

NRC Research and Test Reactor Oversight Activities

Anthony Mendiola, Chief
Research and Test Reactors Oversight Branch
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

2018 TRTR Annual Meeting
October 31, 2018



Presentation Agenda

- PROB Staff Changes
- Oversight Year in Review
 - RTR Inspection Program Year in Review
 - Focus on RTR Safety Culture
 - RTR Operator Licensing Program Year in Review
- Operator Licensing Applications
 - Process Improvements
 - Focus on Application Issues and Medicals
- Operator License Reactivation
- RTR Security Program



Presentation Agenda

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Oversight Branch Staff

Anthony Mendiola, Branch Chief

- Craig Bassett, Reactor Inspector
- Johnny Eads, Reactor Inspector
- **Mike Morlang, Reactor Inspector**
- **Ossy Font, Reactor Inspector**
- John Nguyen, Reactor Examiner
- Paulette Torres, Reactor Examiner
- **Ashley Ferguson, Rx Inspector**
- Michele DeSouza, Reactor Examiner
- Beth Reed, Security Specialist
- **Mike Takacs, Security Inspector**
- **Bill Schuster, Security Inspector**
- Nicole Parker, Licensing Assistant
- **Angela Baxter, Op Lic Assistant**
- **Caroline “Jedie” Randiki, Op Lic Assistant**

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RTR Inspection Program – Year in Review

- Inspection results continue to document that NRC-licensed RTRs are being operated safely and securely
- Violations have significantly decreased
- Overall Inspection observations and findings
 - Repeated findings from previous inspections not an issue
 - Inspection follow-up actions are up – minor issues

RTR Inspection Program – Year in Review

- Severity Level IV Violations (3)
 - NRC Approved Reviewing Official
 - Tech Spec Annual Audit
 - Evacuation Drills not held
- Non Cited Violations (2)
 - Tech Spec Deviations
- Reactive Inspections (1)
 - Safety Conscience Work Environment (SCWE)



RTR Inspection Program – Year in Review

- Future inspection challenges
 - Mo-99 Facilities
 - Physical security and cyber security threat
- Balancing Inspector workloads
 - More inspectors on staff – cross qualifying staff
 - Development of Mo-99 inspection staff

What is Safety Culture?

- The Commission defines Nuclear Safety Culture as the core values and behaviors resulting from a collective commitment by leaders and individuals to emphasize safety over competing goals to ensure protection of people and the environment.



What is the NRC policy on safety culture?

- The expectation that individuals and organizations performing or overseeing regulated activities establish and maintain a positive safety culture commensurate with the safety and security significance of their activities and the nature and complexity of their organizations and functions



Traits of a Healthy Safety Culture

- Leadership Safety Values and Actions
- Work Processes
- Effective Safety Communications
- Problem Identification and Resolution
- Continuous Learning
- Respectful Work Environment
- Personal Accountability
- Environment for Raising Concerns
- Questioning Attitude

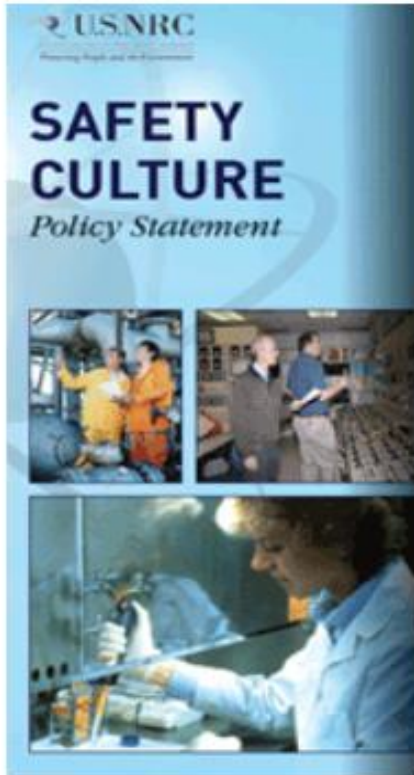


Significance within the RTR community

- Very Significant
- RTRs have minimal direct interface with NRC regulators
 - No resident inspectors – No region based inspectors
 - NRC onsite time is small compared to other regulated facilities
 - Associated staff support for a single facility is very small
- NRC must trust and rely upon all RTR managers and operating staff to demonstrate proper safety culture every day regardless of completing goals



