

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

June 13, 2003

**NRC REGULATORY ISSUE SUMMARY 2003-10
LICENSED OPERATOR REQUALIFICATION TRAINING:
WRITTEN EXAMINATION FREQUENCY**

ADDRESSEES

All holders of operating licenses for nuclear power reactors and test and research reactors, except those who have permanently ceased operations and have certified that fuel has been permanently removed from the reactor vessel.

INTENT

The NRC is issuing this regulatory issue summary (RIS) to clarify the NRC staff's expectations regarding the frequency of licensed operator comprehensive requalification written examinations required per Part 55 of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR Part 55). This RIS requires no action or written response on the part of an addressee.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Three subparagraphs in 10 CFR 55.59 specify the requalification periodicity requirements for licensed operators and for the associated requalification training programs administered by facility licensees.

- Per 10 CFR 55.59(a)(1) each licensed operator must successfully complete a requalification program developed by the facility licensee and approved by the Commission. This program shall be conducted for a continuous period not to exceed 24 months in duration.
- Per 10 CFR 55.59(a)(2) each licensed operator must pass a comprehensive requalification written examination and an annual operating test.
- Per 10 CFR 55.59(c)(1) licensed operator requalification training programs must be conducted for a continuous period not to exceed two years, and upon conclusion must be promptly followed, pursuant to a continuous schedule, by successive requalification programs.

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SUMMARY OF ISSUE

There has been some confusion regarding the required frequency for licensed operator comprehensive requalification written examinations. Two common questions are:

1. Can the comprehensive requalification written examination be administered *after* the completion of a 24-month requalification training program? In other words, can the requalification training program (lectures, simulator training, etc.) be conducted for 24-months, *followed by* the administration of the comprehensive requalification written examination?

The answer to this question is no. The comprehensive requalification written examination is considered a part of each 24-month requalification training program. Therefore, the comprehensive requalification written examination must occur *during* (and, consistent with the definition of comprehensive, preferably at or near the end of) each 24-month requalification training program and *not after* a 24-month program has been completed.

2. Does each licensed operator have to complete a comprehensive requalification written examination at a frequency no greater than 24-months?

The answer to this question is no. Although comprehensive requalification written examinations are generally conducted on 24-month intervals, their timing can be adjusted somewhat near the end of each 24-month requalification program to accommodate outages and other events. For certain individual licensed operators, the adjustments may cause the testing interval between successive comprehensive requalification written examinations to exceed 24 months. This is acceptable, as long as each licensed operator takes a comprehensive requalification written examination during each 24-month requalification program. No request for a rule exemption per 10 CFR 55.11 is required.

For example, suppose a licensed operator was in two consecutive requalification programs. The first program ran from January 1, 1998, to December 31, 1999, and the second program from January 1, 2000, to December 31, 2001. The licensed operator took the comprehensive written examination for the first program on November 15, 1999, and took the comprehensive written examination for the second program on December 12, 2001. Although this individual has exceeded 24 months between comprehensive requalification written examinations, the facility licensee and the individual are still in compliance with the regulations because (1) each successive requalification training program did not exceed 24 months, (2) during each 24-month requalification training program there was a comprehensive requalification written examination, taken by the operator and (3) the requalification programs were conducted on a continuous schedule.

BACKFIT DISCUSSION

This RIS requires no action or written response and, therefore, does not constitute a backfit under 10 CFR 50.109. Consequently, the staff did not perform a backfit analysis.

FEDERAL REGISTER NOTIFICATION

A notice of opportunity for public comment on this RIS was not published in the *Federal Register* because it is informational.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT

This RIS does not require any specific action or written response and, therefore, is not subject to the requirements of the Paperwork Reduction Act.

If you have any questions about this matter, contact the individual listed below.

/RA/

William D. Beckner, Program Director
Operating Reactor Improvements Program
Division of Regulatory Improvement Programs
Office of Nuclear Reactor Regulation

Technical Contact: David S. Muller, NRR
301-415-1412
E-mail: dsm3@nrc.gov

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