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| ONR site report  Sellafield Ltd – Sellafield |



ONR site report

Sellafield Ltd - Sellafield

**Report for period**: 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025

**Authored by**: Nominated Site Inspector

**Approved by**: Superintending Inspector

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Foreword

This report is issued as part of our 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 West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group (WCSSG) and are also available on our website: [www.onr.org.uk/publications/regulatory-reports/site-specific-reports/llcssg-reports](http://www.onr.org.uk/publications/regulatory-reports/site-specific-reports/llcssg-reports).

Our site inspectors usually attend West Cumbria Sites Stakeholder Group (WCSSG) 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 us via email at [contact@onr.gov.uk](mailto:contact@onr.gov.uk).

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# Inspections

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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## Date(s) of inspection

Our site inspector made inspections on the following dates during the report period 01 October 2024 – 31 March 2025:

# 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.

In this period, routine inspections of Sellafield covered the following:

**Special Nuclear Materials Value Stream (SNM)**

**SNM North**

Three planned compliance inspections were conducted to confirm Sellafield Limited’s compliance with its arrangements for Licence Conditions (LCs) 22, 24, 28 and 36. ONR judged that compliance with the LCs was adequate and awarded Green (no formal action) inspection ratings.

**SNM South**

Four planned compliance inspections were conducted to confirm Sellafield Limited’s compliance with its arrangements for LC 11, 22, 27, 28 and 36, and compliance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015, and The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. ONR judged that compliance was adequate and awarded a Green (no formal action) inspection rating.

**Retrievals Value Stream**

**Pile Fuel Cladding Silo (PFCS)**

ONR inspectors undertook inspections to judge the adequacy of Sellafield Limited’s implementation of the PFCS safety case as it applies to nuclear fire safety, and compliance with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The inspection focused on systems, structures and components (SSC) and relevant LCs important to safety used for radioactive waste retrieval operations.

The inspectors judged that, from the evidence sampled, Sellafield Limited are adequately implementing the PFCS safety case as it applies to nuclear fire safety. They also judged that, from the evidence sampled, the company was complying with the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The inspectors judged for LC10, LC23, LC24, LC27 and LC 28 Green (no formal action) inspection ratings were appropriate. The inspectors provided advice and guidance arising from the inspection, which was accepted by Sellafield Limited.

**Magnox Swarf Storage Silo (MSSS)**

The purpose of the inspection was to judge the adequacy of Sellafield Limited’s implementation of the MSSS safety case as it applies to the essential electrical systems. The inspection focused on systems, structures and components (SSC) and relevant LCs important to safety associated with the MSSS essential electrical systems.

The inspectors judged that, from the evidence sampled, Sellafield Ltd is adequately implementing the MSSS safety case as it applies to the essential electrical systems. The inspectors judged for Licence Condition (LC)10 and LC 28 Green (no formal action) inspection ratings were appropriate. During the inspection a minor issue was identified regarding the proof test for the pond purge system. This is linked to the Effluent Distribution Tank (EDT) overfill protection system and the inspectors provided advice and guidance regarding its resolution.

**First Generation Magnox Storage Pond (FGMSP)**

Two inspections were undertaken at FGMSP during this period.

A system based inspection (SBI) was undertaken in November 2024 to determine whether the safety systems, structures and components associated with the sludge retrievals system in the FGMSP are able to adequately fulfil their safety duties, in line with claims made within the safety case. The inspectors judged for LC10, LC23, LC24, LC27, LC28 and LC34 Green (no formal action) inspection ratings were appropriate. The inspectors raised one level 4 regulatory issue in relation to the EDT overfill protection system, and provided advice and guidance arising from the inspection, which was accepted by Sellafield Limited.

A compliance inspection was undertaken in March 2025 of implementation of the Sellafield Limited arrangements in relation to emergency response. The inspectors judged for LC10, LC11 and LC36 Green (no formal action) inspection ratings were appropriate. The inspectors provided advice and guidance arising from the inspection, which was accepted by Sellafield Limited.

