



THE TIMES 100

NDA summary

Introduction

Many of the traditional fuel sources, including coal, gas and oil, are drying up. The UK needs clean and renewable sources to replace them. Britain is looking at the possibility of opening more nuclear sites, but first, old sites need to be made safe. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) is the public sector body whose job is to make sure that old sites are cleaned up and safe. The NDA owns a number of nuclear power stations in the UK. Its mission is to provide solutions to manage nuclear waste in ways that are safe, secure, value for money and acceptable to society and stakeholders.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are any group with an interest in the organisation's work. For NDA, these include employees, communities, suppliers, regulators, government and the public. NDA works within a framework of UK and EU law, especially the 2004 Energy Act. This makes health and safety the main priority for the NDA. The NDA also regulates itself to even higher standards. When a nuclear site is no longer efficient, it is decommissioned, made safe and the land returned to its former state.

Health and Safety (H&S)

H&S laws affect NDA in many ways. Some of the main laws include:

- The Nuclear Installations Act. This is the basis of all NDA's work.
- Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974 - this says businesses must provide safe conditions and employees must work in safe ways
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health, 1999 . this outlines how dangerous substances must be handled.
- The Factories Act, 1961 sets out details of working conditions such as temperature and ventilation
- The Fire Precautions Act, 1971 covers fire safety, including equipment, checks and drills
- Working Time Directive, 1999 gives the maximum hours that employees can work in a week.

H&S laws are especially important in the nuclear industry, where any accident could be far-reaching due to the nature of nuclear materials. The nuclear industry takes rules seriously. For NDA, no accident is acceptable. This makes it probably one of the safest places to work.

Labour law

According to the Energy Act, the NDA must have an appropriately skilled workforce. The NDA has created Skills Action Plans to ensure that enough employees are being trained to gain the right skills to carry out its work. The NDA also exceeds the requirements of the laws covering equal pay and discrimination.

Business benefits

Looking after the workforce to such high levels brings other benefits to NDA. There is less absenteeism than the national average and increased levels of motivation amongst its employees. Employees are likely to work harder and this creates higher levels of productivity. In addition, the local communities in which NDA works have confidence in its safety record and see NDA as a good partner.

Conclusion

The UK has been producing nuclear power for a long time and has a long nuclear legacy. Old or out of date power stations now need to close down and the land cleaned. The NDA operates the highest levels of health and safety and is a world leader in safe and secure practice due to the intensive training programmes it provides.