

Report to Sizewell Site Stakeholder Group

June 2015

This report covers the Environment Agency's regulation of Sizewell A & B nuclear sites and related issues for the period between March 2015 and May 2015.

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 Health & Safety Executive for the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) regulations that apply to Sizewell B.

Current Regulatory Activities

Sizewell A

In March we met with the Sizewell A Site Director and lead team to discuss their transition into a decommissioning site. This involved reviewing the site's priorities for the coming year and encouraging progress in their evolution from a generating power station to a waste management facility.

We will be attending the site's Annual Review of Safety and the Environment meeting on 21st May. In this forum we will review the site's compliance over the last year, highlight areas for improvement and encourage good practice.

Sizewell B

During this period we conducted routine inspections covering the permitted Combustion Activity (back-up diesel generators) and radioactive liquid effluent system. No non-compliances were recorded during these inspections.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been necessary at Sizewell A or B since the last report to the Sizewell Site Stakeholder Group in March 2015.

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 both Sizewell A and Sizewell B sites were at levels well within permitted limits and no Quarterly Notification Levels (QNLs) were exceeded in the period.

Other News

Environmental Monitoring

We published guidance¹ which sets out our expectations for environmental monitoring for when we design our own independent monitoring programmes and also for when we review an operator's programme. Our guidance sets out how we can target our routine environmental monitoring based on objectives such as to provide reassurance, understand how radionuclides behave in the environment or check that the operators own programme is appropriate. Our programme, based on this guidance, allows us to identify the levels of radioactivity arising from nuclear site permitted discharges and so assess dose to the public to ensure that this remains within statutory limits.

¹ Environment Agency (2010) Radiological Monitoring Technical Guidance Note 2 – Environmental Radiological Monitoring.

Information from our monitoring around nuclear sites is published annually in the Radioactivity in Food and the Environment report (RIFE), in conjunction with Natural Resources Wales, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and Food Standards Agency.

We have reviewed our environmental monitoring programme for each of the nuclear sites in England & Wales to ensure these remain consistent with our guidance. For Sizewell sites we took into account the current operational status of both the existing power stations and made an allowance in case the proposed Sizewell C power station is constructed.

Following this review, we have made some modifications to the programme around Sizewell. Specifically we have:

- Added seaweed into the programme to be consistent with programmes around other power stations, though we recognise that the Suffolk coast is not suited for seaweed growth and that we may not be able to find samples.
- Added a new surface water sampling location close to the power stations sites to give better geographic coverage.
- Moved a sediment sampling location away from the proposed Sizewell C construction site.
- Added grass sampling to the programme to be more consistent with other programmes and help our understanding of how radionuclides move through the environment.
- Changed the analytical techniques used so that they are more appropriate to the operational discharges from the Sizewell power stations.

The changes identified will be introduced into the programme over the coming months. The results of our programme will continue to be published in RIFE.

Overall we are satisfied that, following this review, the forward monitoring programme will be appropriate for Sizewell.

Sizewell Habits Survey 2015

We use information about the habits of local people when assessing the impact of radioactive discharges made around nuclear sites. We use this information to identify the most exposed sections of the community and calculate the total

radiation dose to the most exposed person. We publish these figures in the annual RIFE report (see above).

Between 9 June and 19 June, our contractors will be in the Sizewell area to conduct a habits survey. The results of the survey will be used to ensure that we are identifying the most exposed persons in the area and that we are taking into account changes within activities and populations in the area. We routinely undertake habits surveys around nuclear site to ensure we are using up-to-date information.

Previous habits surveys can be found on our contractor's website:

<http://www.cefas.defra.gov.uk/publications-and-data/scientific-series/environment-reports.aspx>

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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