

This factsheet briefly outlines the role of the principal regulatory bodies that apply to SDP and gives more detailed information on the regulation of the key stages of submarine dismantling.

## Introduction

Submarine dismantling will be regulated at all stages. The purpose of regulation is to ensure that the stringent standards for the protection of health, safety and the environment, as defined in UK law, are applied consistently by organisations that conduct activities which could pose potential risks.

The authority of the regulators is enshrined in legislation that gives them statutory responsibilities, accompanied by enforcement powers that allow them to take any actions they deem necessary to ensure operators comply with the law. All industrial activities are closely regulated, but there are additional regulations that apply to work involving radiation.

## Removing the radioactive materials from the submarine

Under UK law employers are responsible for ensuring the safety of their workers and the public. This is just as true for employers in the nuclear domain as for any other area. The HSE will be responsible for regulating the safety of the construction of facilities for SDP as well as the safety of work to remove materials from the submarine. The HSE has the power to stop activities if it is not satisfied<sup>1</sup>.

The Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) is responsible for regulating the radiological work involved in the initial dismantling process, which will be carried out on a nuclear licensed site. Through conditions attached to this site licence, the ONR sets the general safety requirements to manage risk on a nuclear site<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

<sup>2</sup> See the Nuclear Installations Act 1965 (as amended)

## Principal Regulatory Bodies

### Health and Safety Executive (HSE):

- The HSE is an independent regulator that acts in the public interest to reduce work-related death and serious injury across workplaces in Great Britain.

### Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR):

- The ONR, acting on behalf of the HSE, seeks to protect people and society from the hazards of the nuclear industry, by ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and by influencing the nuclear industry to create and maintain a good health, safety and security culture. ONR was formerly the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII).

### Department for Transport (DfT):

- The DfT seeks to ensure safer transport and this applies to the transport of hazardous materials. When transported, these goods need to be packaged correctly for each mode of transport to ensure that they are carried safely to minimise the risk of an incident. DfT's Radioactive Materials Transport Team is currently in the process of being merged into the ONR.

### Environment Agency (EA):

- The EA aims to protect and improve the environment and to promote sustainable development in England and Wales. For nuclear sites, it regulates how they manage and dispose of radioactive and other waste to protect people and the environment.

### Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA):

- SEPA's main role is to protect the environment and human health in Scotland. It does this by regulating activities that can impact on the environment and human health and by monitoring the quality of Scotland's air, land and water.

### Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR):

- DNSR is an independent regulator within the MOD, whose role is to ensure that, where the defence programme is exempt from civil legislation, equivalent safety standards are upheld.



### **'Size reduction' (cutting the ILW into smaller pieces)**

The HSE will be responsible for regulating the safety of the construction and operation of the size reduction facility, if one is required. The ONR will regulate the management of radioactive waste when it is on the nuclear licensed site. The HSE carries out regular inspections (sometimes jointly with the EA or SEPA) to check that the sites comply with the relevant standards and regulations.

The EA and SEPA regulate how nuclear sites dispose of their waste, including solid waste and discharges to the air or water, by granting site-based permits to the companies who run them<sup>3</sup>. They monitor the operators to ensure they do not exceed the authorised discharge limits and also make sure that the operators minimise the amount of radioactive waste they produce. They check radiation doses to the public from the sites and publish the results in the annual Radioactivity in Food and the Environment (RIFE) reports which can be found on their websites.

### **Managing radioactive waste**

Low Level Waste (LLW) will be disposed of via existing routes in accordance with the UK LLW Strategy. The EA and SEPA regulate the disposal of radioactive, controlled and hazardous wastes. Sites where LLW is then disposed of in England and Wales, such as the LLW Repository in Cumbria, are regulated by the EA. As the LLW Repository site is a nuclear licensed site, it is also regulated by ONR. In Scotland, waste disposal is regulated by SEPA.

The radioactive materials that cannot be disposed of immediately (ILW) will be transported to a facility for safe storage. As the store will be on a nuclear licensed site, it will be regulated by the ONR. The ONR is responsible for granting a nuclear licence and it closely monitors and inspects the operators to ensure they comply with the conditions of the licence. It conducts regular inspections, team inspections on specific topics and witnesses emergency exercises.

The ONR will issue improvement notices or halt all operations if it is not satisfied that standards are being maintained.

### **Transport**

Approval will be needed for the design and manufacture of transport packages, their shipment, the filling of the packages with waste and the handling and transporting of the waste. DNSR is responsible for the transport of Defence-related radioactive material<sup>4</sup> and operates to the same standards as DfT (which is responsible for all civil material). The MOD also works closely with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority to share best practice and advice on transport issues. **(See factsheet: Transport for more information).**

### **Ship recycling**

A ship recycling facility will break-up the submarine and recycle or dispose of any non-radioactive hazardous waste such as asbestos from the submarine. Ship recycling facilities require a permit from the EA or SEPA, both of which insist on strict operating standards and procedures that are enforced throughout the life of the business.



<sup>3</sup> See the Radioactive Substances Act 1993 and the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010.

<sup>4</sup> See the Carriage of Dangerous Goods Act and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2009.