

Quarterly site report for Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment (NRTE) Dounreay

April to June 2011

Foreword

This report is issued as part of the Office for Nuclear Regulation's (ONR) commitment to make information about inspection and regulatory activities relating to Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment available to the public. Reports are distributed quarterly to members of the Dounreay Stakeholders Group and are also available on the ONR website (www.hse.gov.uk/nuclear/llc).

Site inspectors from ONR usually attend the Dounreay Stakeholders Group and will respond to any questions raised there by the members of the group. Any other person wishing to inquire about matters covered by this report should contact the ONR.

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Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment (NRTE), Dounreay

The majority of sites inspected by ONR are licensed by HSE under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965 (as amended). The Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment (NRTE) in Dounreay is not a licensed site although it operates under Authorisation from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR). The site is adjacent to the Dounreay Licenced Site and is regulated by ONR through other legislation as noted below. This report summarises the inspection and regulatory activities associated with the Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment (NRTE) which are co-ordinated with inspections by DNSR.

ONR Site Inspectors made inspection visits to the Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment (NRTE) on the following dates during the quarter: -

20-24 June 2011

The Superintending Inspector for Naval Nuclear Propulsion Programme (NNPP) Inspection also visited the site on the following dates during the quarter:

21-24 June 2011

Routine matters

Inspections on site are undertaken are taken as part of monitoring compliance with:

1. The Health and Safety at Work etc Act (HSWA) 1974 and
2. Regulations made under the HSWA for example the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999 (IRR99), the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001 (REPPPIR) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSW99)

The main purpose of this visit was to attend the annual demonstration exercise Lonestar 2011. In addition progress against the remaining recommendations made during the team inspection on the Ionising Radiations Regulations (IRR) 1999 carried out in March 2010 was undertaken.

Exercise Lonestar 11 demonstrated the agreed objectives and the emergency response showed the operator's ability to cope in such circumstances. Consequently this exercise was considered an adequate demonstration of the emergency arrangements in place at the Vulcan site. However as with all exercises some learning opportunities were identified which have been communicated to the site.

The site has made good progress with the IRR Recommendations and consequently only two remain extant. It is anticipated that these will be completed by the next site visit.

Non-routine matters

Operators are required to have arrangements to respond to non-routine matters and events. ONR Inspectors judge the adequacy of the operator's response including actions taken to implement any necessary improvements.

There were no items of particular note during the current reporting period.

Regulatory activity

Under Health and Safety legislation ONR Site Inspectors, and other HSE Inspectors, may issue enforcement (Crown) notices to secure improvements to safety.

No enforcement (Crown) notices were issued during the quarter.

News from ONR

ONR update

Nick Baldwin was appointed as the interim Chair of ONR with effect from 1 April 2011. He was the chief executive of Powergen until 2002, having joined the company in 1989 and having held a series of board-level and senior management positions. Until recently he was a non-executive director of Scottish and Southern Energy and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. The interim Chair appointment is expected to be for a period of two to three years, pending the successful passage of legislation to establish the ONR on a statutory basis. Nick is Chair of the ONR Board which has corporate responsibility for ensuring that the ONR fulfils the aims set out in the Framework Document, and the objectives and key performance measures agreed under it. This document sets out the framework under which ONR will operate as an agency within the wider HSE and constitutes the authority for the conduct of its operations.

The first meeting of the ONR Board was held on 20 June 2011.

Further information about the ONR Board and a copy of the Framework Document can be found under the Board pages of the ONR website <http://www.hse.gov.uk/nuclear>

Fukushima and the UK nuclear industry

On 12 March 2011, the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, asked Dr Mike Weightman, HM Chief Inspector of Nuclear Installations, to produce a report on the implications for the UK nuclear industry of the accident that took place at the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power station in Japan. The purpose of the report is to identify any lessons to be learnt for the UK. This work will be taken forward in co-operation and co-ordination with national stakeholders and international colleagues. The Secretary of State asked for an interim report by the middle of May 2011, with a final more comprehensive report to be published in September.

ONR established a dedicated project team and technical support team to look at aspects of the Fukushima event that were likely to be important learning lessons.

In addition to the internal team ONR actively sought assistance from a wide range of organisations and issued a broad invitation to anyone able and willing to assist. In order to provide independent technical advice to the Chief Inspector during the production of the interim report, a wide range of stakeholders were asked to nominate an expert to attend an ONR technical Advisory Panel (TAP). The TAP provided valuable input to the interim report and will continue to provide advice as ONR completes the final report.

The interim report, 'Japanese earthquake and tsunami: Implications for the UK Nuclear Industry' was published on 18 May and concludes there is no need to curtail the operations of nuclear plants in the UK but lessons should be learnt. It identifies 25 recommended areas for review - by either industry, the Government or regulators - to determine if sensible and appropriate measures can further improve safety in the UK nuclear industry. These include reviews of the design and layout of UK power plants, emergency response arrangements, dealing with prolonged loss of power supplies and the risks associated with flooding. A 26th recommendation calls for plans to be published by the middle of June detailing how each of the 25 recommendations will be addressed.

The project and technical support team are now working on the final report (Final submissions were requested by 15 June).

Further information, including a copy of the interim report and details of the technical advisory panel is available on the ONR website: www.hse.gov.uk/nuclear/fukushima/