

Environment Agency Report to the Hinkley Point Site Stakeholder Group

26th Oct 2018

Introduction

This report covers the Environment Agency's regulation of the Hinkley Point A & B nuclear sites and related issues for the period June 2018 to October 2018.

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 available 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:

- We are currently working with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority on the planned transition from the Cavendish Fluor Partnership in managing Magnox. Amongst other things, we aim to ensure that the new management body has clear lines of environmental accountability and responsibility within the organisation and

that high levels of environmental protection continue to be applied across the fleet.

- A meeting to discuss our comments on Magnox's plans to encapsulate spent ion exchange resin with polymer took place in June (see our last report). Our Nuclear Waste Assessment Team (NWAT) are satisfied with Magnox's response to our comments.
- In September, we attended the Annual, Regional Review of Safety, Security and Environment (ARRoSSE), which covers the south west Magnox sites of HPA, Oldbury and Berkeley. The annual review included visits to key HPA facilities to discuss progress and future work. This was then followed by a formal meeting reviewing the sites' compliance over the last year and the work programme for the next. Our opinion is that Magnox have had good environmental performance over the last year, especially at HPA given the increasing amounts of work being carried out on site.
- We have been discussing with the site its plans for future radioactive effluent treatment. This is to ensure that its proposals reflect regulatory expectations and are robust. The site's permit requires that sources of radioactive effluent are minimised and treated using Best Available Technique so that discharges to the environment are low and the resultant radiological doses are as low as reasonably achievable (ALARA).

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

Hinkley Point B

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

- In July we carried out an inspection of the standby & auxiliary combustion plant (gas turbines, boilers, pumps & generators). No non-compliances were identified; we made recommendations about fuel filling lines for some standby pumps.
- In August we carried out an inspection on the gaseous waste monitoring system and also the off-site District Survey Laboratory. We observed good progress with improving reliability of the gas sampling cubicles. We identified minor non-compliances with the separate permit issued for the laboratory and provided advice and guidance on the necessary improvements.
- In September we carried out an inspection of solid waste management arrangements and facilities. We identified a non-compliance relating to uncharacterised residues in a few drums stored in the disused incinerator building. We provide advice and guidance; the operator has arranged for the waste to be characterised in November.
- We have updated the Compilation of Environment Agency Requirements to enable disposal of some tritiated waste oil.

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.

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^[3] of the GOV.UK website.

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

^[3] <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nuclear-regulation-in-the-environment-agency>

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.

Richard is on secondment for three months from 1st October 2018. During that time Andrew Stone, our Lead Regulator for Dungeness B, will be the primary Environment Agency contact for Hinkley Point B.

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