

HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE
HM NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS INSPECTORATE

1. Title: Flooding at AWE Burghfield
2. Place & date of meeting: AWE Burghfield, 31st July 2007
3. Those Present: [REDACTED] (AWE)
[REDACTED] (NII)
4. Key issues:

I visited AWE Burghfield to assess the damage from the recent flooding (see Contact Report TRIM Reference 2007/167721). I met [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in the emergency accommodation that had been set up in the contractor Portakabins directly opposite the Licensed Site, from where the remediation teams were co-ordinated. I was first of all shown a number of photographs of a large portion of the Licensed Site taken by [REDACTED] on the morning of Saturday 21 July. These clearly showed the depth the water had reached across the facility (the maximum height measured was just over 2 feet) and the force with which the water rushed through the facility (a number of thermal jackets, weighing in excess of 30kg each had been carried a couple of hundred yards by the flood water). It was explained that command and control was undertaken from [REDACTED] office in the Portakabin, with access to the facility controlled from here.

I was given an update report on each of the buildings affected. [REDACTED] is still holding approximately 2 inches of water in some areas; this remains the building that is providing the biggest challenge in terms of recovery. [REDACTED] water was found to contain very little water as the air seals appeared to work reasonably well; however, recovery of the building will still be challenging due to the contents. Some water is still present in [REDACTED] although criticality is not considered credible due to the low fissile holding in the building. [REDACTED] contained some minor puddles but the containment of all of the items present was not compromised. Levels of radiological contamination remain very low throughout the facility. All lighting and power has been re-instated in the corridors. HVAC has been re-instated in some buildings although the fire detection system is still not operational. I have contacted our ND fire specialist, [REDACTED] to provide some advice regarding AWE's alternative arrangements for fire detection, as well as advice regarding the reliability of the detection system. It was explained to me that the CID system had adequate battery back-up, but this was not used as the inventory in [REDACTED] was such that a criticality was not credible.

I was given a tour of the facility. This confirmed what I had seen in the photographs and raised no additional issues. Whilst in the facility, a test of the criticality detection system was undertaken. This has now been re-instated and is working as expected.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Following the tour, we discussed recovery of the facility and the way forward. [REDACTED] indicated that the priorities for AWE were to reinstate the services on the licensed site and to safely deal with the items in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] explained the strategy for dealing with these items. This looked reasonable, but I said that AWE should be very clear that there is no compromise of safety throughout the recovery process and that all services and emergency arrangements are fully in place before any work is undertaken on these items. The plan for returning all of the buildings to pre-flood condition was discussed. [REDACTED] explained that the first stage for this process would begin the week commencing 6 August with a systematic inspection of each building by a team of civil engineers. Work will begin once it is declared safe to carry out work in the building. A tented area is to be set up in the convoy car park to enable items to be taken out of buildings, cleaned, inspected etc and returned to the building. The route will use basic RP contamination control principles to segregate 'clean' and 'dirty' components. I advised AWE that this strategy looked sensible.

I was advised that all safety case work is continuing and the intention is to complete the revised safety case and the PRS safety case related shortfalls by the declared delivery dates. Other safety case work, for example that associated with [REDACTED] is unaffected. There will, however, be delays in the PRS remediation work to the facility. All moves have been cancelled to give the facility a clear run to restore the facility and work on the PRS fixes.

From an inspection point of view, I advised AWE that I thought it would be prudent to postpone the planned LC compliance inspections for the time being. However, I added that I would undertake reactive inspections, particularly as plant is being re-commissioned and brought back on to the facility. [REDACTED] indicated that the 804 Change Control process would be heavily used for these activities; I said that this seemed reasonable but added that I would subject this to some scrutiny. I also added that I would look carefully at flooding in the new safety case and in particular the claims regarding frequency of flooding, the reliability of essential services in the event of flooding and steps taken to minimise the likelihood of this event happening again.

[REDACTED]
NII Site Inspector, Assembly /Disassembly Portfolio
2 August 2007