

Report to Sizewell Site Stakeholder Group

September 2014

This report covers the Environment Agency's regulation of Sizewell A & B nuclear sites and related issues for the period between June and August 2014.

Our Regulation

We regulate radioactive waste disposals to the environment. We do this through environmental permits that contain limits and conditions aimed at minimising wastes and protecting the environment. We check compliance with the permits by making regular inspections at Sizewell A & B.

Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Reports (RASCARs) detailing our inspections and any non-compliances found are placed on the Public Register.

We also regulate and control other activities through our environmental permits, including surface water discharges to surrounding water bodies and emissions to air from emergency diesel generators. We are also the joint technical authority, alongside the Office for Nuclear Regulation for the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) regulations that apply to Sizewell B.

New Parent Body for Magnox

On 1 September 2014 NDA formally appointed Cavendish Fluor Partnership (CFP) as the new Parent Body Organisation for Magnox Ltd and Research Sites Restoration Ltd (RSRL).

We have assessed jointly with Office for Nuclear Regulation the suitability and training of incoming Parent Body Organisation staff. We have received a notification of change under our permit for this change and have issued a note of no objection.

Current Regulatory Activities

Sizewell A

There have been no reported environmentally significant events since our last report to the SSG.

We have conducted a site inspection on the subject of training, qualification and experience (SQEP) of key staff. This assessed whether Sizewell A have the right level of resources in place to carry out essential activities to ensure compliance with their environmental permit.

This inspection included the following assessments:

- Interview and assessment of selected staff from the environment and waste teams
- Staff records and content of relevant training courses
- management oversight of staff competence
- Continuing professional development of staff
- The authorisation assessment process for key staff

No non-compliances were identified but a number of recommendations were made to provide a clearer audit trail of the continuing competency assessment process for staff.

Sizewell B

In May, the Environment Agency participated in the test of the off-site emergency plan. We are a Category 1 responder in the unlikely event of an off-site release of radiation from an incident at a nuclear site. We deployed a small team to the Strategic Co-ordination Centre, which was based at the police headquarters in Ipswich as well as exercising our own internal arrangements by opening our own Area Incident Room at our office in Ipswich and opening our Technical and Radiological Monitoring Centre based in our Penrith office.

During the last quarter we have undertaken two inspections at Sizewell B:

In June, an inspection of radioactive gaseous effluent management and discharge reporting processes was completed. No non-compliances were identified during the course of the inspection. During this inspection visit, I also visited the Dry Fuel Store construction site along with colleagues from the local area office in Ipswich in order to gain a better understanding of the construction project and the environmental protection measures being used on the site. We were pleased to see that environmental protection issues were well understood by the construction project and that good environmental management practices were being employed.

In July, I completed an inspection of Sizewell B's radioactive waste management arrangements, which is part of an Environment Agency themed inspection where the same inspection is conducted across all the nuclear sites in England and in Wales. I concluded that Sizewell B has appropriate arrangements in place for the management of waste and employs some good practices.

We also attended some meetings tracking progress with the construction of the Dry Fuel Store at Sizewell B. We will assess relevant parts of the store safety case – any parts relevant to our legal vires, such as radioactive waste management and disposal – in support of the Office for Nuclear Regulation's assessment. We will also assess EdF's demonstration that Best Available Techniques (BAT) has been applied in the design of the store to minimise radioactive wastes as part of our regulatory process once it becomes available in early September.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been necessary at either A and B sites since the last report to the Sizewell Site Stakeholder Group in June 2014.

Discharge Reports

The operators at Sizewell A and B are required to report liquid and gaseous discharges to the environment to us on a regular basis. These reports are placed on the public register and a digest of information is available via the Environment Agency section on the gov.uk website: *What's in your backyard?*

Liquid and gaseous discharges from the Sizewell A site are at levels well within the requirements of its permitted limits and no Quarterly Notification Levels (QNLs) have been exceeded in the period.

Liquid and gaseous discharges from the Sizewell B site are at levels well within the requirements of its permitted limits and no Quarterly Notification Levels (QNLs) have been exceeded in the period.

Other News

Delays to RIFE report this year

The latest copy of the Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) report will be delayed. This report summarises our environmental monitoring programme for the previous year is usually published in October but this year it will be published in December due to delays in the provision of food monitoring data from the Food Standards Agency, which have now been resolved.

New Environment Agency Chairman

Sir Philip Dilley, former Executive Chairman of the consulting group, Arup, has been confirmed as the new Chairman of the Environment Agency. Sir Philip will take over from Lord Chris Smith on 8 September 2014.

DECC White Paper published on Implementing Geological Disposal

In July, the Department for Energy and Climate Change (DECC) published their white paper setting out its revised approach to selecting a site for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) for nuclear waste. The revised approach takes account of lessons learnt from the withdrawal of west Cumbria from the previous process, responses to a call for evidence by UK government and the subsequent public consultation last year.

UK government continues to favour a voluntarism approach based on willingness of communities to participate in the siting process for a geological disposal facility.

We do not have a regulatory role in the decision-making process for identifying and selecting a suitable site for a GDF. Our regulatory role will only start when a developer decides to apply for an environmental permit for intrusive investigation work at a potential site (or sites), for example, to allow drilling of boreholes to investigate the geology. We would also regulate the design, construction and operation of a GDF alongside the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

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Contacts

The Environment Agency's Lead Regulator for the Sizewell A and Sizewell B sites are Andrew Pynn and Stuart Parr respectively. Andrew and Stuart are both Nuclear Regulators and part of the Nuclear Regulation Group (South) which is based at the Environment Agency's Wallingford office in Oxfordshire.

Andrew and Stuart undertake environmental regulation of radioactive substances on nuclear licensed sites in southern England and Wales. They work closely with the local Environment Agency teams in those areas as well as external bodies such as the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

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