reflect the region's perspective on the issues.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Robert Gallo on 301-415-1031.

Attachment

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Attachment

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\*See previous concurrence

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