

Report to Sizewell Site Stakeholder Group

March 2017

This report covers the Environment Agency's regulation of Sizewell A & B nuclear sites and related issues for the period between December 2016 and February 2017.

Our 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 check compliance with the permits by making regular inspections at Sizewell A & B.

Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Reports (RASCARs) detailing our inspections and any non-compliances found are placed on the Public Register.

We also 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 technical authority, alongside the Health & Safety Executive for the Control of Major Accident Hazard (COMAH) regulations that apply to Sizewell B.

Current Regulatory Activities

Sizewell A

We have carried out one inspection visit since the last SSG meeting.

On 6th and 7th December we carried out a joint inspection with the Office of Nuclear Regulation on solid radioactive waste. We also had a catch up meeting before the inspection with the Operator where we discussed various site related issues and how decommissioning is progressing. There were some recommendations but no non-compliances from this inspection.

On 9th February 2017, we attended the joint South East sites meeting on waste strategy and permissioning with Magnox and the Office for Nuclear Regulation. These meetings take place on a regular

basis and have been set up to improve coordination between Magnox and the regulators on topics of interest affecting Sizewell A, Dungeness A and Bradwell.

Environmentally significant equipment not calibrated in required timescale

In December 2016 we were notified by the Operator that 2 balances used for weighing gamma spectrometry samples were identified as being out of calibration.

We found that there were 2 minor breaches of the permit but as there was no environmental impact or concerns we have classed these as category 4 breaches. Our enforcement response was to give advice and guidance to the Operator on this occasion.

Sizewell B

We undertook an inspection looking at the nuclear fuel storage ponds and associated plant systems at the Sizewell B power station to ensure compliance with the site's environmental permit. The ponds are the key barrier to maintain the integrity of the nuclear fuel and to ensure that radioactivity contained within the fuel does not enter the environment.

We saw the fuel storage ponds and also the new Dry Fuel Store (DFS) which is due to undergo active commissioning in early 2017. We looked at the potential discharges (gaseous and liquid) and also the waste created from storing nuclear fuel in the pond.

Overall from our inspection we noted no non-compliances with regard to the management of the nuclear fuel storage ponds at SZB and saw some examples of good practice that demonstrated that the Best Available Techniques are being employed to minimise discharges to the environment from the long term storage of nuclear fuel.

Enforcement

We have taken no enforcement action and noted no non-compliances during the period December 2016 – February 2017 for SZB

SZA received two category 4 breaches relating to the delay in calibration of balances used for characterisation of radioactive waste (see SZA section above).

Discharge Reports

The operators at Sizewell A and B 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.

Liquid and gaseous discharges from both Sizewell A and Sizewell B sites were at levels well within permitted limits and no Quarterly Notification Levels (QNLs) were exceeded in the period.

Other News

Briefing Notes published on Geological Disposal of Radioactive Waste

We have published some briefing notes which summarise our role as environmental regulator in the planning, development and operation of a future geological facility for the disposal of Higher Activity Wastes (HAW).

Another briefing note describes our joint working with the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) for any future geological disposal facility.

Our regulatory role for geological disposal will start when a developer decides to apply for an environmental permit. As part of our regulatory process, we will consult widely and this can include holding public events or you can respond in writing to our consultation. You can also contact us by email at geological.disposal@environment-agency.gov.uk

For further information please follow this link <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/geological-disposal-facility-gdf-for-high-activity-radioactive-waste>.

Contacts

The Environment Agency's Lead Regulator for the Sizewell A and Sizewell B sites are Phil Fahey and Stuart Parr respectively. Phil and Stuart are both Nuclear Regulators and part of the Nuclear Regulation Group (South) which is based at the Environment Agency's Wallingford office in Oxfordshire.

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

Address: Environment Agency
Red Kite House
Howbery Park
Wallingford
Oxfordshire
OX10 8BD

Email:

phillip.fahey@environment-agency.gov.uk

stuart.parr@environment-agency.gov.uk

Telephone: Please note new phone numbers;

Phil Fahey: 020 302 59732

Stuart Parr: 020 302 59771