

Environment Agency Report to the Hinkley Point Site Stakeholder Group

24th February 2018

Introduction

This report covers the Environment Agency's regulation of Hinkley Point A & B nuclear sites and related issues for the period October 2017 to February 2017.

Radioactive substances 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 these permits by making regular inspections at Hinkley Point A & B.

Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Reports (RASCAR) detailing our inspections and any non-compliances found, are put on the Public Register^[1].

We maintain regular contact with the sites by telephone and e-mail in addition to our formal correspondence and visits to the sites.

Hinkley Point A

Our work at Hinkley Point A (HPA) has been focussed on the following themes and issues in the last four months:

- In January an inspection was carried out on the site's approach to Asset Management. This is part of a cross-industry series of inspections we are conducting on how 'assets' (e.g. tanks, ventilation systems, pipelines, drains, etc.) are managed according to their potential impact to the environment if they degrade or fail, including how their condition is

monitored and how they are inspected and maintained. No non-compliances were identified although a small number of recommendations/ observations were made.

- We are currently discussing with the site its plans for future management of radioactive effluent. Effluent arisings have significantly reduced in terms of radioactivity and volume since the site stopped generating electricity. We expect effluent arisings and the amount released to the environment to be minimised according to Best Available Technique (BAT), which is a key requirement of the environmental permit we issue to the site.
- In February we are conducting a joint waste inspection with the Office for Nuclear Regulation. This will mainly focus on the management of radioactive waste on the site including storage and disposal of such wastes.

Hinkley Point B

Our work at HPB has been focussed on the following themes and issues in the last quarter:

- In October we carried out an inspection on gaseous radwaste systems, particularly focussing on continuous improvement. No non-compliances were identified. We noted some good practices and made some minor recommendations.
- In January we carried out an inspection on the site's approach to Asset Management (see HPA report for explanation of scope). No con-compliances were identified although we made some minor observations/recommendations.

^[1] <https://www.gov.uk/access-the-public-register-for-environmental-information>

- The report on work to verify the operator's process for characterising Low Level Waste (LLW), that is sent offsite for incineration, has been delayed. The conclusion of this work will be reported at the June 2018 SSG meeting rather than the February 2018 meeting as originally planned.

Events and enforcement

No enforcement action has been necessary at Hinkley Point A or Hinkley Point B.

Discharge reports

The operators at Hinkley Point A and B are required to report liquid and gaseous discharges to the environment to us on a regular basis. We assess these to check compliance with the site permits. The site discharge reports and our assessments are placed on the public register.

Liquid and gaseous discharges from Hinkley Point A and B were within the permitted limits and notification levels during this period.

Environmental impact

Nuclear sites are required to carry out a rigorous environmental monitoring programme that requires the operator to monitor and assess the impact of their discharges on the environment.

Additionally, the Environment Agencies and Food Standards Agency carry out independent environmental monitoring around nuclear sites. The results of this work are published in our annual Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) report.

In the RIFE report the Hinkley Point sites are considered together for the purposes of environmental monitoring because the effects of both are on the same area. The report presents a yearly assessment of radiological dose to the group of people in the local population who are most exposed to radiation from the sites. In the latest report for 2016

(RIFE-22)^[2], the total radiation dose to this group of people as a result of discharges and radiation shine from the sites was very low at 0.013 mSv/year. This is about 1-2% of the Government dose limit of 1 mSv/year and an even smaller percentage of the average amount of radiation we all receive from natural sources, which is approximately 2.2 mSv/year.

Geological Disposal

Two consultations^[3] are being undertaken by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, these are on:

1. A proposed policy on how communities should be engaged and represented in a siting process for a geological disposal facility for higher activity radioactive waste in England and Northern Ireland.
2. A draft National Policy Statement (NPS) setting out the need for nationally significant infrastructure projects related to the geological disposal of higher activity radioactive waste in England

Both consultations will run for 12 weeks and will finish on Thursday 19th April 2019.

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 Environment Agency section^[4] of the GOV.UK website.

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/monitoring-radioactivity>

[3] <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/geological-disposal-facility-gdf-for-high-activity-radioactive-waste>

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

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88

The Environment Agency's Lead Regulator for the Hinkley Point A site is Robert MacGregor. The Environment Agency's Lead Regulator for the Hinkley Point B site is Richard Lee.

Robert and Richard are both Nuclear Regulators and part of the national Nuclear Regulation Group (South) which is based at the Environment Agency's Wallingford office in Oxfordshire.

Robert and Richard undertake environmental regulation of radioactive substances on nuclear licensed sites in southern England. They work closely with the local Environment Agency teams in those areas as well as external bodies such as the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

Hinkley Point A:

Dr Rob MacGregor

Telephone: 02030 259746

E-mail: robert.macgregor@environment-agency.gov.uk

Hinkley Point B:

Richard Lee

Telephone: 02030 259741

E-mail: richard.lee@environment-agency.gov.uk

Address for both Robert and Richard:

Nuclear Regulation Group (South)
Environment Agency
Red Kite House
Howbery Park
Wallingford
Oxfordshire
OX10 8BD

customer service line
03708 506 506

incident hotline
0800 80 70 60

floodline
03459 88 11 88

www.gov.uk/environment-agency