



THE MERCHANT SHIPPING (OIL POLLUTION PREPAREDNESS, RESPONSE AND CO-OPERATION CONVENTION) REGULATIONS 1998 (as amended)

Requirement for operators of offshore oil and gas installations to undertake an oil pollution emergency response exercise to maintain relevant expertise for the implementation of their OPEP, including interaction with the National Contingency Plan (NCP).

OPRED guidance requires that Tier 3 exercises, which interface with elements of the National Contingency Plan, are held every three years.

With regards to arranging these exercises, OPRED requires that operators contact the Department and other NCP response organisations (e.g. MCA/HMCG, SOSREP, Environment Group, Local Authority) they would like to be involved in the exercise at least six months before the date of the exercise.

Operators should consider the scope of previous exercises when determining the type of exercise to be undertaken. It is also important that Operators consider the worst-case pollution scenarios from their operations and the elements of interaction with the NCP response organisations that may not have been tested that thoroughly before. It is helpful if an outline of possible exercise scenarios (3) is provided to the NCP response organisations for discussion.

An OPRED exercise evaluator will monitor planning of the exercise and evaluate the Operator's response during the exercise. Operators are encouraged to involve the OPRED exercise evaluator in discussions they have with the NCP response organisations to help make the exercise as useful as possible to all involved.

Operators are also responsible for:

- determining which individuals will be involved from all stakeholder organisations and the roles they will play; and
- preparation of joining instructions, exercise directories etc. and dissemination of these documents and arrangements to all stakeholders.

Operators should note that in addition to Tier 3 exercises the allocated OPRED inspector may contact them to arrange observation and/or inspection of Tier 2 exercises and or arrange an onshore inspection of management system arrangements covering oil spill emergency response.