NRC Educational Materials Available for Safety Culture



<https://www.nrc.gov/about-nrc/safety-culture.html>

Operator Licensing Program – Year in Review

- FY 18 RTR Exam Performance remains consistent
 - Administered exams to 75 RO and 25 SRO candidates in FY18
 - **Written Exam Pass rate**
 - 67/75 for Reactor Operators (89%)
 - 11/11 for Senior Reactor Operators (100%)
 - **Operating Exam Pass Rate**
 - 73/75 for Reactor Operators (97%)
 - 25/25 for Senior Reactor Operators (100%)

RTR Operator License Docket Summary

- 375 Active RTR Licenses
 - 193 Reactor Operators
 - 181 Senior Reactor Operators
 - 1 Limited Senior Reactor Operator
- 51% of active licenses have conditions
 - Most of these are corrective lens (84%)
 - Prescribed Medications (13%) Other (3%)

RTR Operator License Docket Management

- Electronic Processing System (RPS-OL)
 - 88 Terminations
 - 26 License Renewals
 - 55 Waivers
 - 146 Amendments (Changes to License)
- Still have issues related to the backlog of operator licensing paperwork.



Guidelines for RTR Op Licensing Applications

- New examination requests and any examination changes as soon as possible in advance
- Initial license applications submitted at least 14 days prior to the exam, sooner if waivers requested
- License renewal applications submitted at least 30 days prior to license expiration date
- Consider the use of EIE and ODD
- Protect against PII disclosures
- Check your mailing addresses

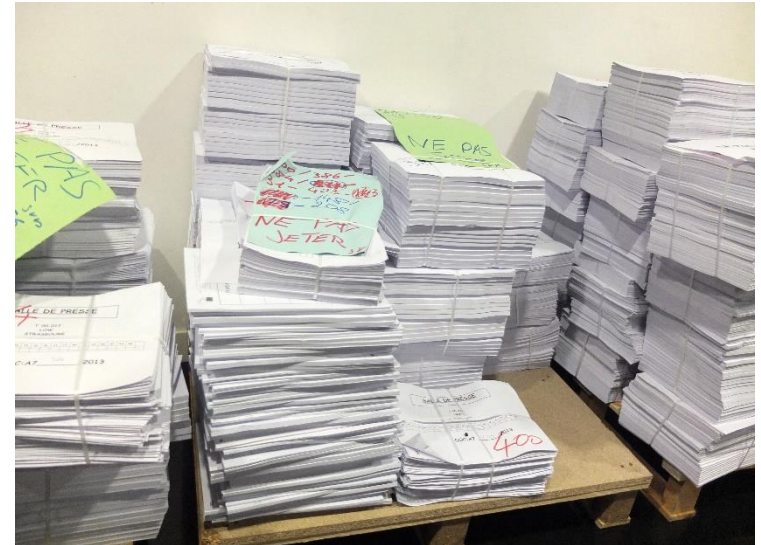
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Operator Licensing Application Process Improvements

- **Standardized Application Forms**
- **Electronic Secure Submittal to the NRC**
- **Operator Digital Docket and RPS-OL**



Standardized Application Forms

- NRC Form 396 and 398 Revisions complete
 - Based on Industry feedback
 - Provided Clarification of instructions
 - Removal of unnecessary fields
 - Available on NRC Forms website
- OMB approved forms which reduce burden on submitter
- Forms standardized to support for digital records



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During a tour of the Tennessee Valley Authority's Browns Ferry Nuclear Plant, NRC Commissioner Jeff Baran (right) and Site Vice President Lang Hughes... [more...](#)

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Next Commission Webcast
[October 29, 2018 at 9:00 a.m.]

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Spotlight

- SONGS Cask Loading Issue
- New Reactor Construction – Vogtle
- Advanced Reactors
- Commission Documents
- Japan Lessons Learned
- New Reactor Construction
- NRC Safety Culture Policy Statement
- Pilgrim Oversight

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S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

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Japan Lessons Learned
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NRC Safety Culture Policy Statement
Pilgrim Oversight
Rulemaking Activity
Seabrook Concrete Degradation
Strategic Plan

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S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

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Operator Licensing Application Process Improvements

- Standardized Application Forms
- **Electronic Secure Submittal to the NRC**
- Operator Digital Docket and RPS-OL



Electronic Secure Submittal to the NRC



- Use of the Electronic Information Exchange (EIE) system
 - Cost-effective, secure, timely delivery mechanism
 - Requires a rudimentary certificate for authentication and authorization (<https://pki.nrc.gov/ecs/apps/eie/dcc-eie-gf.html>)
- Contact the EIE Helpdesk at 1-866-672-7640 or email at Meta_System_Help_Desk.Resource@nrc.gov



How to get an EIE certificate:

www.nrc.gov → “Site Help” → “Electronic Submittals Application” (<https://www.nrc.gov/site-help/e-submittals.html>)

