

Our Vision

Health and safety risks in the Australian offshore petroleum industry are properly controlled.

This series of messages is aimed at keeping you informed of the operations of NOPSA. Please let us know if you would like to be added to the [distribution list](#). Operators and other employers are encouraged to circulate the newsletter to their workforce.

INDUSTRY MATTERS:

- NOPSA commissioned Hart Aviation to undertake research and prepare a [review of offshore helicopter operations in Australia](#)¹, and is now released for public comment. Issues raised include the ageing helicopter fleet and adoption of new aircraft technology and alternative escape and rescue provisions. Please address any comment to information@nopsa.gov.au by 31 January 2008.
- NOPSA is currently investigating a significant engine room fire on a Mobile Offshore Drilling Unit. No injuries were reported during the fire.
- IADC has just launched several new harmonized standards for use by Drilling Contractors and others on a global basis. All these documents have undergone substantial consultation and comment by stakeholders throughout the world and they have widespread acceptance by drilling contractors, governments and oil and gas companies, as a means to improve drilling HSE offshore and on land, as well as crew competency. These documents include:
 - an updated [legislative index](#)² to the IADC HSE Case Guideline for Mobile Offshore Units;
 - the main body of the [guideline](#)³;
 - the IADC HSE Case Guideline for [Land Drilling Operations](#)⁴;
 - the legislative index to the [IADC HSE Case Guideline for Land Drilling Units](#)⁵; and
 - the [IADC Offshore Competency Training Programme](#)⁶, which has been adopted by Drilling Contractors globally and has been accepted as a recognised framework, by the North Sea Offshore Authorities Forum.

¹ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/document/NOPSA%20-%20HART%20Aviation%20report%20on%20Offshore%20Helicopter%20Operations%20Research%20-%20public.pdf>

² <http://www.iadc.org/committees/EWG/Appendix%204%20Issue%203.3%20-%20October%202007.pdf>

³ <http://www.iadc.org/committees/EWG/HSE%20Case%20issue%203.2.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.iadc.org/committees/EWG/IADC%20HSE%20Case%20Guideline%20-%20Land%20Drilling.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.iadc.org/committees/EWG/IADC%20HSE%20Case%20Guideline%20-%20Land%20Drilling%20-%20Appendix%204.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.iadc.org/committees/EWG/IADC%20Offshore%20Competency%20Programme%20-%20revision%20009%20-%20October%202007.pdf>

- **Duty not to Disturb the Site of an Incident:** Operators appear to be well aware that certain incidents, called “accidents and dangerous occurrences” in the Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act, must be reported to the Safety Authority. There is possibly less awareness on offshore facilities that Regulation 53 of the Management of Safety on Offshore Facilities Regulations requires the site of an incident to be left undisturbed unless:
 - An OHS Inspector has given authority (written or oral); OR
 - It is reasonable to do so for the purpose of
 - rescuing or helping casualties or people in danger;
 - maintaining the safety of the facility or people;
 - reducing danger;
 - retrieving, or attempting to retrieve, a dead person; OR
 - More than 3 working days has passed since the Safety Authority was notified and no OHS Inspector has gone to investigate.

A person who disturbs a site can be fined up to 20 penalty units on conviction. This duty is independent of the duty to notify the Safety Authority, although it arises from the same event. Operators are advised to ensure personnel on facilities understand and act accordingly. An OHS Inspector will normally give permission to disturb the site as soon as the Safety Authority has decided it does not intend to gather evidence from it. An operator should note the time and date and the name of the OHS Inspector who gives it permission to disturb a site.

- NOPSA endorses the recent APPEA initiatives in bringing together industry representatives and air service providers in workshops to improve cyclone evacuation (Timor Sea) and emergency response management (Exmouth Sub-basin).

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS:

- NOPSA attended, as an observer, a meeting of the Upstream Petroleum & Geothermal Sub-committee (UPGS) held in Hobart in early October. The UPGS is an inter-Government committee dealing with legislative matters related to Petroleum and Geothermal operations. Issues of note for NOPSA included the proposed consolidation of regulations under the PSLA, the 3 year review of NOPSA operations and the responsibility for regulation of geothermal operations and various integrity issues (well integrity, subsea equipment integrity)
- NOPSA attended two meetings in Perth related to Marine safety matters; the first was a MarineSafe forum, which NOPSA attended as an Observer. The second meeting was an OHS forum hosted by the Commonwealth Government Seacare Authority at which NOPSA presented on the theme of “Trends, Issues and Gaps”.
- NOPSA staff met with staff of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) to exchange information regarding assessment and inspection processes in the context of undertaking further joint inspections
- NOPSA attended the environmental auditors’ forum held by DITR and the Designated Authorities in Brisbane. NOPSA and the Victorian DPI described

how they have collaborated on a number of matters, including joint inspections of OHS and environment issues.

