

Sellafield permit changes issued

The permit controls receipt and disposal of radioactive waste and imposes conditions and limits on discharges. This is the most significant review of this permit since the early 2000s.

As part of this review Sellafield Ltd submitted an application for a RSA permit variation in 2018. A public consultation on this application was conducted in October 2018 and another took place on the Environment Agency's draft decision in 2019.

A final decision on this application has now been reached, incorporating comments received from both consultations, and today (27 February) the Environment Agency have issued the permit variation to Sellafield Ltd.

Dr Rob Allot, Sellafield Nuclear Regulation Team Leader said:

"The Environment Agency has been working with Sellafield Ltd for some time to carry out a major review of this environmental permit in readiness for the end of fuel reprocessing at the Sellafield site.

The public engagement via the consultations have been a really important part of this process and today signifies a major milestone as we issue the permit variation.

The Sellafield site has historically reprocessed radioactive fuel in its THORP and Magnox reprocessing plants. However, fuel reprocessing came to an end at THORP in November 2018 and Magnox reprocessing is planned to end in 2020. This will mean that the site will see a significant reduction in radioactive discharges to the environment. Given these forecast reductions, the company needs this new RSA environmental permit to better reflect the new, lower discharge levels.

Following the end of fuel reprocessing, Sellafield Ltd's mission will focus on decommissioning and the safe and secure environmental remediation of the Sellafield Site. The permit review has enabled us to build more flexibility into the permits to allow for post operational clean out and clean-up of the high hazard legacy facilities to reduce the risk to people and the environment."

This permit variation incorporated these main changes:

- Significantly reducing site discharge limits and introducing a 2-tier (upper and lower) site discharge limit structure.
- Removing some site discharge limits where discharges have fallen below significant levels and they do not meet the Environment Agency criteria for setting limits.
- Replacing plant discharge limits with plant notification levels so that Sellafield Ltd can make most effective use of the available discharge routes

and treatment plants.

- Removing discharge limits related to the rate of fuel reprocessing (throughput) to reflect the end of reprocessing operations.
- Updating the permit to the latest template so that it reflects recent guidance changes.