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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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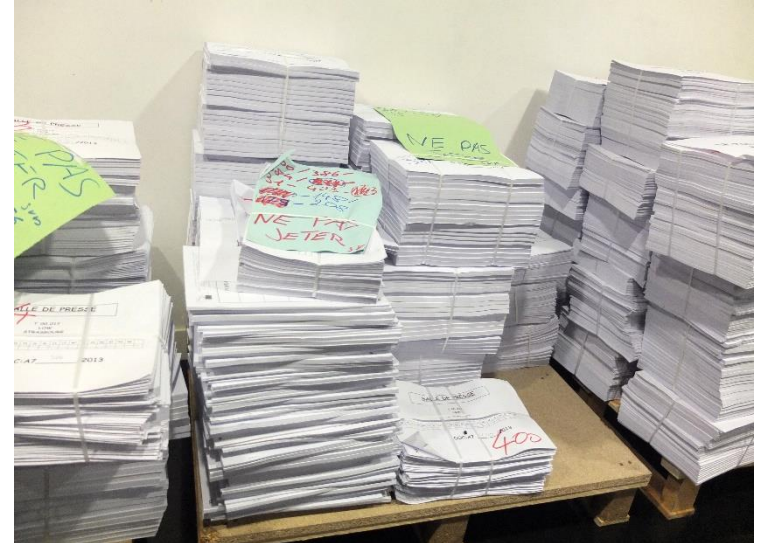
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Operator Licensing Application Process Improvements

- Standardized Application Forms
- Electronic Secure Submittal to the NRC
- Operator Digital Docket and RPS-OL



Operator Digital Docket (ODD)

- Automation of components of the OL process
- Electronic document delivery mechanism
 - cost-effective, secure and timely delivery of documents to NRC
- Data extraction solution for submitted applications
 - Parsed and delivered to the Reactor Program System
 - Reduces the need to manually enter data into RPS-OL
 - saves time
 - minimizes the risk of data entry errors.
- <https://www.nrc.gov/site-help/e-submittals.html>



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Electronic Submittals Application

The Electronic Submittals application allows electronic transmission of information to the NRC pertaining to licensing actions, associated hearings, and other regulatory matters. The application ensures that information sent to the NRC via the Internet is secure and unaltered during transmission. For other communications with the NRC, see our [Contact Us](#) page.

The Electronic Submittals application operates 24 hours daily except when the application must be taken down for scheduled maintenance. System operators will post a notice on the Electronic Submittals home page whenever a scheduled outage is planned.

Users new to the Electronic Submittals application or in need of instructions should select the link below before accessing their applicable system:

- [Getting Started](#)

On this page:

- [Electronic Submission Systems](#)
- [Electronic Submission for Operator Licensing Applications](#)
- [Electronic Submission for Licensing Applications](#)

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The NRC has published Users' Guides for each of its Electronic Submissions Systems. They are available at the following links:

[Adjudicatory Submissions](#)[General Form Submissions](#)[Criminal History Submissions](#)[Electronic Generic Fundamentals Examination Registration and Operator Licensing Application Submission](#)

The operating hours of the Help Desk have changed. The new hours are 9 AM to 6 PM Monday through Friday (except for Federal holidays.)



Improving Record Keeping

- NRC is moving to digital record keeping for operator dockets (Operator Digital Dockets (ODD))
- All medical related correspondence and records are maintained digitally
- Recommend use of EIE for sending and receiving medical information to/from NRC:
 - Security (encryption)
 - Expediency
 - Cost savings (shipping)
 - Skips irradiation!

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Common Application issues

- Common application issues seen this year
 - Unclear or missing application information
 - Weeks of training calculation – 1 week = 40 hours
 - Handwriting/spelling difficulties
 - Mailing address issues – Student addresses
 - Incomplete waiver information
 - Medical information dates



Experience Information on NRC Form 398


20. Power Reactor Operator Training Program							
a. Has the applicant completed the Operator Training Program accredited by the National Nuclear Accrediting Board?						<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
b. Is a "Plant-Referenced Simulator" (As defined in 10 CFR 55.4) used in the Operator Training Program?						<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
21. Training (Since Last Application - See Instructions)							
a. Classroom	From (MM/YYYY)	To (MM/YYYY)	No. of Weeks		From (MM/YYYY)	To (MM/YYYY)	No. of Weeks
1 - Nuclear Power Plant Fundamentals				d. Extra Person on Shift in Control Room			
2 - Plant Systems				e. Time on Shift Above 20% Power			
3 - Plant Procedures				f. Requalification			
b. Simulator				g. Other (Specify below)			
c. SRO Instruction							
22. Significant Control Manipulations							
DESCRIPTION	PLANT	SIMULATOR	DESCRIPTION	PLANT	SIMULATOR		
a.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	f.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
b.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	g.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
c.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	h.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
d.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	i.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
e.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	j.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		



