



Offshore Petroleum Regulator
for Environment & Decommissioning

Offshore Petroleum Regulator for
Environment & Decommissioning
Department for Energy Security & Net Zero
AB1 Building
Crimon Place
Aberdeen AB11 1BJ
E: opred@energysecurity.gov.uk
[Department of Energy Security & Net Zero](#)

17th November 2023

Concerns have been raised by industry relating to the procurement of underwater sonar beacons. OPRED provide the following clarification:

PART 4A OF THE ENERGY ACT 2008 – SCHEDULE OF CONSENT CONDITIONS: 5(g)

'Underwater sonar beacons shall be installed and maintained on the Works in accordance with Ministry of Defence specifications, except where the Works are within 500 meters of a permanent / fixed and charted installation.'

The above condition forms part of the consent to locate a mobile installation administered by OPRED and has been enforced since the introduction of Part 4a of the Energy Act 2008. The use of beacons has essentially always been a requirement and the requirement to install a beacon or submarine sonar 'pinger' was routinely included in Model Clauses attached to certain licences prior to Part 4a of the Energy Act 2008. This type of equipment is usually restricted to the temporary deployment of mobile installations and OPRED would only insist on the use of beacons where Works are being conducted in open water and where there is no other charted subsea infrastructure. This condition is most commonly but not exclusively applicable when undertaking exploration or appraisal drilling in open water where there is a clear seabed with no other permanent / fixed charted installations within 500m of the Works. Underwater beacons must be installed on the Works and operational from when the mobile installation is brought onto location. The Ministry of Defence have confirmed that the condition is valid and extant. There are no derogation options for Condition 5(g) and has no relation to military activity associated with training or danger areas. In circumstances where the consent holder may have issues complying with the terms of the condition, we recommend that they contact their OPRED Environmental Manager as soon as possible.