

# Harwell Site Stakeholder Group

## Environment Agency report

September 2017

**This report covers the Environment Agency's (EA) regulation of the Harwell Nuclear Licensed Site and related issues.**

### Radioactive substances regulation

#### Permitting

Magnox holds two permits under the Environmental Permitting Regulations (EPR) at the Harwell site: one covers the nuclear licensed site (PB3598DX, the 'nuclear' EPR permit); the second covers smaller areas outside the nuclear licensed site boundary (PB3198DJ, the 'non-nuclear' EPR permit).

We have granted a variation to the non-nuclear permit. This will allow soil waste from the old Liquid Effluent Treatment Plant (LETP) within the nuclear site to be transferred to the land once occupied by the site sewage treatment plant (within the non-nuclear permitted area) for characterisation. This will make the throughput and disposal of waste from remediation operations at the LETP more efficient. This application does not affect radioactive discharges from the site.

There have been no changes made to the site's environmental permit covering the nuclear licensed site (EPR/PB3598DX).

#### 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 the permit by making regular inspections at Harwell. For all inspections we issue Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Forms (RASCARs). These reports summarise the inspection we carried out and clearly describe any permit breaches. Copies of RASCARs are publically available on request.

We continue to have regular contact with the site. We keep in touch with progress on actions and recommendations and learn about emerging

issues. We receive and assess a range of monthly reports from the site.

In June we visited we visited the site to determine whether the conditions of permit EPR/PB3598DX are being met with regard to disposals of radioactive gaseous effluent. We visited several different facilities and met with a number of members of staff.

In July we visited to determine whether the conditions of permit EPR/PB3598DX are being met with regard to environmental monitoring arrangements and the disposal of waste from the off-site discharge pipeline. We viewed a selection of environmental monitoring points. We also visited Milton Park to see work being carried out to remove a 1.1 km section of the Harwell offsite discharge pipeline (ODP) and the freshwater inlet pipeline which historically supplied river water to the site for the purpose of cooling operational reactors.

In August we conducted a joint inspection of the site with the Office for Nuclear Regulation, spending 2.5 days at the site to inspect a variety of facilities and waste streams.

We identified no breaches of the environmental permit during these inspections.

#### Incidents and enforcement

The Environment Agency monitors breaches of permit conditions using the Compliance Classification Scheme (CCS). This ranks breaches on a 1-4 scale, with category 1 being the most serious.

Since the last SSG meeting we have had no cause to raise any non-compliances against the site.

## Discharge reports

Through the site's environmental permit, we require that operators use the best available techniques (BAT) to produce the minimum amount of radioactive waste and release as little as possible into the environment. Disposal of wastes – as solids, liquid or gases can only be made via permitted routes or to permitted sites. The site is required to report liquid and gaseous discharges to the environment on a regular basis. We examine these reports and produce a RASCAR for them. Copies of the discharge reports and the RASCARs are publically available on request.

Liquid and gaseous discharges from Harwell continue to be at levels well within permitted limits.

## Environmental impact

The site environmental permit requires the operator to monitor and assess the impact of discharges on the environment. This monitoring demonstrates that the impact of the site on the environment is low.

The Environment Agencies and Food Standards Agency also carry out independent environmental monitoring around nuclear sites. The results of this work are published annually and the latest report "Radioactivity in Food and the Environment 2015" (RIFE 2015) is published on the Food Standards Agency website at:

<http://www.food.gov.uk/science/research/radiologicalresearch/radiosurv/rife>

The RIFE report presents a yearly assessment of radiological dose to individuals in the local population who are most exposed to radiation from each nuclear licensed site. In 2015, the total dose to this 'representative person' as a result of discharges from the Harwell campus was 17 microsieverts ( $\mu\text{Sv}$ ). This is less than 2% of the government public dose limit of 1000  $\mu\text{Sv}/\text{year}$  and less than 1% of the average annual amount of radiation we all receive from natural sources (2700  $\mu\text{Sv}/\text{year}$ ).

## Emergency preparedness

A new External Agencies' Liaison Group has been formed to establish communications across the whole Harwell campus concerning emergency arrangements. We welcome Magnox taking the

lead on this initiative and will continue to be a part of the group with our multi-agency partners.

## Further information

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 register documents from the Customers and Engagement Team in the Wallingford office.

Please email [WTenquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto: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>

customer service line  
03708 506 506

incident hotline  
0800 80 70 60

floodline  
0345 988 1188  
0845 988 1188

[www.gov.uk/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/environment-agency)

The Environment Agency's lead Nuclear Regulator for the Harwell site and its tenants is Rebecca Cleverley. Rebecca is part of the national Nuclear Regulation Group (South) (NRG(S)) which is based at the Environment Agency's Wallingford office in Oxfordshire.

NRG(S) undertakes environmental regulation of radioactive substances on nuclear licensed sites in southern England. It works closely with the local Environment Agency teams in those areas as well as external bodies such as the Office for Nuclear Regulation.

Members of the local Environment Agency team cover the site for general (non-radioactive substances) environment protection matters such as regulation of groundwater, contaminated land, waste management and water abstraction.

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