

Sizewell Sites Stakeholder Group Report

This report covers the Environment Agency's regulation of Sizewell A & Sizewell B nuclear sites and related issues for the period May to September 2022.

Our Regulation

We regulate radioactive waste disposals and discharges to the environment. We do this by placing limits and conditions in environmental permits, which helps us to ensure that radioactive waste discharges are minimised, and that the environment is protected. We carry out a variety of regulatory activities to check for compliance with our regulatory requirements, including site inspection, review of documents and arrangements and any reports of events.

Details of our assessments and any non-compliances identified are included in Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Reports (RASCARs), which are placed on our public register. See the 'further information' section at the end of this document to find out how to request documents from our public register.

We 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 competent authority, alongside the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), for the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) regulations that apply to Sizewell B.

Site regulation

Sizewell A

We held monthly remote meetings with Magnox to discuss work taking place on site that could have an environmental impact. We reviewed the quarterly discharge monitoring and environmental monitoring reports for Sizewell A.

We attended the annual review of safety, security, and the environment (ARoSSE) for Sizewell A, Bradwell and Dungeness A, held at Sizewell. Topics we discussed with Magnox included the actions Magnox will be taking to prepare for the increase in the rate of decommissioning waste generation expected in the next three to five years, and disposal options for the Sizewell ponds skips.

We visited Sizewell site to view the turbine hall and provided advice to Magnox on approaches that they might take to manage the waste that will be generated when the turbine hall is demolished.

Sizewell B

Alongside our inspection programme, we have maintained bi-weekly telephone and regular email contact with EDF, and routine review of returns. In May 2022 we carried out an inspection of liquid effluent management, sampling, and discharge at Sizewell B. It indicated that liquid wastes continue to be appropriately managed and minimised at the site. Sampling arrangements ensure that EDF understands the discharges from the site and there is rigorous and thorough assurance and verification of discharge data. The plant and facilities visited were in good condition.

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Jointly with the ONR, we then carried out an inspection of training and authorisation of individuals. This indicated sufficient levels of environmental resource and resilience, and operational staff demonstrated a good understanding of environmental aspects and permit compliance. Arrangements ensure there is appropriate consultation with authorised Radioactive Waste Advisors (RWA). No non-compliances were identified.

In August, we attended the annual review of safety, security, and the environment (ARoSSE) for Sizewell B, with EDF and the ONR also in attendance. We noted the site's environmental performance and compliance with its permit during 2021/22.

Enforcement

We have not taken any enforcement actions at Sizewell A or Sizewell B in the period since the previous SSG meeting. The operators have remained compliant with the requirements of their permits, or with the requirements and standards of our Regulatory Position Statements, where applicable and in use.

Environmental Permitting

Sizewell A

There have been no changes to Magnox's Sizewell A radioactive substance permit in the period since the previous SSG meeting. No changes are planned in the near future.

Sizewell B

There have been no changes to EDF's Sizewell B permits in the period since the previous SSG meeting. No changes are planned in the near future.

Discharge Reports

The sites' environmental permits require the operators to use BAT to manage their operations and ensure their impacts on the public and wider environment are minimised. Disposal of wastes – as solids, liquids, or gases – can only be made via permitted routes or by transfer to permitted sites. Magnox and EDF 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. We examine these reports and detail our assessment of their performance through RASCARs.

Sizewell A

At Sizewell A Magnox are required to report liquid and gaseous discharges to the environment to us on a quarterly basis, within 30 days of the end of the quarter. Reports received in July 2022, covering the reporting period April to June 2022 showed that all liquid and gaseous discharges from Sizewell A were at levels well within permitted limits.

One discharge (of 145 m³ active effluent) was made via the main radioactive effluent route during the reporting period.

Low volumes of treated effluent were discharged from the sewage treatment plant, which serves both Sizewell A and Sizewell B sites. The plant is managed by Magnox. Effluent is monitored at quarterly intervals for the presence of tritium or caesium-137. No radioactivity above limits of detection was reported in samples taken during the period covered in this report.

Gaseous discharges from Sizewell A are low. Variations in gaseous discharges are slight as the site's reactors are now "breathing" passively. There is no forced flow of air through the reactors and discharges follow a seasonal pattern, tending to increase with warmer or more humid conditions, and decrease when the temperature or humidity drops.

Sizewell B

Liquid and gaseous discharges from Sizewell B have remained within permitted limits for the period April 2022 to July 2022 (inclusive), and returns were submitted to us within the required timescales. 12-month cumulative gaseous discharges of carbon-14 remained less than 66% of the annual limit, with other gaseous discharges less than 21% of respective annual limits. Liquid discharges were in-line with expected levels and remain less than 20% of respective annual limits.

Environmental Monitoring

We carry out sampling and analysis under our independent environmental monitoring programme, in association with the Food Standards Agency. The results of this work are published in our annual Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) report. The Sizewell sites are considered together for the purposes of environmental monitoring.

The monitoring data for the calendar year 2020 was published in RIFE report 26 (RIFE 26) in November 2021, and can be found at:

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

For Sizewell, the total dose for the representative person was 0.017mSv in 2020. This corresponds to less than 1% of the average dose across the UK population of 2.7mSv, received from all sources including from natural radiation and medical sources.

In parallel to this programme, the operators are required to carry out their own programme of environmental monitoring and to submit the results of this programme to us on a periodic basis. This is carried out jointly by Magnox and EDF. We received the latest environmental monitoring report in June, for the quarter January to March 2022. The results continue to be consistent with our independent programme, and do not indicate any concerning results or trends. We make the information from both operator and our own environmental monitoring programmes available on our public register.

Sizewell C

We have launched a 12-week public consultation on our proposed decision to grant three permits relating to the planned Sizewell C nuclear power station. The consultation closes on 25 September 2022. More information can be found at: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/psc/sizewell-c-environmental-permits-information-page/>

Further Information

The Environment Agency's Nuclear Regulation Group (South) (NRG(S)) is responsible for the environmental regulation of radioactive waste disposals on or from nuclear licensed sites in southern England and Wales. We work closely with local Environment Agency teams as well as external bodies such as the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

The Environment Agency's Lead Regulators for the Sizewell A and B sites are Peter Reynolds and Alex Lord, respectively.

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Email nrg.south@environment-agency.gov.uk

Local Office Address Environment Agency, Icen House, Cobham Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP13 9JD

A public register service is available on the GOV.UK website at:

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/index>

Alternatively you can request access to public documents directly by contacting the Customers and Engagement Team in the Wallingford office. Please email:

WTenquiries@environment-agency.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 Environment Agency pages of the GOV.UK website at:

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

Our enforcement and sanctions policy is publicly available on the GOV.UK website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/environment-agency-enforcement-and-sanctions-policy/environment-agency-enforcement-and-sanctions-policy>

UK Health Security Agency has placed guidance on ionising radiation dose comparisons on the GOV.UK website at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ionising-radiation-dose-comparisons>