



[7590-01-P]

## NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[NRC-2014-0204]

### Quality Assurance Program Description - Design Certification, Early Site Permit and New License Applicants

**AGENCY:** Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

**ACTION:** Standard review plan-final section; issuance.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing a final revision to NUREG-0800, "Standard Review Plan for the Review of Safety Analysis Reports for Nuclear Power Plants: LWR Edition," Section 17.5, "Quality Assurance Program Description – Design Certification, Early Site Permit and New License Applicants."

**DATES:** The effective date of this Standard Review Plan (SRP) update is **[INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE *FEDERAL REGISTER*]**.

**ADDRESSES:** Please refer to Docket ID **NRC-2014-0204** when contacting the NRC about the availability of information regarding this document. You may obtain publicly-available information related to this document using any of the following methods:

- **Federal Rulemaking Web Site:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov> and search for Docket ID **NRC-2014-0204**. Address questions about NRC dockets to Carol Gallagher; telephone: 301-415-3463; e-mail: [Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov](mailto:Carol.Gallagher@nrc.gov). For technical questions, contact the individual listed in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section of this document.

- **NRC’s Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS):**

You may obtain publicly-available documents online in the ADAMS Public Documents collection at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. To begin the search, select “[ADAMS Public Documents](#)” and then select “[Begin Web-based ADAMS Search](#).” For problems with ADAMS, please contact the NRC’s Public Document Room (PDR) reference staff at 1-800-397-4209, 301-415-4737, or by e-mail to [pdr.resource@nrc.gov](mailto:pdr.resource@nrc.gov). The ADAMS accession number for each document referenced (if it available in ADAMS) is provided the first time that a document is referenced. The final revision for Standard Review Plan (SRP) Section 17.5, “Quality Assurance Program Description – Design Certification, Early Site Permit and New License Applicants,” is available in ADAMS under Accession No. ML15037A441.

- **NRC’s PDR:** You may examine and purchase copies of public documents at the NRC’s PDR, Room O1-F21, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

- The NRC posts its issued staff guidance on the NRC’s external Web page (<http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr0800/>).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mark Notich, Office of New Reactors, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; telephone: 301-415-3053; e-mail: [Mark.Notich@nrc.gov](mailto:Mark.Notich@nrc.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

**I. Background.**

On September 24, 2014 (79 FR 57143), the NRC published for public comment the proposed SRP Section 17.5, “Quality Assurance Program Description – Design Certification, Early Site Permit and New License Applicants,” in Chapter 17, “Quality Assurance,” of NUREG-

0800. The staff received a total of nine comments on the draft section. A summary of the comments and the staff's disposition of the comments are available in a separate document, "*Response to Public Comments on Draft Standard Review Plan, Section 17.5, Quality Assurance Program Description – Design Certification, Early Site Permit and New License Applicants*" (ADAMS Accession No. ML15037A303).

## **II. Backfitting and Issue Finality.**

The SRP Section 17.5 provides guidance to the staff for reviewing applications for a construction permit and an operating license under part 50 of Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR), "Domestic Licensing of Production and Utilization Facilities," with respect to compliance with the "Quality Assurance Program Description Design - Certification, Early Site Permit and New License Applicants," 10 CFR 50.65 and the guidance in Nuclear Management and Resources Council 93-01 as approved for use by the NRC in Regulatory Guide 1.160, "Monitoring the Effectiveness of Maintenance at Nuclear Power Plants," SRP Section 17.5 also provides guidance for reviewing an application for a standard design approval, a standard design certification, a combined license, and a manufacturing license under 10 CFR part 52, licenses, Certifications, and Approvals for Nuclear Power Plants," with respect to those same subject matters.

Issuance of this SRP section revision does not constitute backfitting as defined in 10 CFR 50.109 (the Backfit Rule) nor is it inconsistent with the issue finality provisions in 10 CFR part 52. The NRC's position is based upon the following considerations.

1. *The SRP positions would not constitute backfitting, inasmuch as the SRP is internal guidance to NRC staff.*

The SRP provides internal guidance to the NRC staff on how to review an application for NRC regulatory approval in the form of licensing. Changes in internal staff guidance are not matters for which either nuclear power plant applicants or licensees are protected under either the Backfit Rule or the issue finality provisions of 10 CFR part 52.

*2. The NRC staff has no intention to impose the SRP positions on existing licensees either now or in the future.*

The NRC staff does not intend to impose or apply the positions described in the SRP to existing licenses and regulatory approvals. Hence, the issuance of this SRP—even if considered guidance within the purview of the issue finality provisions in 10 CFR part 52—does not need to be evaluated as if it were a backfit or as being inconsistent with issue finality provisions. If, in the future, the NRC staff seeks to impose a position in the SRP on holders of already issued licenses in a manner that does not provide issue finality as described in the applicable issue finality provision, then the staff must make the showing as set forth in the Backfit Rule or address the criteria for avoiding issue finality as described in the applicable issue finality provision.

*3. Backfitting and issue finality do not—with limited exceptions not applicable here—protect current or future applicants.*

Applicants and potential applicants are not, with certain exceptions, protected by either the Backfit Rule or any issue finality provisions under 10 CFR part 52. Neither the Backfit Rule nor the issue finality provisions under 10 CFR part 52—with certain exclusions—were intended to apply to every NRC action that substantially changes the expectations of current and future applicants.

The exceptions to the general principle are applicable whenever an applicant references a 10 CFR part 52 license (e.g., an early site permit) or NRC regulatory approval (e.g., a design certification rule) with specified issue finality provisions. The NRC staff does not, at this time, intend to impose the positions represented in the SRP in a manner that is inconsistent with any issue finality provisions. If, in the future, the staff seeks to impose a position in the SRP section in a manner that does not provide issue finality as described in the applicable issue finality provision, then the staff must address the criteria for avoiding issue finality as described in the applicable issue finality provision.

### **III. Congressional Review Act**

This action is a rule as defined in the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. §§ 801-808). However, the Office of Management and Budget has not found it to be a major rule as defined in the Congressional Review Act.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 28<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2015.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Carolyn Lauron, Acting Chief  
New Reactor Rulemaking and Guidance Branch  
Division of Advanced Reactors and Rulemaking  
Office of New Reactors

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