**Remediation Value Stream**

ONR undertook an LC35 (Decommissioning) compliance inspection on the First-Generation Reprocessing Plant focusing on the decommissioning activities that are taking place within this facility with particular focus on how the decommissioning of the Medium Active North) cell will be progressed as a Remediation Accelerated Decommissioning pilot project. Based on the sampling undertaken during this inspection, ONR judged that Sellafield Limited is adequately implementing its LC35 arrangements and this inspection was rated Green (no formal action).

ONR also undertook a combined nuclear fire and life fire safety inspection on the Mox Demonstration Facility. The inspection was to seek assurance of Sellafield Limited’s arrangements for compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and LC 28 from the nuclear fire safety perspective. The inspection concluded that Sellafield Ltd had complied with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 for life fire safety and LC28 for nuclear fire safety. A Green rating was provided with no further regulatory actions required and no regulatory issues raised.

An LC36 organisational capability inspection took place at the Sellafield Remediation Value Stream - Final Decommissioning delivery unit. The Remediation Value Stream underwent a significant structural change in 2024 and the inspection was to gain assurance that the management of change process was adequate and the new structure was fit for purpose. The inspection concluded that Sellafield Limited had complied with the LC36 arrangements and a Green rating was provided with no further regulatory actions required and no regulatory issues raised.

**Spent Fuel Management Value Stream - Highly Active Liquor Evaporation and Storage (HALES) and High Level Waste Plants (HLWP)**

A compliance inspection was conducted in the HLWP to confirm Sellafield Ltd’s Limited’s compliance with its corporate arrangements for the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER). During the LOLER inspection, ONR judged that Sellafield Limited had shortfalls in the area of examination of In-Cell lifting accessories and an inspection rating of AMBER (seek improvement) was assigned. An enforcement letter was subsequently issued to Sellafield Limited seeking improvement in this area. A level 3 regulatory issue has also been raised to monitor the resolution of this shortfall, which is ongoing.

A systems-based inspection was also conducted in the HLWP to confirm the adequate implementation of the safety case for the HLWP containment systems and to confirm compliance with LCs 10, 23, 24, 27, 28 and 34. For all the planned LC compliance inspections ONR judged that Sellafield Ltd had met the required standard and assigned Green (no formal action) inspection ratings. ONR also judged that the HLWP safety case for its containment systems had been adequately implemented.

A planned compliance inspection was conducted in the HALES facility to confirm Sellafield Limited’s compliance with its corporate arrangements for LC 24. ONR judged that compliance with LC24 as met and assigned a Green (no formal action) inspection rating.

**Spent Fuel Services (SFS)**

Five inspections were undertaken at the Spent Fuel Services Operating Unit; two system based inspections covering LCs 10, 23, 24, 27, 28 and 34, one LC21 inspection, one inspection covering the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (Regulations 8 and 9), and one inspection covering LC17 (Assurance). All of these inspections were rated Green (no formal action).

**THORP**

A system based inspection was undertaken at the Salt Evaporator and Medium Active Storage. This also covered inspection of the arrangements against the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000 (PSSR).

The system based inspection related LCs were judged as Green (no formal action) rating with no additional observations or regulatory issues raised. The inspection against PSSR was judged as AMBER. An associated level 3 Regulatory Issue has been raised and ONR is currently overseeing Sellafield Limited’s progress against addressing the associated shortfalls.

**LAEMG**

A system based inspection was undertaken on the ventilation system at the Waste Encapsulation Plant. For all of the LCs ONR judged these as Green (no formal action) rating with no advice and guidance or associated regulatory issues raised.

**Site Management**

A planned inspection was conducted to assess the control and supervision of emergency arrangements related to infrastructure utilities, focusing on the deployment, maintenance, and supervision of mobile diesel alternators. These alternators are critical for responding to electrical supply disruptions at nuclear safety-significant plants. Infrastructure/Utilities at Sellafield Limited demonstrated the adequacy of their arrangements for LC11 and LC26 warranting an intervention rating of Green (no formal action).

