

Introduction

This report covers the Environment Agency's regulation of Oldbury nuclear power station and related issues.

Radioactive substances regulation

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 Oldbury. Radioactive Substances Compliance Assessment Reports (RASCAR) detailing our inspections and non-compliances identified are put on the Public Register.

Our work at Oldbury has been focussed on the following themes and issues in the last quarter:

- Assessment of arrangements regarding the generation, treatment and disposal of radioactive effluent from the site.
- Assessment of site arrangements for conducting the site Environmental Monitoring programme required by the Environment Agency.
- Assessment of a Best Available Technique study for metallic Low Level Waste (LLW).
- Assessment of a Management of Change proposal regarding the Oldbury Human Resources Department.
- Assessment of the Oldbury site Integrated Waste Strategy (IWS) including the Radioactive Waste Management Cases for Intermediate Level Wastes (ILW) on the site.

- Consolidation of the water discharge consents for the site.
- Assessment of proposals to treat oil-water residues from oil cooler cleaning operations.
- Implications of cessation of generation in 2012 on staffing of site in the near-term.
- Assessment of the status and repairs necessary to the manholes in the main cooling water discharge ducts.

Discharge reports

The operator at Oldbury is required to report liquid and gaseous discharges to the environment on a regular basis. These reports are assessed by us and the reports (and our assessments) are placed on the public register. A digest of the discharge information for the site is available via the Environment Agency website- 'What's in your backyard?' facility^[1].

Liquid and gaseous discharges from Oldbury are at levels well within the requirements of its permitted limits. No Quarterly Notification Levels (QNLs) have been exceeded in the period.

Annual review

We have completed the annual review of Magnox Ltd's Environmental Permit for the Oldbury site. The review concluded that the permit is fit for purpose, from both our perspective and that of the operator. This permit review is a legal requirement placed on us.

^[1] <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/37793.aspx>

Environmental impact

In the site permit we specify a rigorous environmental monitoring programme that requires the operator to monitor and assess the impact of their discharges on the environment. The site is required to provide regular reports on the results of this environmental monitoring programme to us. We assess these reports and put them and our assessments of these on the Public Register. The monitoring carried out by the site continues to demonstrate that the impact of the site on the environment is very low.

Additionally, the Environment Agencies and Food Standards Agency 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 2010" (RIFE 2010) has been published on the Environment Agency website^[2].

In the RIFE report, the Oldbury and Berkeley sites are considered together for the purposes of environmental monitoring because the effects of both are on the same area. The RIFE 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 2010, the total dose to this group of people was 0.011 mSv which is a substantial (80%) reduction from 0.058 mSv in 2009. The main reason for this is a reduction in the amount of radiation shine recorded from the Berkeley site. This reduction is due to improvements to the way that direct radiation results are recorded and assessed and not as a result of lower recorded levels of direct radiation from the Berkeley site.

These radiological doses are far below the Government Dose limit of 1 mSv/year and even smaller compared to the average amount of radiation we all receive from natural sources each year which is around 2.2 mSv.

^[2] <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/110353.aspx>

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 website^[3].

The Environment Agency's Lead Regulator for the Oldbury site is now Robert MacGregor. Robert is a Nuclear Regulator and part of the national Nuclear Regulation Group (South) and is based at our Wallingford office.

While his principal office is in Oxfordshire, Robert provides expertise on the environmental regulation of radioactive substances on and from nuclear licensed sites in southern England and Wales. He also acts as the Lead Nuclear Regulator for GE Healthcare's nuclear licensed sites and works with local Environment Agency teams in Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Buckinghamshire and South Wales.

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

Email:

robert.macgregor@environment-agency.gov.uk

Telephone: 01491 828379

^[3] <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/sectors/32517.aspx>