



**Regulating Offshore oil and gas Installations during Coronavirus (Covid-19) Outbreak. UK and Scottish Government 04 January 2021 announcement of change to lockdown measures - update 07 January 2021**

1. The Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment & Decommissioning (OPRED) notified stakeholders on 06 October 2020 ([updated Covid-19 communication](#)) of a return to offshore inspection activity in October, undertaking offshore inspections and investigations alongside remote interventions.
2. With the UK and Scottish Governments' recent announcement on 04 January 2021, advising of an increase in Covid-19 lockdown measures for a further period and citing the steeply rising trend of infections and the increased transmissibility of the new variant as reasons for increase in measures, OPRED has decided to temporarily pause routine offshore inspection activities with immediate effect.
3. The temporary pause in offshore activity will provide OPRED time to consider the recent change in lockdown measures, gather information on impact of any changes to offshore operations and the offshore working environment, alongside providing Operators space and time to ensure their working arrangements and control measures continue to remain robust.
4. OPRED will do as much of our regulatory intervention work as we can remotely, but we will still mobilise to site, including offshore, where it is deemed necessary to provide assurance that hazards are being effectively managed and to secure compliance with the law.
5. OPRED will continue to endeavour to undertake regulatory activities which do not require site visits as normally as possible, for example review of Environmental Statements and EIAs; approvals for permits, consents and OPEPs; statutory activities such as Safety Case Assessments, Thorough Reviews, Wells Notifications, etc; and review and approval of Decommissioning Programmes. Please note that our teams are much busier than usual due to additional workloads, e.g., UK ETS permits, LCP Derogations, and with reduced staff availability due to schools remaining closed, so it might take longer to respond to stakeholder enquiries. Please consider this when submitting applications.
6. OPRED will respond to significant pollution incidents in accordance with our established procedures 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. The safety of OPRED staff and stakeholders continues to be of primary importance. As such, OPRED will continue to be guided by the specific needs and characteristics of the offshore oil & gas industry and will ensure any proposed resumption of regulatory activities is in accordance with advice from the UK and Scottish Government, Public Health England and Health Protection Scotland and in line with established BEIS risk assessment processes.



Offshore Petroleum Regulator  
for Environment & Decommissioning

8. We will keep the situation under continual review. Further updates will be communicated to stakeholders on our website and through our full range of online and offline communication channels.

WITHDRAWN