A reactive inspection was conducted in response to an event reported at site following a series of unexpected failures within the Separation Area Ventilation System during planned fuse board maintenance. The inspection focussed on unresolved regulatory concerns related to system behaviour, configuration, risks from system failures, indication and staffing response capabilities. Insufficient evidence was provided during the inspection to justify or address these concerns. However, Sellafield Limited subsequently provided evidence relating to the fault tolerance of the system during follow-up engagements.

A planned inspection was conducted on the site-wide steam system which is a key utility supporting welfare, operations and nuclear safety. The inspection identified risks associated with the protective devices associated with over-pressurisation faults during normal operations and maintenance. The inspection concluded that there were suitable and sufficient control measures providing protection against a risk of serious personal injury during normal operations. Sellafield Limited have subsequently revised their maintenance arrangements. The inspection was rated Amber (seek improvement) and ONR is considering an appropriate regulatory response, which will be covered in the next ONR SSG report.

**Corporate**

Supply Chain and Quality

During the reporting period the ONR Supply Chain and Quality sub specialist inspectors have completed the following planned inspections:

Self-shielded boxes (SSBs)

The purpose of this inspection was to seek assurance that Sellafield Limited had implemented adequate supply chain and quality management arrangements for the supply of SSBs and to inform a regulatory judgement regarding the licensee’s compliance with relevant statutory provisions and good practice.

The inspectors judged that based on the evidence sampled areas of good practice were highlighted, and acknowledged further improvements are planned. An inspection rating of Green (no formal action) was assigned against LC17 (Management systems) and LC6 (Document, records, authorities and certificates). Two ONR level 4 regulatory issues were raised to capture the identified areas for improvement and track remedial actions relating to the SSB supply chain management model and material certification requirements for procured materials.

Programme and Project Partners

The purpose of this inspection was to seek assurance that the SIXEP Contingency Project and the Sellafield Product and Residue Store Retreatment Plant Project has implemented adequate supply chain and quality management arrangements associated with design, procurement and construction, and to inform a regulatory judgement regarding the licensee’s compliance with relevant statutory provisions and good practice.

The inspectors judged that based on the evidence sampled, relevant good practice was met with minor shortfalls identified, when compared to appropriate benchmarks. An inspection rating of Green (no formal action) was assigned against LC17 (Management systems) and LC6 (Document, records, authorities and certificates). Two ONR level four regulatory issues were raised to capture the identified shortfalls relating to the management of non-conformance and to monitor licensee progress. The inspectors also provided regulatory advice and guidance and observations for Sellafield Limited consideration.

Counterfeit, Fraudulent & Suspect Items (CFSI)

The purpose of this thematic inspection was to seek assurance that Sellafield Limited’s supply chain management arrangements, and the management systems of its suppliers, were adequately controlling risks from CFSI in line with regulatory requirements. Further to that, the inspection sought to ensure there was adequate understanding and implementation of the required CFSI arrangements within Sellafield Limited’s wider supply chain.

Based on the areas sampled, the inspectors concluded that overall relevant good practice was in general being met with minor shortfalls identified when compared to appropriate benchmarks. An inspection rating of Green (no formal action) was assigned against LC17 (Management systems) and LC6 (Document, records, authorities and certificates). Two ONR level four regulatory issues were raised to capture the identified shortfalls and to monitor Sellafield Limited’s progress in making improvements. The inspectors also provided regulatory advice and guidance relating to identified areas for improvement for Sellafield Limited’s consideration.

During the reporting period, based on the progress and evidence sampled, ONR closed regulatory issues relating to intelligent customer oversight arrangements for the manufacture and supply of SSBs, and CFSI risk mitigation and quality management arrangements on the Infrastructure Strategic Alliance Electrical Distribution Network Upgrade Project.

