



Raising the Bar

Duke Energy's Nuclear Training Programs



Training never stops at Duke Energy. It's part of our company's tradition. Our employees undergo training throughout their careers to ensure our nuclear plants continue to safely and efficiently provide power to our customers.

An Industry Leader

In August 1983, operator training programs at Duke Energy's Oconee Nuclear Station were the first ever accredited by the National Nuclear Accrediting Board. Today, more than 140 instructors train the people who operate and maintain Duke Energy's nuclear stations. As nuclear facilities have evolved and operating requirements have become more stringent, our training programs have also grown and include a combination of classroom, control room simulator and on-the-job training. Our history of efficient plant operation reflects the high quality of training that personnel receive.

Training the First Operators

Duke Energy's nuclear training program began in the 1960s when classes started for students who would become the first nuclear operators at Robinson Nuclear Plant. Since that first class put its knowledge to the test when Robinson began operating in 1971, our nuclear fleet's outstanding record has proven Duke Energy to be one of the best in the business.

Committed to Training

Employees in operations, engineering, maintenance, radiation protection and chemistry enter an initial training program when they join Duke Energy. The training lasts from 12 weeks to a year, depending on the job. During the training period, employees become full-time students. They receive classroom instruction as well as hands-on experience where they acquire the knowledge and skills needed to operate and maintain a nuclear plant. Training does not stop, though. Duke Energy employees undergo continuous training throughout their careers.

Becoming a Nuclear Operator

The most extensive training is for the nuclear operators. Prior to beginning a career in operations, applicants are subjected to careful screening and testing. Field operator training begins with approximately four months of classroom training on subjects ranging from trigonometry to reactor theory and core physics. Students then report to their designated Duke Energy nuclear plant. Under the guidance of licensed operators, they operate plant equipment outside of the control room and also perform daily surveillance. During this time, students spend one out of every five weeks in continuing training.

Licensed reactor operator candidates are chosen from a variety of backgrounds including previous experience as a field operator or engineer. Their training lasts about a year and includes control room observation, classroom instruction and training in the control room simulator (a replica of a nuclear plant's control room). Upon completion of his/her training, a control room operator candidate must pass a U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) license exam. In addition to the NRC license, which must be renewed every six years, Duke Energy also retests its operators annually. All operators spend more than 240 hours a year in continuing training.

The National Academy for Nuclear Training

Established in 1985 under the direction of the Institute of Nuclear Power Operators, the National Academy for Nuclear Training coordinates the training efforts of U.S. electric utilities that operate nuclear plants. The academy recognizes nuclear power professionals who complete accredited trainings and evaluates individual plant and utility training programs.

Select operator and technical training programs are accredited through the independent National Nuclear Accrediting Board. When a plant's programs are accredited, the plant becomes a branch of the academy and must renew its accreditation every four years.



To learn more about industry standards and Duke Energy's nuclear fleet, visit the Nuclear Information Center at nuclear.duke-energy.com.