

Introduction

This report covers the Environment Agency's (EA's) regulation of Oldbury nuclear power station and related issues in the period since the previous Oldbury SSG meeting on 28 October 2015

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 inspections at intervals at Oldbury. Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Reports (RASCAR's) detailing our inspections and listing non-compliances found are put on the Public Register.

No inspections have been carried out at Oldbury by the Environment Agency since the previous SSG meeting.

Storage of IONSIV's

The first incoming IONSIV's from Dungeness A were placed in the Oldbury pond for storage on 13 January and appear to have had no adverse impact on pond conditions. No impact was the expected outcome, based on assessments carried out by Magnox beforehand and checks carried by Oldbury staff on delivery of the flasks containing the IONSIV's.

Going forward, we will continue to review information provided by Oldbury, to confirm that the IONSIV's received from Dungeness A and Sizewell A do not have unexpected effects on pond chemistry that could lead to increased emissions of radioactive substances to the environment.

Permitting

No changes were made to Oldbury's Environmental Permit or CEAR (Compilation of Environment Agency Requirements) during the quarter.

We are reviewing Oldbury's water abstraction and discharge permits. Where needed we will revoke or vary the permits to ensure they provide effectively regulation under current operating conditions, without placing an unnecessary cost or regulatory burden on Oldbury.

We expect the variations to be complete by the end of the first quarter of 2016.

Enforcement

We have not taken any enforcement actions in the period since the previous Oldbury SSG meeting.

Discharge Monitoring

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. Both gaseous and liquid discharges are at level well within the requirements of its permit limits. No Quarterly Notification Levels (QNLs) were exceeded during the quarter October to December 2015.

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

Environmental Monitoring

Oldbury have proposed changes to their environmental monitoring programme, which is carried out in addition to the monitoring of discharges from point sources (ventilation stacks or effluent discharge lines) mentioned in the section of this report headed “Discharge Monitoring”.

We are in the process of reviewing the proposed changes to the programme and will report on our findings at the next SSG meeting.

Looking forward:

During past year Oldbury has made considerable progress in removing both radioactive and non-radioactive hazards from the site and will shortly enter a new operational phase: preparations for care and maintenance.

We are satisfied that management of change arrangements are in place to develop organisational structures and management procedures that will ensure Oldbury continues to meet its permit conditions once preparations for decommissioning start on site.

We will continue to monitor the changes underway at Oldbury to provide assurance that the impact on the environment is minimised.

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.

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