Members of the public who would like further information on our inspection activities during the reporting period can view site inspection records on our website: [www.onr.org.uk/publications/regulatory-reports/site-specific-reports/inspection-records](http://www.onr.org.uk/publications/regulatory-reports/site-specific-reports/inspection-records).

Should you have any queries regarding our inspection activities, please email [contact@onr.gov.uk](mailto:contact@onr.gov.uk).

## Other work

**Analytical Services**

Analytical Services was placed into significantly enhanced regulatory attention in 2024 and the decision was taken during this reporting period to extend this level of regulatory attention into 2025. The decision is entirely based on the level of our ONR resource afforded to the facility rather than any concerns over the pace of delivery or significant compliance issues at Analytical Services. Significant progress has been made during the period that includes extensive roof repairs, replacement of electrical boards, remedial work on ventilation systems and substantial risk reduction through the removal of legacy gloveboxes. Significant projects will continue in 2025 and we will continue to seek assurance that the progress seen in 2024 is maintained and sustained. A further decision will be made at the end of 2025 on whether continued significantly enhanced regulatory attention is appropriate. Sellafield Limited has a number of programme milestones that we will use to evidence against a move to enhanced and then routine regulatory attention.

**Special Nuclear Materials (SNM)**

Following an assessment and a readiness inspection during October 2024 we gave agreement to the lifting of hold points 604 and 634 (see Section 4) to allow venting of a sub-set of Containment Vessels containing former Dounreay SNM packages, and import of those packages into medium-term storage. This capability will address a significant proportion of the SNM inventory that was transported to Sellafield under the Dounreay Exotics Consolidation Programme and which is subject of a level 1 regulatory issue (RI-5569). Sellafield Limited has successfully implemented this capability and has imported a number of packages into the medium-term store.

We have continued to engage and influence the timely delivery of the additional capabilities required to deal with the remaining sub-set of former Dounreay SNM packages that are subject to the regulatory issue.

Sellafield Limited continues to make satisfactory progress with establishing a means for retrieval, overpacking and medium-term storage of acute risk SNM packages from a legacy (repurposed) SNM store. It is expected that Sellafield Limited will submit a request for release of the related regulatory hold point during the next WCSSG reporting period.

The on-going construction of the Sellafield Product and Residue Store Retreatment Plant (SRP) is fundamental to the success of the future state programme and forms part of our continued engagement with Sellafield Limited to ensure the timely implementation of capabilities required for the safe longer-term storage of SNM inventory, including that which has been consolidated from Dounreay to Sellafield. ONR has informed Sellafield Limited that it requires ONR’s permission prior to installing safety significant plant into the SRP building. Permissioning this stage helps to mitigate project risk and provides regulatory opportunities to influence the project before options are foreclosed.

**Pile Fuel Cladding Silo (PFCS) - Key Decommissioning Milestones (KDM)**

In February 2025, Sellafield Limited formally notified ONR that the date for completion of the PFCS KDM M34 was unachievable. Sellafield Limited provided assurance in a written statement confirming that they still considered the risks posed by PFCS were continuing to be managed as low as reasonably practicable (ALARP). The notification followed on from several engagements between Sellafield Limited and ONR on PFCS KDMs.

PFCS KDM M34 was concerned with the completion of waste retrievals from compartment five that will underpin the PFCS forward high hazard and risk reduction programme. In line with Sellafield Limited’s arrangements made under LC 35, and with our agreement, PFCS is developing an adequately underpinned action plan for re-baselining of KDM M34. ONR inspectors will continue to engage with Sellafield Limited on PFCS KDMs as part of the routine regulatory engagements.

**First Generation Magnox Storage Pond (FGMSP) Permissioning Activities**

During March we permissioned via a Licence Instrument an Agreement for the change to operations in the FGMSP Export Facility and the Interim Storage Facility (ISF) to handle and store SSBs containing FGMSP Fuel Bearing Material skips. This agreement follows the commencement of export of zeolite skips to ISF in March 2024.

