

Report to Sizewell Site Stakeholder Group

December 2014

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

Current Regulatory Activities

Sizewell A

We have carried out two site inspections since the last SSG meeting.

An inspection looking at sampling and analysis was carried out on 22-23 September. This focussed on the site's arrangements for the collection, handling and analysis of discharge samples and the subsequent data management process. Advice was provided to the operator to improve their arrangements in line with best practice.

An inspection took place on 20-21 October looking at Radioactive Waste Management Arrangements. This is a common, themed

inspection that has taken place at the majority of nuclear sites in England and Wales. Operators have been assessed against a common methodology and will be subject to a benchmarking exercise to identify best practice and areas for improvements across the industry.

Sizewell B

We carried out an inspection of Sizewell B radioactive waste management practices during the recent re-fuelling outage on 11 November. With so much work taking place during the outage it was a good opportunity to observe how wastes are handled during this time. Overall, practices were good and the standard of house-keeping high. There were some areas for improvement, notably one waste storage area should have had better demarcation and segregation of wastes, but no significant environmental protection issues were identified during the inspection.

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 are assessing 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 which was submitted to us in late 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 its permitted limits

and no Quarterly Notification Levels (QNLs) have been exceeded in the period.

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.

We set QNLs as indicator levels (not limits) so that we can track plant performance throughout the year. The exceedance of a Quarterly Notification Level tells us that something unusual is happening on the plant and we require the operator to demonstrate to us that the Best Available Techniques (BAT) are still being applied to minimise the quantity of waste discharged to the environment.

In October, Sizewell B reported to us that the station had exceeded its QNL for tritium in liquid effluents: 32 TBq¹ of tritium had been discharged during the previous 3-months against a QNL of 30 TBq. There has been no breach of the annual limit for tritium discharges in liquid effluent, which is set at 80 TBq over a 12-month period. Consequently, radiation doses to the environment and the public remain well below statutory limits.

EDF have submitted a summary explanation of this event to us, including a re-assessment of BAT. We are assessing this submission.

Other News

Planning the Future of Water

We want communities, our partners and others with an interest in the water environment to share their views on how best to manage water for life and livelihoods. We've launched consultations on draft flood risk management plans and draft updates to river basin management plans to encourage everyone to have their say.

Flood risk management plans form part of a 6 year planning cycle and describe the risk of flooding from rivers, the sea, surface water, groundwater and reservoirs. They set out how the Environment Agency, Natural Resources Wales, local councils, drainage authorities, highway managers and water companies will work together with communities to manage flood risk. We're consulting on these draft plans from now until 31 January 2015.

¹ 1 terabecquerel (TBq) = 1 x 10¹² becquerels (Bq), noting that 1 Bq is a very small unit of radioactivity.

To contribute on the draft flood risk management plans, the draft plans and further information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-flood-risk-management-plans>

The draft updates to river basin management plans set out long term objectives for the quality of the water environment. They provide evidence on the state of, and pressures on, water bodies, enabling partners to consider the most cost effective and beneficial ways of improving the water environment, debate priorities and coordinate actions across the many organisations that manage water or land. We're consulting on these draft updated plans from now until 10 April 2015.

Further information on this consultation can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/update-to-the-draft-river-basin-management-plans>

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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