



Offshore Petroleum Regulator for Environment & Decommissioning

ENVIRONMENTAL ALERT

ALERT NUMBER: 002/2025

ISSUE DATE: July 2025

ALERT DETAILS:

Regulation 4(5) of the Merchant Shipping (Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response Co-operation Convention) Regulations 1998 states that every operator shall fully review its oil pollution emergency plan no later than five years after the submission and thereafter at intervals of no more than five years.

Full details on how to comply with this requirement can be found in OPRED's OPEP Guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/oil-and-gas-offshore-environmental-legislation#merchant-shipping-oil-pollution-preparedness-response-co-operation-convention-regulations-1998>

The pertinent information is reproduced below:

Every Responsible Person or Operator of the Oil Handling Facility (Operator) must carry out a full review of each OPEP within five years of the date upon which the OPEP was first approved and a minimum of every five years thereafter.

The five-year review may be brought forward to coincide with a variation to the OPEP. In such circumstances the Responsible Persons or Operators of Oil Handling Facilities must undertake a full review of their OPEP utilising the 'Work on this OPEP' section of the CA Portal.

All five-year reviews must be submitted to the Department via the CA Portal at least two months before the end of the five-year review period.

ALERT FINDINGS:

OPRED has identified instances where the mandatory five-year reviews of Oil Pollution Emergency Plans (OPEPs) were either not conducted or not submitted within the required timeframe. As a result, operations were carried out without approved OPEPs, prompting OPRED to initiate four formal investigations.

This Environmental Alert serves as a reminder to the industry of the requirements under Regulation 4(5) of the Merchant Shipping (Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Convention) Regulations 1998. Operators must ensure OPEPs remain compliant and have systems to monitor expiry dates to prevent regulatory breaches.



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Further Information

Any queries relating to this alert should be addressed to:

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