**Remediation Value Stream - Decommissioning Projects**

In this period, we continued to engage with Sellafield Limited on the floc removal from legacy tanks, and have planned inspections on the Floc Removal Project during 2025/26. The inspections will cover LC26, Conventional Health and Safety and CDM regulations on the construction site.

Regulatory engagements continue with other projects in remediation, including on active demonstrators (the alpha glovebox demonstrator, the sort and segregate demonstrator and risk reduction of the glovebox operations demonstrator). The glovebox demonstrator (developing an efficient and effective capability to semi-remotely decommission alpha-active gloveboxes using laser cutting technology) was scheduled for permissioning in late 2024. The permissioning of this activity is now anticipated to take place in mid-2025.

We are continuing our engagement activities regarding the removal of the barrel section of the pile 1 chimney. Sellafield Limited has undertaken trials in late 2024 which consisted of raising and lowering a specifically designed decommissioning platform onto a mock-up pile 1 chimney. Engagement has also resumed on a new major construction project (lightly shielded stores), for permissioning in the medium term. Finally, in cooperation with the ONR innovation team, we are also engaging on other concept designs (demonstrators and other pilots).

**Facilities to support waste retrievals from legacy silos**

To support waste retrievals from the legacy silos, MSSS and PFCS, Sellafield Limited needs to progress the construction of several new build facilities and implement modifications to existing facilities. We are continuing to maintain regulatory focus in these areas to ensure we have the necessary regulatory confidence that Sellafield Limited has the key enablers in place to safely store the waste retrieved from the legacy silos and that the overall risks to people on and off site remain reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.

**Box Encapsulation Plant Product Store/Direct Import Facility (BEPPS-DIF)**

BEPPS-DIF is a critical enabler for hazard and risk reduction, storing the filled waste packages retrieved from the silos and other legacy facilities. Active commissioning was completed in 2024 and the facility is now fully operational, with PFCS packages being safely stored in BEPPS-DIF vaults. The pace of package transfers is expected to increase during 2025/6.

Box Encapsulation Plant (BEP)

BEP is another critical enabler for hazard risk reduction in receiving waste packages, processing, followed by onward passage and storage in BEPPS-DIF. The facility is continuing hand over from construction to commissioning, with some of the inactive commissioning activities expected to begin during 2025/6 alongside the first step of ONR permissioning.

Site Ion Exchange Effluent Treatment Plant (SIXEP) Continuity Plant (SCP)

The SIXEP treats effluent discharges from the Sellafield Site. This facility was brought into service in 1985 with a design service life of 25 years. The SCP project provides a replacement for SIXEP using similar technologies. We are continuing to engage with the SCP project during the construction phase, as well as focusing the effort on the related tie-in activities into SIXEP.

The Box Encapsulation Plant Product Store (BEPPS2)

BEPPS2 is a key new build project at Sellafield, which extends the capacity of BEPPS to support high hazard and risk reduction operation at site. We are engaging with the project ahead of the permissioning for commencement of construction during next financial year.

Corporate - Leadership and management for safety

During this period our inspectors observed both Sellafield Limited’s Enterprise Performance Committee and Enterprise Safety Committee, to gain insights into

* The adequacy of the management arrangements that support executive management decision-making;
* The quality of the information provided to enable informed executive management decision making; and
* The quality of the discussions and deliberations.

In doing this, our inspectors sought evidence of how executive management maintains oversight of, and challenges, safety performance; and the extent to which they consider safety in their decision-making. Our inspectors provided feedback to members of Sellafield’s executive management team following their attendance at these meetings. This intervention is ongoing and we will report on this in due course.

During this period, we also conducted regulatory oversight of Sellafield Limited’s Safety Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP is maturing, and the introduction of a dedicated project manager has been a key enabler for this. We will retain our focus on how Sellafield Limited is managing and overseeing the SIP, and during the next reporting period we will increase our focus on each of the SIP’s ten workstreams to seek confidence that each workstream will deliver the safety benefits that it set out to deliver.

