

enhancing... improving... cleaning... restoring...
changing... tackling... protecting... reducing...
create a better place... influencing... inspiring...
advising... managing... adapting...

Environment Agency Report to Berkeley Site Stakeholder Group

June 2010 – September 2010
For SSG Meeting Thursday 6 October 2010

Radioactive substances

We regulate radioactive waste disposals to the environment. We do this through permits that contain limits and conditions aimed at minimising wastes and protecting the environment. We check compliance with the authorisation by making regular inspections at Berkeley.

Environmental Permitting Regulations, 2010

On 6th April, permits covering radioactive discharges and disposals, became part of the Environmental Permitting Regulations, (EPR). These combine environmental permitting arrangements, which previously came from different regimes, under one set of regulations. As a consequence all extant RSA 93 authorisations, including at the Berkeley site, are now deemed to be environmental permits under EPR. This will not lead to a change in the standards of environmental protection at the site, although some administrative practices are likely to change and become more streamlined.

Site Inspection

We continue to make inspection visits to the Berkeley Site. Since the last SSG meeting we have visited the site 2 times and looked at:

- Arrangements for ensuring best practicable means (BPM) are applied to liquid radioactive waste discharges to minimise wastes generated and the environmental impact from disposals
- Arrangements for the management of higher activity solid radioactive wastes to ensure best available techniques (BAT) is applied to minimise the generation of secondary wastes and discharges of radioactive wastes
- In addition to our own inspection activities, we routinely review the operator's reports of events and incidents occurring on its site.

We prepare Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Reports (RASCARs) detailing our inspections and any non-compliances identified. These are placed on the public register.

Permit Variations

The permit was last varied in March 2010. This variation was covered in my previous report.

The NDA has sought to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its decommissioning programme by the operation of a competition strategy for the running of the site licensed companies.

In order to compete the operational contracts effectively NDA had to decide the most appropriate size for 'site management bundles'.

Three years ago it was believed that it would be most effective to bid the Magnox fleet as two separate entities - currently Magnox North Ltd and Magnox South Ltd. (who currently run Berkeley).

It is now believed that 're-bundling' the Magnox fleet as a single group of ten sites would be most efficient. Our role remains the same as it was when Magnox Electric Ltd was split; to ensure the new operator holds the permit and that adequate resources and arrangements are in place to meet their permit conditions.

We will be reviewing the proposals for the transfer of the permits to Magnox Ltd, the Company combining both Magnox North Ltd and Magnox South Ltd.

Discharge Reports

Nuclear sites are required to routinely report to us their liquid and gaseous discharges to the environment and transfers of radioactive wastes to other sites. We review this information and place these reports on the public register. This information is available in summary form on the Environment

Agency Website facility 'What's in your backyard?'¹.

Environmental Impacts

The site's authorisation contains a specification to carry out an environmental monitoring programme, to monitor and assess the impact of their discharges on the environment. The monitoring data from this programme indicates the radiological impact on the environment is low.

In addition, along with the Food Standards Agency we conduct an independent environmental monitoring programme. Due to their proximity the Berkeley and Oldbury sites are treated together. The results of this programme are published in an annual report, "Radioactivity in Food and the Environment" (RIFE). The RIFE report (RIFE-15) covering the calendar year 2009 is due to be published in October 2010. It will be available to download from our website or also available in hardcopy by request.

Enforcement

Since our last report we have not taken any enforcement action and do not have any actions pending against Magnox South for their operation of the Berkeley Site.

DECC Exemption Order Review

Following consultations in June 2010 and September 2009, as part of Government's review of the exemption order arrangements, DECC is currently consulting on draft proposed legislation².

¹ http://maps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiybyController?ep=mapto pics&lang=_e

² http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/what_we_do/uk_supply/energy_mix/nuclear/radioactivity/decc/legislation/exempt_review/stakeholder/stak eholder.aspx

NDA Strategy II Consultation

The draft NDA Strategy II was made available to the public at the start of September on their website³. It sets out the NDA's long-term objectives and strategic direction. Comments on the draft Strategy can be submitted up to 24 November.

NDA LLW Strategy

The UK Nuclear Industry LLW Strategy has been also been published and is available via the NDA website⁴.

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 our website⁵.

³ www.nda.gov.uk

⁴ <http://www.nda.gov.uk/news/llw-strategy.cfm>

⁵ <http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/epages/eapublications.storefront> Search for keyword 'RSR'

Karl Littlewood is Lead Regulator for Berkeley Site. Karl's contact details are:
Address: Environment Agency, Red Kite House, Howbery Park, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, OX10 8BD
Telephone: 01491 828378.
e-mail: karl.littlewood@environment-agency.gov.uk

Feb 2010 – Jun 2010

