

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

December 16, 1981

ALL POWER REACTOR LICENSEES, APPLICANTS FOR OPERATING LICENSE, NSSS VENDORS,  
REACTOR VENDORS AND ARCHITECT ENGINEERS

Gentlemen:

Subject: Qualifications of Reactor Operators - License Examinations  
(Generic Letter 81-40)

In letters dated September 13, 1979 and March 28, 1980, we informed you of proposed recommendations and revised criteria to be used by the staff in evaluating reactor operator training and licensing. We also informed you that Commission review was continuing in this area and could be expected to result in additional criteria.

As part of our effort, we have conducted an in-depth review of the examination process, including the scope and format of the examination. The review has resulted in several changes to our internal procedures and a revised operator and senior operator written examination.

Both examinations will consist of five categories and have a six-hour time limit imposed. The weight given to theory is reduced from 38% in the operator written and 56% in the senior operator written, to about 25% in each. Consequently, the examination becomes less of a writing marathon than at present. Enclosure 1 presents the scope of the new examinations and how they relate to the current examinations.

In addition to the above, the senior operator written examination is restructured so that a senior operator need not take the operator written portion. Senior operator candidates who elect to sit only for this written examination will not be considered for an operator's license should they fail this examination.

We hope to initiate the administration of the new examinations early in 1982. However, we believe that it is essential to receive public comments prior to implementation. In particular, we would welcome comments on how best to schedule the implementation of this program so as to minimize disruption of ongoing training programs and staffing plans for pending operating license applicants. Also, we believe it is essential to have some type of controlled experiment to assure that the proposed examination will result in well-qualified licensed individuals. We welcome any suggestions regarding these experiments. We have scheduled an all-day meeting at the Holiday Inn, 8200 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, Md. on January 6, 1982 at 9:00 am.

We plan a one-hour presentation and question/answer session. This will be

followed by small roundtable discussions involving OLB examiners and industry, vendor, and members of the public to assure complete understanding of our approach and answer additional questions and address individual concerns. We urge you to have representation of your training department at this meeting.

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Mr. Paul F. Collins, Chief, Operator Licensing Branch, will conduct the meeting. Mr. Collins can be reached on (301)492-4868 if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

Darrell G. Eisenhut, Director  
Division of Licensing

Enclosure:  
Revised examinations  
paper