

Introduction

This report covers the Environment Agency's (EA's) regulation of Oldbury nuclear power station and related issues.

Radioactive substances regulation

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 also check compliance with the permit by making regular inspections at Oldbury. Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Reports (RASCAR) detailing our inspections and non-compliances found are put on the Public Register.

Staff from the Environment Agency attended the Oldbury Annual Review of Safety and Environmental Performance, and reviewed discharge and environmental monitoring reports against permit requirements. No non-compliances were identified during the quarter.

Enforcement

We have not taken any enforcement actions in the period (May 2014 to July 2014) since the previous Oldbury SSG meeting.

Liquid discharges

Historically Oldbury abstracted water from the River Severn to cool the reactors. Abstraction and discharge of cooling water continued until December 2013 to dilute and mobilise the treated radioactive effluent discharged from the site via a covered culvert to the River Severn.

Bad weather in December 2013 led to damage to the cooling water inlet at the site and abstraction of cooling water had to cease. Oldbury provided an BAT (best available

techniques) assessment, which we accepted, that demonstrated that continuing discharges in the short-term without cooling water while a new discharge line was constructed, would result in a negligible increase in the already small environmental impact of the discharges.

Oldbury's plans to install the new pipeline (the active effluent discharge line, or AEDL) to transfer effluent to the Bristol Channel have been delayed. Construction of the AEDL is now expected to begin before the end of September.

Oldbury provided an updated BAT assessment to the Environment Agency. The assessment showed that doses to the public from liquid effluent discharges would not exceed 0.0019 microsieverts per month. We accepted on this evidence that the delay in installing the AEDL would have no significant effect on the environment or members of the public.

Discharge reports

The operator at Oldbury is required to report liquid and gaseous discharges to the environment on a regular basis. These reports are placed on the public register and a digest of information is available via the Environment Agency website's 'What's in your backyard?' facility^[1].

Reports received from Oldbury indicate that radioactive gaseous discharge rates continue to decline. No clear trend is apparent for liquid effluent discharges to the Severn. Both gaseous and liquid discharges are at levels well within the requirements of its permitted limits. No Quarterly Notification Levels (QNLs) were exceeded in the period.

^[1] <http://apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/default.aspx>

Further information

Further information on our role in regulating the use of radioactive substances and related activities on nuclear licensed sites can be found on the GOV.UK website ^[2].

The Environment Agency's Lead Regulator for the Oldbury site is Peter Reynolds, who is part of the Nuclear Regulation Group (South) team and is based at our Wallingford office.

Address: Environment Agency
Red Kite House
Howbery Park
Wallingford
Oxfordshire
OX10 8BD

Email:
peter.reynolds@environment-agency.gov.uk

Telephone: 01491 828 461

^[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nuclear-regulation-in-the-environment-agency>