

Oldbury Site SSG Report

27th July 2016 meeting

This report covers our regulation of Oldbury Site and related issues over the period since the last Oldbury SSG meeting on 28th April 2016.

Radioactive Substances Regulation

We regulate radioactive waste disposals to deliver the best outcome for the environment. We do this by placing limits and conditions in the environmental permits that help us ensure radioactive waste discharges are minimised and the environment is protected. We carry out regular checks of Oldbury Site's compliance with our regulatory requirements.

Site Inspection

We continue to check compliance with the permit by making inspections at intervals at Oldbury Site. We prepare Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Reports (RASCARs) detailing our inspections and any non-compliances identified. These reports are placed on our public register.

Since the last SSG meeting, we have carried out one site inspection. This acted primarily as an introductory visit to the site to allow the new EA Lead Regulator to familiarise himself with the site and its arrangements but also allowed consideration of the site's preparations for decommissioning. During the inspection we did not identify any non-compliances. However, we provided Magnox with regulatory advice and guidance to make improvements in line with best practice.

In addition to our own inspection activities we routinely review Magnox's reports of events and incidents occurring on site.

During May we received notification from Magnox about an event on site which resulted in the isolation and removal of a number of air filters serving a ventilation and discharge system for gaseous radioactive waste. The event did not result in any increase in discharges and did not have any impact on the environment. We completed our investigation and noted no non-compliances as a result of this event.

We provided regulatory advice and guidance to Magnox.

We remain satisfied, for the Oldbury site, that Magnox achieves a good level of compliance with our regulatory requirements.

Enforcement

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

Intermediate Level Waste (ILW) Strategy

We are continuing our work together with the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) to advise Magnox on regulatory issues at Oldbury Site. We provide advice to Magnox on the potential environmental considerations associated with its plans to progress the site through decommissioning.

Magnox is proposing to consolidate the storage of ILW across the 3 South West Magnox sites (Hinkley Point A, Oldbury and Berkeley). The proposals are for storage of ILW IONSIV cartridges and filters from Oldbury in the Berkeley Interim Storage Facility (ISF). ILW pond skips from Oldbury are proposed by Magnox to be stored in the Hinkley Point A ISF.

We encourage Magnox to explore all such credible options for the management of their waste and to manage their wastes in such a way as to minimise the environmental and other impacts arising from its management.

Discharge Reports

Nuclear sites are required to routinely report to us their liquid and gaseous discharges to the environment. We review these reports for compliance and this work is detailed in a RASCAR, which is placed on our public register.

Reports received from Magnox indicate that radioactive gaseous and liquid discharges from Oldbury site remain low and are well within the requirements of the permit. No Quarterly Notification Levels (QNLs) or Weekly Advisory Levels (WALs) were exceeded.

Overall the levels of gaseous and liquid discharges remain far below the levels when Oldbury was an operating power station.

Environmental Monitoring

We have carried out sampling and analysis under our independent environmental monitoring programme following our review of the programme against our guidanceⁱ.

The monitoring data for the calendar year 2015 will also be published in next year's Radioactivity in Food and the Environment report (RIFE).

The independent monitoring data indicates that the levels of radioactivity found in the environment remain low and close to background levels. The environmental monitoring information should provide the public with further reassurance about the behaviour of radioactivity in the local environment and confirmation that the impact from permitted discharges is not radiologically significant.

Magnox's permit for Oldbury Site includes a requirement to carry out a suitable environmental monitoring programme, to monitor and assess the impact of the site's discharges on the environment. The monitoring data from Magnox's programme continues to indicate the level of radioactivity in the environment is low.

We make the information from both the Magnox and our own environmental monitoring programmes, available on our public register.

Environmental Impacts

We publish our independent monitoring of environment annually in RIFE reports, along with independent monitoring of the food-chain, which is carried out by the Food Standards Agency.

The latest report, "Radioactivity in Food and the Environment 2014" (RIFE 20) was published in October 2015 and is available along with previous reports on the GOV.UK website [ii].

RIFE 20 includes an annual assessment of radiological dose to the group of people in the local population identified as being most exposed to radiation from Oldbury Site. In 2014, the total dose to this group of people was 0.005 milli-sieverts (or less than 0.5% of the relevant public dose limit). This is lower than the figure of 0.010 milli-sieverts attributed for the year 2013. This radiological dose is far below the UK Government Dose limit for members of the public from man-made sources of 1 milli-sievert per year and can be compared to the average dose to the

population in the UK from all sources of radiation, which is around 2.7 milli-sieverts per year.

Other News

Guidance Note on Revocation of Permits

Between February and May 2016, we held a public consultation on our proposed new guidance on "Requirements for Release of Nuclear Sites from Radioactive Substances Regulation".

The proposed new guidance has been produced jointly by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

The consultation was hosted by SEPA on behalf all three environment agencies. Full details and the associated documents can be viewed on the SEPA "Consultation Hub" website:

<https://consultation.sepa.org.uk/operations-portfolio/grr>

We are now considering the responses received to the consultation. Over the next year we will also be using the draft guidance to support our provision of regulatory advice and guidance to nuclear site operators on a trial basis at several nuclear sites.

Further Information

The Environment Agency website has now moved to GOV.UK. 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 [iii].

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
0845 988 1188

www.gov.uk/environment-agency

The Environment Agency's Lead Regulator for Oldbury Site is Rob Green, based in the Nuclear Regulation Group (South), NRG(S).

NRG(S) is responsible for the environmental regulation of radioactive substances on and from nuclear licensed sites in southern England (and in Wales on behalf of Natural Resources Wales). We also work closely with the local Environment Agency teams in Wessex Area in relation to other Environment Agency roles and responsibilities.

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

ⁱⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/radioactivity-in-food-and-the-environment-2014-rife-20>

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

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