Medical Information on NRC Form 396



PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION - WITHHOLD UNDER 10 CFR 2.390

NRC FORM 396 (01-2018) 10 CFR 55.21, 55.23, 55.25, 55.27, 55.31 55.33, 55.53, 55.57.		U. S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION  CERTIFICATION OF MEDICAL EXAMINATION BY FACILITY LICENSEE		APPROVED BY OMB: NO. 3150-0024 <small>Estimated burden per response to comply with this mandatory collection request: 30 minutes. NRC requires this information to determine that the physical condition and health of operator licensees is such that the applicant would not be expected to cause operational errors endangering the public health and safety. Send comments regarding burden estimate to the Information Services Branch (T-2F43), U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001, or by e-mail to InfoCollects.Resource@nrc.gov, and to the Desk Officer, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, NE08-10202, (3150-0024), Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503. If a means used to impose on information collection does not display a currently valid OMB control number, the NRC may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, the information collection.</small>		EXPIRES: 03/31/2019	
Name of Applicant/Operator (Last Name, First Name, Middle Name)		Applicant/Operator Docket Number		Date of Most Recent Biennial Examination (MM/DD/YYYY)			
Full Address of Applicant/Operator		Facility		Facility Docket Number			
				<input type="checkbox"/> 050- <input type="checkbox"/> 052-			
A. MEDICAL EXAM INFORMATION							
<p>BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE PHYSICAL EXAMINATION, INCLUDING INFORMATION FURNISHED BY THE APPLICANT/ OPERATOR, I CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE NAMED APPLICANT/OPERATOR HAS BEEN FOUND TO MEET THE MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSED OPERATORS AT THIS FACILITY. I ALSO CERTIFY THAT IN REACHING THIS DETERMINATION, THE GUIDANCE CONTAINED IN THE ANSI STANDARD OR AN APPROVED NRC ALTERNATIVE METHOD WAS FOLLOWED AND THAT DOCUMENTATION IS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW BY THE NRC.</p>							
<p>GUIDANCE USED:</p> <p> <input type="checkbox"/> ANSI/ANS 3.4 -- 1983 <input type="checkbox"/> ANSI/ANS 3.4 -- 2013 <input type="checkbox"/> ANSI/ANS 15.4 -- 2007 <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify below) <input type="checkbox"/> ANSI/ANS 3.4 -- 1996 <input type="checkbox"/> ANSI/ANS 15.4 -- 1988 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ANSI/ANS 15.4 -- 2016 </p>							
Typed or Printed Name of Physician		Physician's Certification Date (MM/DD/YYYY)		State		License Number	
<p>BASED ON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE PHYSICIAN, IT IS REQUESTED THAT THE APPLICANT/OPERATOR LICENSE BE CONDITIONED AS FOLLOWS: Check all that apply. PROVIDE EXPLANATION IN BOX BELOW AND ATTACH APPLICABLE SUPPORTING MEDICAL EVIDENCE [letter from the examining physician outlining the condition, treatment and or medication (name, dose, timing & tolerance)] and medical examination/ test results (current blood pressure reading, A1C, TSH levels, etc.).</p>							

Recap of medical information from last year

- Use the ANS 15.4 Standard, “Selection and Training of Personnel for Research Reactors”
 - Various versions (1988, 2007 and 2016)
- Focus on Section 7, “Medical certification and monitoring of licensed personnel”
- Basis for the RTR medical professional assessments and NRC medical review officer recommendations



Basis for Health Requirements



- Physical condition and general health of operators shall be such that they are capable of carrying out licensed activities and perform associated tasks
- For conditions that involve sudden **incapacitation**, these may be accommodated by restricting activities, imposing a medical regime, or requiring a second individual present (no solo) who shall be able to shut down the reactor and summon help.

General Requirements

- Candidates shall demonstrate **stability and capacity** for all of the following:
 - Mental Alertness and Emotional Stability
 - Acuity of Senses and ability of expression
 - Stamina, Range of motion, Dexterity to support assigned duties
- Candidates shall be free of any of the following:
 - Mental or physical impairments
 - Any medical, surgical, or other professional treatment
 - Any condition, habit, or practice that might result in incapacitation.



