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| ONR Site Report  AWE – Aldermaston and Burghfield |



ONR Site Report

AWE - Aldermaston and Burghfield

Report for period: 1 February to 30 September 2023

Authored by: Nominated Site Inspector

Approved by: Head of Weapons Regulation

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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 AWE Local Liaison Committee and are also available on the ONR website (<http://www.onr.org.uk/llc/>).

Site inspectors from ONR usually attend AWE Local Liaison Committee 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.

The period covered by this report is in response to an agreement at the last AWE Local Liaison Committee to move to a six-monthly schedule starting November 2023. Future reports will cover the period 1 April to 30 September and 1 October to 31 March to accommodate this revised schedule.

Contents

[1. Inspections 4](#_Toc124509190)

[2. Routine Matters 5](#_Toc124509191)

[3. Non-Routine Matters 8](#_Toc124509192)

[4. Regulatory Activity 9](#_Toc124509193)

[5. News from ONR 10](#_Toc124509194)

[6. Contacts 10](#_Toc124509195)

# Inspections

## Date(s) of Inspection

ONR site inspectors made inspections on the following dates during the report period 1 February to 30 September 2023:

6to 9 February

9 March

13 – 16 March

29 March

3 – 6 April

9 – 11 May

12 – 16 June

10 -13 July

24 – 26 July

7 – 9 August

4 – 8 September

19 September

# Routine Matters

## 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 etc Act 1974 (HSWA74); and
* regulations made under HSWA74, for example the Ionising Radiations Regulations 2017 (IRR17) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR99).

The inspections entail monitoring the 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 in order to ensure legal compliance. Inspections seek to judge both the adequacy of these arrangements and their implementation.

* examination, maintenance, inspection and testing;
* management of operations including control and supervision;
* staff training, qualifications and experience;
* modifications to plant, equipment and safety cases;
* plant construction and/or commissioning;
* incidents on the site;
* radiological protection;
* radioactive waste management;
* decommissioning;
* organisational changes;
* quality assurance and records;
* supply chain management and inteligent customer capability; and
* conventional (non-nuclear) health and safety.

In the reporting period ONR inspectors attended the AWE Annual Review of Environment and Safety [AROES]. This provided the opportunity to discuss AWE’s safety and environmental performance over the previous year, the identification and implementation of learning from operational experience, and the strategic focus for the coming years. Overall, ONR was content that AWE’s assessment of their performance and their strategic focus aligned with ONR’s assessment and expectations.

ONR and AWE have commenced a joint review into the circumstances that led to the Prohibition Notice served following shortfalls identified in AWE’s confined space arrangements. The intent of this review is to understand the communications that took place between ONR and AWE and, the information available providing the basis of decisions made within the various governance forums.

ONR has also undertaken further activities to assess AWE’s progress in delivering the safety improvements necessary to support the AWE Aldermaston site moving to a routine level of regulatory attention. The outcomes from those activities continue to be encouraging with the site having made significant improvements over the last 12 months. There remain a number of areas that will continue to be subject to regulatory focus over the next 12 months. These areas are:

* Organisational Learning.
* Capacity and capability.
* Effective internal assurance [at all levels within the organisation].
* Supply chain management and demonstration of intelligent customer capability.
* Conventional health and safety (specifically construction safety).

In addition, ONR has held a further ‘Holding to Account’ meeting with the Managing Director and key members of his executive team to reinforce the regulatory expectations regarding the start of high hazard decommissioning activities. AWE has yet to develop and implement a viable plan for the programme of work to address the risk presented by the ageing infrastructure on site. This will remain a key area of regulatory focus for the foreseeable future.

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](http://www.onr.org.uk./intervention-records).Should you have any queries regarding our inspection activities, please email [contact@onr.gov.uk](mailto:contact@onr.gov.uk).

## Other Work

ONR continues to undertake a series of activities in support of the oversight and permissioning of significant programmes of work. The focus this reporting period includes:

* completion of construction and the preparations for commencement of commissioning activities within the new warhead facility [Burghfield].
* preparations for construction and commissioning of the new nuclear material store [Aldermaston].
* progressing decommissioning activities on the Aldermaston site.
* progressing facility improvement and capability up-lift projects on the Aldermaston site.

In addition, ONR continues to be engaged in the assessment of proposals for organisational change. These include:

* changes to the arrangements for governance of control of work and assuring nuclear safety.
* changes to the provision of engineering resource to deliver the operational programme more effectively and efficiently.

ONR site inspectors continue to hold periodic meetings with the safety representatives within their operational areas, to support their function of representing employees and receiving information on matters affecting their health, safety, and welfare at work.

# 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.

Events of significant note during the period were as follows:

* On the 6 July, AWE notified ONR that an incident had occurred on the Hub Construction Enclave resulting in significant injuries to two workers. One of these workers was airlifted to hospital where he subsequently died from his injuries. In accordance with the ‘death at work protocol’ Thames Valley Police (TVP) are currently the lead agency for the ongoing investigation with ONR providing technical support and advice. ONR is not in a position to provide any further information at this stage.
* On 30 August, AWE notified ONR of an attempt to conduct movement of fissile material by an operator whose training had expired. The discrepancy was identified before any material movement took place and the operator’s access to the system has been restricted pending recertification. All fissile movements were placed into abeyance until a full audit of operator training and certification had been conducted. ONR consider that the safety arrangements were sufficiently robust to identify the shortfall and prevent the material movement from taking place. ONR is satisfied that the checks conducted in response by AWE provide the assurance required for the continued safe movement of fissile material. ONR will not be taking any further formal action.

# 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 Notices have been issued during the period:

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Type | Ref. No. | Description |
| 12/07/23 | Legal Form LP12 | 2023/52343 | Notice to Leave Undisturbed. Plant and equipment of direct relevance to the investigation into the fatality on site. |
| 31/07/23 | Legal Form LP12 | 2023/38054 | Notice to Leave Undisturbed. Additional plant and equipment to support the investigation into the fatality on site. |

Reports detailing the above regulatory decisions can be found on the ONR website at <http://www.onr.org.uk/pars/>.

# News from ONR

For the latest news and information from ONR, please read and subscribe to our regular email newsletter ‘ONR News’ at [www.onr.org.uk/onrnews](http://www.onr.org.uk/onrnews).

# Contacts

Office for Nuclear Regulation

Redgrave Court

Merton Road

Bootle

Merseyside

L20 7HS

website: [www.onr.org.uk](http://www.onr.org.uk)

email: [Contact@onr.gov.uk](mailto:Contact@onr.gov.uk)

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