



## MEDIA RELEASE

---

National Nuclear Regulator PO Box 7106, Centurion 0046

Tel: +27 12 674 7100, Email: [enquiry@nnr.co.za](mailto:enquiry@nnr.co.za), Web: [www.nnr.co.za](http://www.nnr.co.za)

19 April 2012

LB/35/5/54/0/08

### ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**The National Nuclear Regulator (NNR) suspends activities associated with the receipt of radioactive waste packages by the National Radioactive Waste Repository in the Northern Cape - Vaalputs.**

The NNR suspended the receipt of all radioactive waste packages by South Africa's National Radioactive Waste Repository, Vaalputs in the Northern Cape as part of enforcing compliance to the conditions of nuclear authorisation.

In accordance with the Vaalputs Nuclear Installation Licence No. NIL-28, Variation 1, condition number 3 and part B-6 (iii), Vaalputs is authorised to temporarily store radioactive waste packages which comply with the Waste Acceptance Criteria (WAC) in the shielded storage area designed specifically for this purpose. Furthermore, the WAC requirements permit Vaalputs to receive radioactive waste packages with a maximum permitted surface contact dose rate of 2mSv/h.

During a routine compliance assurance inspection conducted at the Vaalputs Radioactive Waste Repository in the Northern Cape, the NNR identified non-compliances to the conditions of the WAC as per their Nuclear Installation Licence.

The non-compliances identified by the NNR relates to;

- Vaalputs storing a radioactive waste package/drum which was above the stipulated maximum permitted surface contact dose rate from Eskom's Koeberg Nuclear Power Plant in a shielded storage area the radioactive waste package/drum was screened and did not comply with the Vaalputs the WAC.



## MEDIA RELEASE

---

National Nuclear Regulator PO Box 7106, Centurion 0046

Tel: +27 12 674 7100, Email: [enquiry@nnr.co.za](mailto:enquiry@nnr.co.za), Web: [www.nnr.co.za](http://www.nnr.co.za)

- The surface contact dose rate of the radioactive waste package/drum was measured and found to be 2.8mSv/h, which is above the maximum permitted surface contact dose rate of 2mSv/h.

“Based on the outcome of this compliance assurance inspection, the NNR directed Vaalputs to suspend all activities associated with the receipt of radioactive waste packages, until the regulatory requirements and conditions of the nuclear installation licence related thereto, have been addressed to the satisfaction of the NNR. Furthermore, a detailed procedure of the remedial actions to be undertaken by Vaalputs and an action plan for addressing the non-compliances identified above must be submitted to the NNR for review and approval.” stated the NNR’s Chief Executive Officer, Adv. Boyce Mkhize.

“Although there is no undue exposure to workers, public and environment the NNR maintains a preventative approach to mitigating potential radiological risk associated with this category of nuclear event. The NNR will ensure that appropriate corrective actions commensurate with the identified nuclear event are implemented prior to the lifting of this directive. Furthermore, the NNR will continue to follow up and monitor the situation closely to ensure that all the corrective and approved remedial actions are implemented to prevent the recurrence of this nuclear event,” concluded the NNR’s Chief Executive Officer, Adv. Boyce Mkhize.

Yours sincerely

Adv. Boyce Mkhize

CEO: NNR

-ends-



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

---

National Nuclear Regulator PO Box 7106, Centurion 0046

Tel: +27 12 674 7100, Email: [enquiry@nnr.co.za](mailto:enquiry@nnr.co.za), Web: [www.nnr.co.za](http://www.nnr.co.za)

### **The National Nuclear Regulator (NNR)**

The National Nuclear Regulator (NNR) is a public entity which is established and governed in terms of Section 3 of the National Nuclear Regulator Act, (Act No 47 of 1999) to provide for the protection of persons, property and the environment against nuclear damage through the establishment of safety standards and regulatory practices. The NNR is responsible for granting nuclear authorisations and exercising regulatory control related to safety over the siting, design, construction, operation, manufacture of component parts, and the decontamination, decommissioning and closure of nuclear installations; and vessels propelled by nuclear power or having radioactive material on board which is capable of causing nuclear damage.

The facilities and actions regulated by the NNR are diverse and includes the operation of nuclear power reactors, research reactors, nuclear technology applications, radioactive waste management, mining and processing of radioactive ores, users of small quantities of radioactive material, transport of radioactive materials, vessels propelled by nuclear power or having radioactive material on board and to any other actions capable of causing nuclear damage to which the National Nuclear Regulator Act applies. Facilities and actions currently under NNR regulatory control includes; safety over the Koeberg nuclear power station, the Pelindaba research and production facilities, the Vaalputs nuclear waste repository and the mining and processing of uranium and other radioactive ores.

### **About Vaalputs Radioactive Waste Repository**

The management of radioactive waste is a national responsibility assigned to the Minister of Energy as per the Nuclear Energy Act of 1999 and delegated to Necsa by virtue of section 55(2) of the Act. The Vaalputs Low Level Radioactive waste facility was established in 1985 after a screening phase of 5 years, using international selection criteria.

Vaalputs is South Africa's National Radioactive waste-disposal facility which is situated in the Northern Cape Province. Springbok is the closest town to the repository and is 90 km



## MEDIA RELEASE

---

National Nuclear Regulator PO Box 7106, Centurion 0046

Tel: +27 12 674 7100, Email: [enquiry@nnr.co.za](mailto:enquiry@nnr.co.za), Web: [www.nnr.co.za](http://www.nnr.co.za)

north-west of Vaalputs. The facility covers an area of approximately 10 000 ha. The area set aside for the disposal site is 99.54 ha (900 m x 1 106 m) including a 200 m exclusion zone along the perimeter. The Nuclear Energy Corporation of South Africa (Necsa) operates the Pelindaba and Vaalputs sites under the conditions of nuclear authorisation as granted by the NNR. The NNR implements a series of independent safety assurance programmes to verify compliance with regulatory requirements and conditions as specified in the nuclear authorisation. This is done through audits and inspections and where violation to the authorisation is identified, the NNR may initiate appropriate enforcement actions to address the specific conditions and requirements of the nuclear authorisation.

### **For more information contact;**

Gino Moonsamy

Manager: Corporate Communications & Stakeholder Relations

National Nuclear Regulator

Tel: (+27) 12 674 7111

Mobile: 082 535 5365

Email: [gmoonsamy@nnr.co.za](mailto:gmoonsamy@nnr.co.za)

Website: [www.nnr.co.za](http://www.nnr.co.za)