Disqualifying Conditions

*The presence of any of the following conditions, which have a high probability of sudden or unexpected **incapacitation**, unless adequately compensated, shall disqualify the individual for solo operation.*



Disqualifying Conditions

- Disqualifying conditions include:
 - **Respiratory** (Asthma)
 - Cardiovascular (Heart conditions)
 - **Endocrine, nutritional, metabolic** (Insulin dependent diabetes)
 - Neurological (epilepsy)
 - Mental Condition (Psychological testing, personality disorders, suicide attempts/threats, psychotic disorders, alcohol and drug abuse)
 - **Medication** (Serious prescription drug side effects)
- Some of these are disqualifying for all conditions, unless treated and corrected

Waivers and Limited Approvals

- Waivers – considered when minimum requirements not met, but applicant can demonstrate complete capacity to perform assigned duties. Information required:
 - Medical history and results/findings of physical examinations
 - Practical tests and demonstrations of ability to perform assigned duties
 - **Certification of Level 2** that individual can safely perform duties
- Limited Approval (no solo)
 - 2nd person present when performing certain assigned duties
 - 2nd person can be summoned when assistance needed
- Follow-up medical examinations (6 to 12 Months)

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Regaining Active Operator Status

- Issue encountered at multiple RTR facilities
- Multiple regulations (10 CFR 55), NRC publications, and historical practices involved
- Power reactor practices and simulator use
- License reactivation is distinct from the requalification requirement

10 CFR 55.53 “Conditions of licenses”

- 10 CFR 55.53 (e) If a licensee has not been actively performing the functions of an operator or senior operator, the licensee may not resume activities authorized by a license issued under this part except as permitted by paragraph (f) of this section. To maintain active status, the licensee shall actively perform the functions of an operator or senior operator on a minimum of seven 8-hour or five 12-hour shifts per calendar quarter. For test and research reactors, the licensee shall actively perform the functions of an operator or senior operator for a minimum of four hours per calendar quarter.

10 CFR 55.53 “Conditions of licenses”

- 10 CFR 55.53 (f) If paragraph (e) of this section is not met, before resumption of functions authorized by a license issued under this part, an authorized representative of the facility licensee shall certify the following:
 - (1) That the qualifications and status of the licensee are current and valid; and
 - (2) That the licensee has completed a minimum of 40 hours of shift functions under the direction of an operator or senior operator as appropriate and in the position to which the individual will be assigned. The 40 hours must have included a complete tour of the plant and all required shift turnover procedures. For senior operators limited to fuel handling under paragraph (c) of this section, one shift must have been completed. **For test and research reactors, a minimum of six hours must have been completed.**

10 CFR 55.53 “Conditions of licenses” (cont.)

- 10 CFR 55.53 (h) The licensee shall complete a requalification program as described by 55.59”

Reactivation Scenarios

- A – Single operator is inactive
- B – All operators are inactive, but requalification program requirements are met
- C – All operators are inactive and requalification program requirements are not met

Scenario A Resolution

- 10 CFR 55.53 (f) If paragraph (e) of this section is not met, before resumption of functions authorized by a license issued under this part, an authorized representative of the facility licensee shall certify the following:
 - (1) That the qualifications and status of the licensee are current and valid; and
 - (2) That the licensee has completed a minimum of 40 hours of shift functions under the direction of an operator or senior operator as appropriate and in the position to which the individual will be assigned. The 40 hours must have included a complete tour of the plant and all required shift turnover procedures. For senior operators limited to fuel handling under paragraph (c) of this section, one shift must have been completed. For test and research reactors, a minimum of six hours must have been completed.

Scenario B and C Resolution

- 10 CFR 55.53 does not address a scenario where there is no active licensed operator to supervise an individual for under instruction watch at the facility

Scenario B and C Resolution (cont.)

- Historical Context
- Practices allowed for power reactors
- RTR operational differences
- Very high turnover, small permanent staff

Next steps

- NRC is exploring how to best resolve Scenarios B and C
- Resolution may involve changes to NRC Examiner Standards
- RTR community will be informed prior to any changes

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Security Program Oversight

- Security Inspection Program
 - OIG Audit – No issues
- Physical Security Plan Reviews
- Compensatory Measures Confirmatory Action Letter closures
- Security and Emergency Exercises
- Security Program Updates

Presentation Summary

- RTR Inspection results - facilities continue to be operated safely and securely, violations are down
- SCWE is an agency focus area
- RTR Operator Licensing examination performance has been consistent with slight improvements
- Operator Licensing process improvements implemented
- Applications and Medical paperwork is a focus area
- Operator Licensing reactivation solution under development
- Security Program successfully audited and active

Questions

