

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 2008 - March 2009

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.

Exercises Held

Only one facility exercise was staged during the reporting period.

11 December 2008: Facility Exercise 'Sandmartin'

This exercise was designed to test the arrangements for the recovery of a contaminated casualty from the basement of the WAGR reactor building. The decommissioning of the WAGR reactor is well advanced and has reached the stage where robotic entries to the reactor basement are being planned to recover radioactive and asbestos contaminated waste material arising from the pressure vessel dismantling process. Key objectives for the exercise, therefore, were to test:

- The arrangements for dealing with an incident involving the recovery of a casualty from the reactor basement.
- The arrangements for the control of asbestos and radioactive material contamination sustained during the recovery of a casualty from the reactor basement.
- Communications between remote working teams in the event of an incident in the reactor basement.
- The setting up and operation of the WAGR Incident Control Centre and Access Control Point or other Incident/Access Control Point locations deemed necessary.

The results from this exercise were very encouraging, demonstrating both the ability of the Sellafield Emergency Services to deal with a range of challenging situations and environments, and the necessary control and coordination role of the operator's emergency team. Further exercises in this area are planned for 2009.

Future Exercises

A programme of exercises for the Windscale site during 2009 has been drawn up and the findings from these will be reported at the next EPSC meeting later in the year.

M R Richardson
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