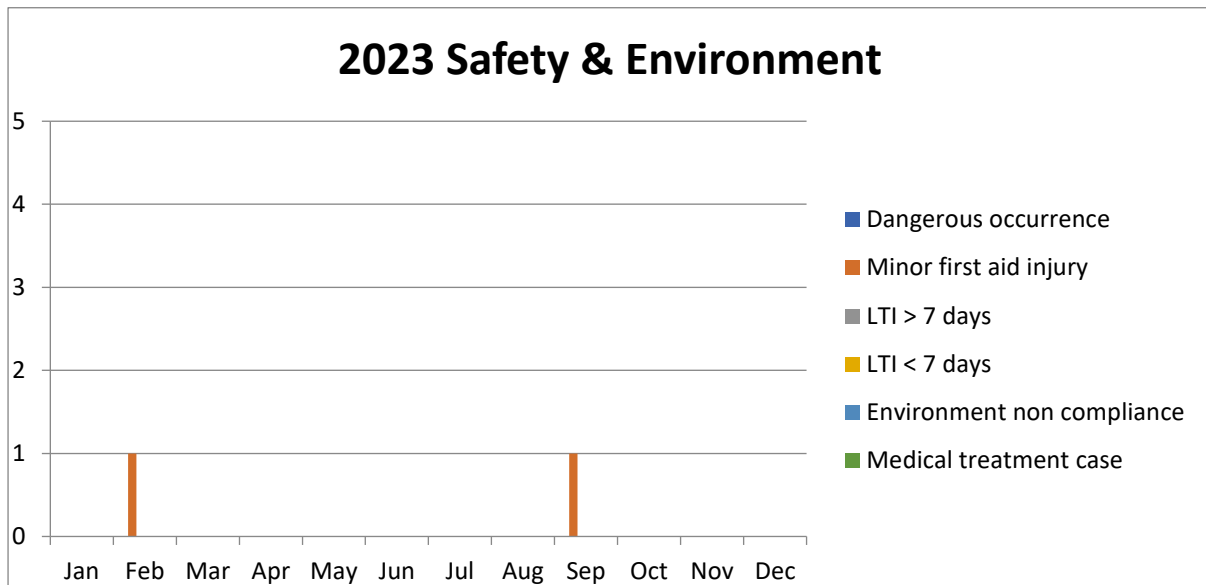


VULCAN NRTE Report to the DSG – January 2024



Health and Safety

There have been no Lost Time Accidents, reportable events or injuries since my last report to the Sub Group in October 2023.

As reported to the DSG in December 2023, we have though had an event where a low voltage cable was damaged during excavation works in the car park; there were no injuries or damage to other equipment. The investigation, whilst identifying a number of learning points, determined that the root cause of the event was due to the cable being installed incorrectly (it was too shallow and not protected). Whilst it is accepted that the excavation could have been completed with the cables 'dead' it is highly unlikely that damaging the cables could have been avoided. We are now assuring ourselves of other works undertaken by this contractor around this time.

Environment

There have been no challenges to the Approval of Arrangements (AoA) limits during this period.

As briefed to the DSG we reported to SEPA a further breach of our discharge consent for the sewage tank. Similar to the event reported in June the flow meter reverted to default settings which was not identified and thus for a period we were not maintaining accurate records of the discharge as required. I must emphasis like before we can prove we did not discharge more than permitted through other information. We have yet to determine why this flow meter reverts to a default mode; the first occurrence we linked to electrical switching, but this was discounted for this occurrence. We are in discussion with the manufacturer and have placed administrative actions as mitigation until we determine the root cause and thus a permanent solution. We are keeping SEPA informed of our progress.

Radioactive Waste Disposal

At the end of November 2023, the annual rolling discharge (expressed as a percentage against the maximum detailed in the SEPA letter of agreement) was:

	Type	Percentage
Gaseous	Noble Gases	0%
	Other radionuclides not specifically listed, taken together.	17.7%
Liquid	Cobalt 60	0.11%
	All other radionuclides not specifically listed, taken together.	0.09%
	Tritium	0.000%
Solid	No waste sent off site	N/A

As briefed at the DSG at the last SEPA inspection, whilst an overall positive rating was provided, two Non-Conformances were raised. Both of these are related to the periodicity of reporting; historically we have reported either 4-week or 5-week periods for a month. SEPA identified that our AofA requires the reporting to be on a calendar month basis. As briefed to SEPA the first results with this slight reporting amendment will be for the January data.

Shore Test Facility Programme

Operations have been continuing, with the current phase of operations due to complete in the next few weeks. The results will provide the submarine enterprise data required to support future submarine operations.

With the current phase nearing completion additional focus and resource is being provided to the commissioning and revalidation of all the additional equipment that will be required for the next phase of operations.

Events

Since the last meeting no events have occurred that required reporting to DNSR or ONR in accordance with their **mandatory** reporting criteria.

Emergency Arrangements

Exercise LONESTAR, the site's annual nuclear emergency response demonstration, was due to be held in November but due to severe weather conditions on the day, and with the consent of DNSR, the demonstration was not conducted as planned. It has been rescheduled for June 2024.

Regulatory Inspections / Audits

Since the last Sub-Group all of the audit reports that we were expecting have been received.

The DNSR inspection on the arrangements for AC14 – Safety Documentation was rated as Adequate; the report states *“No enforcement action was raised as a result of this inspection. Several examples of good practice were identified, for which the staff of Vulcan NRTE should be commended.”*

For the planned ONR inspection that occurred on Tuesday 19 September 2023 the inspection was rated as Green. The report formally closed the open Regulatory Issue (RI), however 1 Regulatory Issue (RI), 1 Recommendation and 2 minor Observations were raised. More pleasingly ONR highlighted 5 instances of Good Practice. Since the report was issued, the Site held a meeting with ONR to present the plan to address the RI, this was accepted by ONR and they announced they will review progress at the next routine visit scheduled for March.

As mentioned in the Radioactive Waste Disposal section SEPA identified 2 non-conformances from the planned inspection on Thursday 21 September 2023, as detailed in the issued report. Site provided a plan for resolution of the findings within the statutory 28 days and are accumulating evidence to demonstrate compliance to SEPA.

Vulcan Decommissioning Programme

The Joint Project Team has continued to investigate the feasibility of the transfer of the decommissioning liability of Vulcan to the NDA. The identified workstreams continue to be progressed, supported as required by Vulcan.

Other

I am pleased to announce that a new member of my team (civil servant) joined last Monday; this was a replacement for an individual who left in August 2023.

As usual Vulcan supported the Remembrance Sunday service in Thurso, including assisting the Deputy Lord Lieutenant with the inspection of the Cadets – I was most impressed by their turnout.

I also attended the Sea Cadet Trafalgar night dinner as a guest, it was a very enjoyable evening, and one which I understand raised a good sum of money for the cadets.

I Walker
Commander Royal Navy
Naval Superintendent Vulcan