

Report to Sizewell Site Stakeholder Group

June 2016

This report covers the Environment Agency's regulation of Sizewell A & B nuclear sites and related issues for the period between March 2016 and May 2016.

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

We have not carried out any inspections at Sizewell A since the last SSG meeting. We have planned inspections for June and July 2016. The June inspection will consider the management arrangements for ponds decommissioning. The July inspection will be a joint inspection with the Office of Nuclear Regulation on aqueous waste discharge management.

We attended the annual review of safety, security and environment at Sizewell A on 25th May 2016. This was a joint meeting with Magnox and the Office of Nuclear Regulation covering Sizewell A, Dungeness A and Bradwell Nuclear sites.

Environmental Monitoring Programme

It was reported at the last SSG meeting that the environmental monitoring programme around Sizewell had given positive results for Strontium-90 (Sr-90) in marine sediment sampled from Aldeburgh beach, one of 5 beaches sampled in the area. The recorded values were less than 5 Bq per kg of sediment, which is a very small amount of radioactivity. For comparison a banana might contain 30 Bq per kilogram of the radioactive potassium (potassium-40 or K-40) from naturally occurring sources.

At the last meeting it was discussed that Sizewell A are conducting an investigation into possible causes of the positive values. This includes extra monitoring on Aldeburgh beach.

We are continuing to engage with the Operator on this investigation. The extra sampling proposed is continuing as are the investigations outlined at the last SSG meeting.

The results from the analysis of these additional samples are not yet available. It can take many weeks for Sr-90 to be analysed due to the complexity of the analytical technique, which needs to be done in a laboratory. A sample taken from Aldeburgh beach earlier in 2016 has been sent to two laboratories for comparison. Differences in working practices in different laboratories can cause subtle differences in analytical results which become important when working with such low concentrations of Sr-90 in these samples. The results are expected in June 2016.

Once all the data has been received and analysed a full report will be made by Sizewell A. We will continue to update the SSG as information becomes available.

It is important to note that these results are unusual, the levels of radioactivity detected are extremely low and do not represent a hazard to anyone using the beach.

Sizewell B

In March, we undertook in a pre-outage inspection to review the operators' arrangements for maintaining environmental protection standards and compliance with the environmental

permit during Reactor Outage 14 (RO14) which began on the 15th of April.

Routine refuelling outages are periods within the stations operating life that can generate large quantities of waste, both radioactive and non-radioactive due to maintenance and repair activities taking place.

As part of our inspection we viewed the waste handling facilities and in particular temporary storage areas for the generation of waste during the outage, the methods of segregation and disposal routes.

From our visit we concluded that the arrangements in place to manage the production of waste were good and the waste handling areas were clean and tidy in anticipation of the resulting outage waste. We identified no non-compliances from this inspection but will be returning to inspect the station in May during the outage period to ensure these arrangements are withstanding the intensity of the increased workload.

Enforcement

No enforcement action has been necessary at Sizewell A or B since the last report to the Sizewell Site Stakeholder Group in March 2016.

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

New habits survey for Sizewell published.

The Environment Agency and Food Standards Agency task CEFAS to periodically undertake a habits survey of areas surrounding nuclear facilities to understand how people live and work in the area and established how exposed they are to radiation in the environment. The information from this report helps the EA to ensure our radiological monitoring programme around nuclear sites is focused. We report the findings

of our monitoring programme annually in our publication, Radioactivity in Food and the Environment publication (RIFE).

Please use the following link to view the latest Sizewell B habitats survey report.

<https://www.cefas.co.uk/publications/environment/sizewell2015.pdf>

Contacts

The Environment Agency's Lead Regulator for the Sizewell A and Sizewell B sites are Phil Fahey and Stuart Parr respectively. Phil 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.

Phil 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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