We are continuing our regulatory oversight of Sellafield Limited’s efforts to improve the extent to which behaviours feature in performance management conversations and formal reviews. Our inspector found that Sellafield Limited has made good progress and now needs to renew its focus on addressing the actions it agreed to, as recorded in the associated regulatory issue.

In January 2025, an inspector observed a Sellafield Limited one-day Leader in the Field training course and found the course content and its delivery to be of a good standard.

During this period, our inspectors conducted regulatory oversight of Sellafield Limited’s efforts to improve the management of its organisational capability. We are satisfied that Sellafield Limited is making improvements in some areas of capability management and are pleased to see progress they have made in ensuring the data contained within their enterprise resource planning system more accurately reflects the current organisational construct. We have, however, identified some shortfalls in Sellafield Limited’s arrangement for managing its nuclear baseline and this will be an area of increasing focus for us in the next reporting period.

Learning and decision making

During this period, we conducted regulatory oversight of Sellafield Limited’s organisational learning workstream, one of the ten SIP workstreams. Our inspectors found that Sellafield Limited has not yet fully developed this workstream, nor is it clear to us if Sellafield Limited has the ambition to sufficiently transform its approaches to learning from incidents in such a way that will assist them in developing the characteristics of a high reliability organisation. This is a priority area for us and in this next reporting period, an ONR inspector will conduct a document review of Sellafield Limited’s learning from incidents arrangements, in preparation for an inspection later in the year.

In March 2025, an inspector observed a meeting of Sellafield Limited’s Nuclear Safety Committee, constituted under LC 13. Whilst the inspector’s attendance at the NSC was not an inspection activity, the inspector nevertheless found the NSC meeting to be conducted in line with relevant good practice.

Nuclear Site Health and Safety (NSHS)

Sellafield Limited continue to be in Enhanced Regulatory Attention for NSHS across three areas:

1. **Safety Performance** - Delivery of Industrial and Fire Safety Improvements.
2. **Control of Hazards and Risks** - Maturity of NSH&S risk prioritisation and profiling
3. **Safety Leadership and Culture** – “Capable Organisation” and “Learning”

The NSHS team continue their work regarding the enforcement action including the two improvement notices served on Sellafield Limited due to breaches of The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 (as amended). These notices were described in the previous ONR WCSSG report. The improvement notice requiring a COSHH assessment of risk has been complied with and was acknowledged by ONR in October 2024. The improvement notice requiring prevention or control of exposure to nickel nitrate has been extended and now has an end date of September 2025. A further update on this notice will be provided in the next ONR WCSSG report.

The NSHS team has supported the enforcement action following the South Sidings rail collision (as described in Section 3). The team also continue to work to progress the 19 open regulatory issues. During this period eight NSHS and Life Fire Safety Regulatory Issues have been closed and eight NSHS and Life Fire Safety Regulatory Issues have been created.

# Non-routine matters

Licensees are required to have arrangements to respond to non-routine matters and events. Our 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:

Spent Fuel Management - High Level Waste Plants (HLWP)

We undertook preliminary enquiries following an incident that occurred at the HLWP where a transport flask of medium active waste was exported via the Sellafield site roads from the HLWP line 3 to the Miscellaneous Beta Gamma Waste Store (MBGWS) and was found to be contaminated above acceptable levels during the incoming HP survey at MBGWS. The preliminary enquiries concluded that no investigation was required as it would have been disproportionate. There was no serious consequences resulting from the contamination, no radiological doses to workers or the public were received, the quantity of contamination was below the notification level in the Ionising Radiation Regulations 2017 (IRR17) and did not breach any regulations in the IRR17. This incident was followed up by our inspectors as part of normal business through the ONR Incident Notification process.

