

Report to the West Cumbria Site Stakeholder Group Emergency Planning Sub Committee on Emergency Exercises held on the Sellafield Ltd Windscale Site during the period September 2010 – March 2011

Introduction

Under the terms of its Nuclear Site Licence, the Windscale licensed site is required to test and exercise its facility emergency arrangements witnessed, as necessary, by HM Nuclear Inspectorate or the Office for Civil Nuclear Security. This report summarises exercises held during the reporting period.

Exercise ‘Elgar’

An emergency exercise codenamed ‘Elgar’ was staged on Thursday 16 September 2010 in order to test the arrangements for dealing with a serious incident in the Windscale Pile 1 facility. This exercise was part of the exercise programme for categorised Windscale facilities in the current year.

Since the completion of the water duct clearing operations the seismic barrier installed during the 1990s is no longer required. To permit the fuel and isotope removal operations to be undertaken for future decommissioning of the Pile, the seismic barrier is to be removed. Exercise ‘Elgar’ was designed to test some elements of the emergency arrangements provided for this work and to present the Windscale team carrying out the work with a series of demanding situations requiring the application of appropriate Command & Control techniques so that actions are suitably prioritised. The exercise was based on a credible, but unlikely, sequence of events assumed to occur during the removal operation.

Overall this was a valuable exercise which confirmed the adequacy of the Piles Emergency Arrangements

Exercise ‘Redstart’:

Exercise ‘Redstart’ was staged on 10 November 2010 in order to test the arrangements for dealing with a security threat in the WAGR area and was part of the annual programme of facility exercises for the Windscale site. The exercise was observed throughout by an Inspector from HM Office for Civil Nuclear Security (OCNS). The exercise scenario assumed that an intruder posing as a member of a contracting organisation carrying out remedial work at WAGR had placed a bomb in at a sensitive location within the reactor decommissioning area but had been observed acting suspiciously by several members of the work force. This was assumed to result in a detailed search of the facility and the subsequent discovery of a plastic drill case containing an improvised explosive device (IED). The scenario required the Building Supervisor to organise and direct quick and effective building searches and, in conjunction with the site police (Civil Nuclear Constabulary), the quick and orderly evacuation of the building workforce (70 persons) to a safe holding area beyond the police security cordon.

Overall this was a useful exercise which confirmed the suitability of the-WAGR security emergency arrangements and the competence of the staff deploying them.

M R Richardson
Emergency Planning Officer
SRDP
Windscale Site
Sellafield Ltd

March 2011