

Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR)

Site Report for AWE – Aldermaston and Burghfield

Report for period 1 February - 31 May 2022

Foreword

This report is issued as part of ONR's commitment to make information about inspection and regulatory activities relating to the above site available to the public. Reports are distributed to members for the Local Liaison Committee (LLC) and are also available on the ONR website (<http://www.onr.org.uk/llc/>).

Site inspectors from ONR usually attend LLC meetings where these reports are presented and will respond to any questions raised there. Any person wishing to inquire about matters covered by this report should contact ONR (contact@onr.gov.uk).

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1. Inspections

1.1. Dates of Inspection

The ONR site inspector made inspections on the following dates during the report period 1 February – 31 May:

7-10, 14,15 February

7-10, March

6, 11-14 April

9-12,18,24,30,31 May

2. Routine Matters

2.1. Inspections

Inspections are undertaken as part of the process for monitoring compliance with:

- the conditions attached by ONR to the nuclear site licence granted under the Nuclear Installations Act 1965 (NIA65) (as amended)
- the Energy Act 2013
- the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA74)
- regulations made under HSWA74, for example the Ionising Radiations Regulations 2017 (IRR17) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR99)
- Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

The inspections include monitoring licensee's actions on the site in relation to incidents, operations, maintenance, projects, modifications, safety case changes and any other matters that may affect safety. The licensee is required to make and implement adequate arrangements under the conditions attached to the licence to ensure legal compliance. Inspections seek to judge both the adequacy of these arrangements and their implementation.

In this period, routine inspections of the AWE sites covered the following:

- LC10 – Training
- LC11 - Emergency arrangements
- LC12 - Duly authorised and other suitably qualified and experienced persons
- LC17 – Management systems
- LC27 - Safety mechanisms, devices and circuits
- LC28 – Examination, inspection, maintenance and testing
- LC34 - Leakage and escape of radioactive material and radioactive waste
- LC36 – Organisational capability
- Fire Safety – Regulatory Reform Order 2005
- Conventional (non-nuclear) health and safety

During the reporting period, ONR judged the arrangements made and implemented by the site in response to safety requirements to be generally satisfactory in the areas inspected.

ONR inspections during the period were all rated as adequate. While regulatory issues were raised in the period these were not the result of inspection findings and were part of routine interactions to track on-going work.

Where necessary, ONR will take formal regulatory enforcement action to ensure that appropriate remedial measures are implemented to reasonably practicable timescales.

Members of the public, who would like further information on ONR's inspection activities during the reporting period, can view site Intervention Reports at www.onr.org.uk/intervention-records on our website www.onr.org.uk.

Should you have any queries regarding our inspection activities, please email contact@onr.gov.uk

2.2. Other Work

The site inspectors held periodic (quarterly) meetings with safety representatives across major facilities at both Aldermaston and Burghfield, to support their function of representing employees and receiving information on matters affecting their health, safety and welfare at work.

ONR also attended the LLC meeting on 16 March.

3. Non-Routine Matters

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

Matters and events of particular note during the period were:

- ONR stated in the previous LLC report that outstanding work remaining from the LC 36 Improvement Notices would be overseen via quarterly inspections, the first of which took place in January 2022. A further quarterly inspection took place in April and the progress observed has resulted in quarterly LC36 inspections no longer being required. LC36 matters and scheduled inspections will be overseen via routine business.
- A Prohibition Notice was served on 26 May for a facility on the Aldermaston site. This prohibits entry into a confined area on the ground floor of the Plutonium Technology Centre unless a safe system of work is in place. The Prohibition Notice has been issued to ensure the safety of staff by controlling entry to this area where reduced oxygen levels have been recorded.
- ONR served the Prohibition Notice on AWE following an inspection and other enforcement actions at the facility. This included an Enforcement Letter sent on 30 March. During the inspection ONR were made aware of events at the facility which showed that the arrangements in place to control access to the area with potentially reduced oxygen levels were insufficient. There was no harm to staff as a result of the shortfalls identified, and there has been no uncontrolled release of radioactive material within or outside the facility.
- The depleted oxygen levels in the area have been caused by operational activities. These are currently being investigated by AWE as part of ongoing work to ensure that the risks to staff and the public are as low as reasonably practicable. ONR will engage with AWE to make sure that adequate progress is made to achieve compliance with the notice.
- ONR has issued a letter regarding the partial redemonstration of the November 2021 LC11 Emergency Demonstration Exercise. This had initially received an Amber rating due to shortfalls in situational awareness and mustering arrangements. The redemonstration took place on 12 April and reflected that the original shortfalls were demonstrated to an adequate standard. This was reflected in the subsequent letter.

4. Regulatory Activity

ONR may issue formal documents to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. Under nuclear site licence conditions, ONR issues regulatory documents, which either permit an activity or require some form of action to be taken; these are usually collectively termed ‘Licence Instruments’ (LIs) but can take other forms. In addition, inspectors may take a range of enforcement actions, to include issuing an Enforcement Notice.

The following LIs have been issued during the period:

Burghfield

None

Aldermaston

None

Table 1: Licence Instruments and Enforcement Notices Issued by ONR during this period

Date	Type	Ref No	Description
13/04/22	Letter	ALD71140N	Aldermaston Level 1 Partial Re-demonstration Emergency Exercise
26/05/22	Prohibition Notice	ONR-PN-22-002	Confined Spaces Management at the AWE Nuclear Licensed Sites.

5. News from ONR

For the latest news and information from the Office for Nuclear Regulation, please read and subscribe to our regular email newsletter 'ONR News' at www.onr.org.uk/onrnews

6. Contacts

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