

OFFSHORE SITE VISITS AND WAIVERS

The Department consider that a site visit to verify emission data *should take place in the year the emissions take place*, historically supported by the request from all UK Regulators for operators to apply for a waiver no later than 30 September in any given year. This timing allows for a visit to be arranged and undertaken if the CA should refuse to issue a waiver i.e. a visit could be organised before the end of December of the relevant year.

In 2013, under the Regulations, as ‘significant changes were made to the monitoring plan’ for Phase III, a Site Visit was required to support the Verification of the Annual Emissions Report. Thus our guidance was in line with the EA pronouncement that a site visit should be undertaken before the end of 2013 *for 2013 data*. However, the Department determined that it was not going to be possible for all the offshore site visits to be undertaken by the end of 2013. The Department unilaterally extended the timing for the ‘**First site visit**’ to the end of 2014 and issued waivers to those operators who could not comply with the end-of-2013 requirement.

The Department stipulated that, where the site visit *could* be undertaken before the end of 2013 that would support 2013 data and if the site visit *had* to occur in 2014 that would support 2014 data. The 31 December 2014 was a clear **non-negotiable deadline** and we did not allow a site visit in January–March 2015 to be used against 2014 data –the absolute cut off for the ‘First’ site visit under Phase III was 31 December 2014.

We considered this would also simplify and support the implementation of the **new requirement to undertake a site visit every 3 years** – it is easy for Regulator and Operator to track **exactly** which year a site visit has been undertaken, which years a waiver can be granted, (providing the qualifying criteria remain relevant) and which year the next site visit **must** take place. Thus, it is our intention that: -

- 1) Either a site visit undertaken or waiver issued in **2013** was in respect to **2013 emission data**.
- 2) A site visit undertaken **in any month in 2014 was in respect to 2014 emission data** (*as operators should have obtained a waiver for a 2013 site visit*).
- 3) Operators with **a site visit in 2013** would apply for a waiver for 2014 and again for 2015, providing the qualifying criteria were applicable, and would be required to undertake a site visit in **2016***,
- 4) Operators with a waiver in 2013 and **a site visit in 2014** would apply for a waiver in 2015 and again for 2016, providing the qualifying criteria were applicable, and would be required to undertake a site visit in **2017***,
- 5) At a minimum, Operators would be required to undertake a site visit ***within every subsequent 3 years and apply for a waiver, where relevant, for the intervening years**.
- 6) Where the qualifying criteria for issuing a waiver are **not met** in intervening years, a site visit **MUST** take place in that year.

We are writing to Operators and Verifiers clarifying our position: OGED are working from 01 January to 31 December for a site visit to verify the emissions data for any given year and reminding Operators of the deadline for applying for a waiver.

Operators must consider whether the criteria set by the Commission to justify the waiving of a site visit are still relevant for each installation and if applicable, apply for a waiver before 30 September 2015.

Link to the guidance Document: The Accreditation and Verification Regulation – Site visits concerning installations AVR Key guidance note No. II.5, Version of 17 October 2012

