



Regulating Offshore oil and gas Installations during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) Outbreak

1. As the UK offshore oil & gas environmental regulator, the Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment & Decommissioning (OPRED) has taken action to ensure that our important role continues effectively as the COVID-19 situation unfolds. These actions are being guided by the specific needs and characteristics of the offshore oil & gas industry and in line with advice from the UK Government, Public Health England and Health Protection Scotland.
2. OPRED recognises the threat presented by COVID-19 to industry, our staff, and the broader community, and in recognition of this, we have transitioned our staff to operate remotely.
3. OPRED's staff remain contactable and we continue to engage with oil and gas operators, owners and other stakeholders with teleconferencing and other tools in place of face-to-face meetings.
4. Despite the demanding circumstances, the requirement to comply with offshore environmental legal requirements remains with permit holders, operators and owners of offshore installations. OPRED will continue to ensure permit applications, variations, queries and support are delivered in the normal manner. OPRED will continue its regulatory oversight of how organisations are meeting their environmental responsibilities in the context of the current public health risk and based on our available regulatory capacity.
5. Our regulatory approach will take a flexible and proportionate account of the risks and challenges arising from the pandemic.
6. As a consequence, OPRED:
 - has carried out a short pause on our offshore oil and gas inspection activities so we can give operators time to overcome various immediate pressures and challenges. We will focus our regulatory work so it is re-prioritised onto critical areas and activities. We will continue to regulate the offshore oil and gas industry throughout this time, undertaking regulatory functions remotely;
 - will endeavour to undertake regulatory activities which do not require site visits as normally as possible, for example Review of Environmental Statements and EIA's; Approvals for permits, consents and OPEP's; Statutory Permissioning activities such as Safety Case Assessments, Thorough Reviews, Wells Notifications, etc; and review and Approval of Decommissioning Programmes;
 - will continue to investigate environmental incidents and will take action to secure compliance with the law where required. We will conduct as much of our investigation activity using technology as possible, without compromising the collection of evidence and our ability to secure effective control of risk.
 - will do as much of our regulatory intervention work as we can remotely, but we will still mobilise to site, including offshore, where it's necessary to provide assurance that hazards



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are being effectively managed and to secure compliance with the law. Where a site visit is required, government guidance (and where possible, operator procedures) will be followed;

- will respond to significant pollution incidents in accordance with our established procedures in order to gather information for Government and other stakeholders. Where possible we will do this remotely using technology, but where necessary, will mobilise to a Responsible Person's Emergency Response Centre. Where it is necessary to mobilise to site, social distancing guidelines will be followed.

7. OPRED will keep the situation under review and updates will be communicated to industry via our website and or full range of online and offline communication channels

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