Transport - Railway Wagon Collision

We undertook follow-up enquiries following an incident that occurred at the South Sidings where a railway wagon that hadn't been properly secured rolled approximately 60 metres along the track before colliding with a stationary wagon. The incident occurred during shunting activities when several other wagons were being moved on the same stretch of track. While no workers were harmed in the incident in November 2024, it had the potential to have had serious consequences for those involved in the shunting operations. The impact left both wagons with minor damage, but neither was derailed. The two nuclear waste containers were unaffected due to their robust construction, and there was no radiation risk to workers or members of the public.

An improvement notice was served on Sellafield Limited, under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Regulation 5(1), following the shunting incident. Work is on-going to address the actions described in the notice, which are due during June 2025 and we will provide a further update within the next ONR WCSSG report

Utilities - Loss of Power

We undertook preliminary enquiries following an incident on 25 January when power was lost to the west half of the Sellafield site. It is believed that winds from storm Eoywn led to the build-up of salt on the 132kV overhead line insulators which caused a flashover that tripped the incoming electrical supplies resulting in the loss of power.

The power outage caused the loss of several IT and communication systems. As a result, communication between the Main Site Command Facility (MSCF) and other facilities on site was disrupted. At the same time, MSCF was operating below its minimum safe staffing level, and its backup power arrangements were weaker than expected.

The site has a number of Incident Control Centres (ICC) as part of its emergency arrangements. These centres are responsible for managing incidents within specific facilities. Despite the communication issues, these control centres remained in place and continued to oversee their areas, ensuring safety was maintained.

Whilst no immediate safety consequences arose, the combination of reduced staffing, weaker backup power, and communication loss represents a degradation of defence in depth. Our preliminary enquiries concluded that an investigation was not required and would be disproportionate. There were no serious consequences resulting from the event, no radiological doses to workers or the public, and there was no potential of a significant challenge to nuclear safety. Sellafield Limited is undertaking its own investigation which we have close oversight of. This incident will continue to be followed up by our inspectors as part of normal business through the ONR Incident Notification process. Sellafield has assigned an INES 1 rating to this event due to the erosion of some defence in depth barriers. ONR supports this rating.

SIXEP Continuity Plant (SCP)

During a visit to the Sellafield SCP Project site on the 5 February 2025 work was observed in connection with exposed live conductors within electrical equipment undergoing inspection and test. The visit also considered electrical safety isolation on equipment undergoing intrusive work.

This visit identified shortfalls against the Electricity at Work Regulations (1989), specifically around work on live conductors and applying suitable means to prevent danger. The work was being undertaken by a contractor (PPS Electrical Ltd) and we have since issued an enforcement letter to PPS. PPS Electrical Ltd has responded to the enforcement letter and ONR will be organising a follow up visit during the next reporting period to assess progress against the observed shortfalls. Whilst the work was being carried out by a contractor, Sellafield Limited were reminded of their responsibilities under Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work Act and against LC26.

# Regulatory activity

We may issue formal documents to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements. Under nuclear site licence conditions, we issue regulatory documents, which either permit an activity or require some form of action to be taken. These are usually collectively termed licence instruments but can take other forms. In addition, inspectors may take a range of enforcement actions, to include issuing an enforcement notice.

**Table 1: Licence instruments and enforcement notices issued by ONR during this period**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Type | Reference | Description |
| 29 November 2024 | Hold Point Release | HPCP line 604 | Agreement to the use of the Mark III de-lidder for venting of Containment Vessels containing SNM packages. |
| 29 November 2024 | Hold Point Release | HPCP line 634 | Agreement to import a sub-set of former Dounreay SNM into medium-term storage. |
| 6 January 2025 | Improvement Notice | ONR-IN-24-12 | Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, Regulation 5(1), following the shunting incident |
| 28 February 2025 | Enforcement Letter | EL-24-049 | Sellafield SCP Project Electrical Safety  Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 |

Reports detailing the above regulatory decisions can be found on our website: [www.onr.org.uk/publications/regulatory-reports/site-specific-reports/project-assessment-reports](http://www.onr.org.uk/publications/regulatory-reports/site-specific-reports/project-assessment-reports).

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# References

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