



Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) Quarterly Site Report for GE Healthcare Ltd, Grove Centre, Amersham

Report for period 1 April – 30 June 2014

Foreword

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

Site inspectors from ONR usually attend the Grove Centre Local Liaison Committee meetings and will respond to any questions raised there. Any person wishing to inquire about matters covered by this report should contact ONR.

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1 INSPECTIONS

1.1 Dates of inspection

The ONR site inspector and other ONR inspectors made inspections on the following dates during the quarter:

24-25 June 2014

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); and
- regulations made under HSWA74, for example the Ionising Radiations Regulations 1999 (IRR99) and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR99).

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

In this period, on 24 & 25 June 2014, ONR carried out a routine inspection of GE Healthcare's compliance with Licence Conditions 32 to 35 in relation to its arrangements for radioactive waste and decommissioning activities in the Senior Caves, other facilities undergoing decommissioning and the Materials Handling Centre (MHC).

We observed high standards of containment and ventilation, radiation protection measures including air-fed suits, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and monitoring, housekeeping, organisation of materials, lay-down areas, information for operators, and engineering of installations for decommissioning. Discussions with supervisors and operators gave us considerable confidence that operations were being well planned, controlled and executed. We observed similar high standards in the MHC which appeared to be a very well organised, tidy and effective facility.

In general, ONR judged the arrangements made and implemented by the site in response to safety requirements to be adequate in the areas inspected. However, where improvements were considered necessary, the licensee made satisfactory commitments to address the issues, and the site inspector will monitor progress during future visits. Where necessary, ONR will take formal regulatory enforcement action to ensure that appropriate remedial measures are implemented to reasonably practicable timescales.

2.2 Other work

On 30 April 2014, GE Healthcare advised ONR that it had reviewed its previous assessment under the Radiation (Emergency Preparedness and Public Information) Regulations 2001 and concluded that there remained no potential for a reasonably foreseeable radiation emergency arising from operations at the Grove Centre.

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.

ONR held discussions with GE Healthcare on 7 April & 7 May 2014 on the licensee's proposals to make changes to its groundwater monitoring programme. ONR noted that the Environment Agency had reviewed the proposal and was content with it. ONR was content for the changes to proceed on a temporary basis, but required the submission of a more detailed proposal before a permanent change to the programme could be agreed.

On 15 April 2014 GE Healthcare provided safety reports to ONR in support of its intention to commission its Waste Posting Facility and commence decommissioning of the redundant Senior Caves facility, and sought ONR's agreement to this. ONR considered this, noting (i) that all earlier commissioning activities associated with the installation of the Waste Posting Facility (WPF) had been successfully completed; (ii) the level of internal scrutiny the case had been subject to prior to ONR's review; and (iii) that ONR's recent inspection of the facility had not given rise to any issue that in our view should prevent GE Healthcare from proceeding to commence with waste removal. On 6 May 2014 ONR confirmed that it had no objection to the proposal and would not be imposing any further regulatory hold point.

ONR was promptly informed of relevant events on the licensed site during this period, including:

- On 10 June 2014, GE Healthcare reported that during decommissioning of legacy manufacturing facilities at the Grove Centre, five very small (< 1 mg) sealed plutonium radioactive sources were found which had not been previously reported under European Safeguards legislation. The licensee explained that the sources had been manufactured at the Grove Centre several years ago but had been missed when current reporting requirements came into force. Due to their location in an enclosure, the sources did not become visible until the facility was decommissioned. GE Healthcare provided ONR Safeguards with further details, including photographs, and liaised with the European Commission and ONR on the completion of the necessary forms to declare the find. ONR Safeguards commented that small finds of nuclear material in legacy facilities are not unusual, and in this case the very small size of the sources did not meet ONR's reporting threshold. GE Healthcare has stated that the sources have been identified as waste and are currently being stored in a suitable location on site in an appropriate container until a disposal route becomes available.
- On 26 June 2014, GE Healthcare reported that during receipt checks of a standard shipment of molybdenum-99 from an overseas supplier, it was noted that the container lid had not been bolted by the supplier securely prior to transportation. The licensee confirmed that the container security seals were intact indicating the inner stock container had not been tampered with during shipment. The container was checked for dose rate and contamination, and these were found to be satisfactory. The overseas supplier has been contacted and is investigating the event.

4 REGULATORY ACTIVITY

No LIs or Enforcement Notices were issued during the period. Reports detailing regulatory decisions can be found on the ONR website at <http://www.onr.org.uk/pars/>.

5 NEWS FROM ONR

Insight into ONR's work as an independent regulator of the nuclear industry can be found in ONR's Quarterly News. The online publication (<http://www.onr.org.uk/onr-quarterly-report.htm>) reports on the key themes and developments in each of ONR's regulatory programmes and provides an update about the ongoing changes at ONR. <http://www.onr.org.uk/index.htm>. For the latest news and updates from ONR visit the website and sign up for our ebulletin (<http://www.onr.org.uk/ebulletin/index.htm>).

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