INTERNATIONAL:

- NOPSA notes with deep regret the [collision of a drilling rig with the Usumacinta platform](#)⁷ during stormy weather in Mexico. At least 18 oil workers were killed and seven workers were still missing.
- The Research Director - Production Technology of SINTEF, Mr Inge Carlsen kindly made some time available during his recent visit to Perth to update NOPSA management on the findings of a research project conducted on the Norwegian Continental Shelf relating to failure of Well Integrity. The findings indicated significant problems across the Norwegian industry. Contributors to integrity failure include operating outside the design envelope and unreliability of packers and seals. These issues could be replicated in Australia. SINTEF is an independent Norwegian research organisation (www.sintef.no). See also Conference section of this newsletter for more discussion on Well Integrity under the SPE Applied Technology Workshop.
- The CEO and CIO of the [PPDM](#)⁸ (Public Petroleum Data Model) Association, Trudy Curtis, met with the NOPSA Information Team to explore the potential for NOPSA to contribute to the development of an industry standard for the exchange of data related to occupational health and safety, such as incident reporting. The PPDM has already developed a model for the exchange of data generated by many upstream business activities, encompassing exploration, development, production, marketing and related administrative activities.

CONFERENCES:

- The International Regulators' Forum will host the second [International Regulators' Offshore Safety Conference](#)⁹ on December 4-6, 2007 in Miami, Florida. Regulatory officials and industry representatives from all nations with ongoing or proposed offshore oil and gas activities are encouraged to attend. The 3-day conference will focus on "Asset Integrity," defined as the maintenance of fitness of offshore structures, process plants, connected pipelines and risers, wells, wellheads, drilling and well intervention facilities, and stability systems. Discussions will consider "as-built" facilities, aging structures, maintenance, verification, and safety management systems.
- The Society of Petroleum Engineers recently ran a very successful Applied Technology Workshop in Perth; the theme of the workshop was Wellbore Integrity. NOPSA attended the meeting as did other Government agencies such as WA Department of Industry & Resources, and Geosciences Australia. The workshop took a deliberately broad view of the topic; many of the more formal aspects of managing Well Integrity were very relevant to NOPSA's operation.

⁷ <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=3773440>

⁸ <http://www.ppdm.org/about/index.html>

⁹ <http://www.mms.gov/international/IRF/IRF.htm>

REGULATORY ACTIVITIES in October 2007:

Disclaimer: Activity and incident quantities identified here may vary as further information becomes available. Statistics are prepared just prior to the last Friday of the month.

Safety Case Assessment

Two new and nine revised Safety Cases were accepted.

One safety case revision was rejected. This revision had been requested by NOPSA, as part of an enforcement action to address discrepancies between the actual facility operations and the in-force safety case. However, the submission was determined not to adequately address the relevant matters. In accordance with the legislation the operator has been granted a "reasonable opportunity" to change and resubmit the revision.

As at 26 October 2007:

33 Safety Cases are still under assessment. Five of these are new, one is a PSMP, one is a scope of validation and 27 are revisions (21 of which are five year revisions of related facilities from a single Operator).

Inspections

Three Inspections were conducted. Issues that were identified included:

- Corrosion management (e.g. considerable corrosion of inert gas system branch lines), assurance of competency of people involved in lifting operations, electrical equipment in hazardous areas, confined space entry training.
- Fire systems (particularly around cementing unit), crane & lifting management, auditing.

Incidents & Complaints:

There were 15 incidents reported: 13 Dangerous Occurrences, one Accident and one LTI.

There was one complaint that alluded to unresolved serious safety issues needing rectification, relating to machinery and both recent and long-term practices.

Of the reported incidents:

- One engine room fire occurred
- One uncontrolled loss of helicopter fuel occurred
- One accident caused a fractured foot and dislocated toes
- One LTI involved crushed fingers
- Three could have caused death or serious injury
- Three incidents could have caused lost time of three days or more
- Two were events requiring immediate further investigation



NOPSA

NATIONAL OFFSHORE PETROLEUM SAFETY AUTHORITY

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

ISSUE No. 58 OCTOBER 26, 2007

Enforcement

No Prosecution Briefs, Prohibition Notices, Improvement Notices, Letters of Warning/Advice were issued this month.

Past issues of this newsletter are available from the NOPSA website at:

http://www.nopsa.gov.au/CEO_emails/