

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.

PERSONNEL:

- Rhonda Moore has commenced with NOPSA as our Administrative Assistant. Rhonda has extensive experience of administration in government organisations.
- Louise Oliver joins NOPSA in the position of Data Analyst. Louise has a background in research and pathology.

INDUSTRY MATTERS:

- Coogee Resources (Ashmore Cartier) Pty Ltd pleaded guilty in the Darwin Magistrates Court on 22nd November to a breach of Clause 3 of Schedule 7 of the PSLA¹. The charge related to an incident that occurred on the Jabiru Venture on 11 May 2006, in which an Integrated Operator fell 4.7 metres and broke both his arms. Sentencing is expected 5 December 2007. A press release is available from the NOPSA website.² The injured person has recently returned to work.
- As part of its planned inspection programme for facilities capable of disconnection and sail away, NOPSA is using a Sail Away preparedness checklist, to review the facility's response to the development of adverse weather. The checklist topics include policy and strategy, planning and implementation, monitoring and evaluation and auditing. For example, the planning and implementation prompts include: 'What procedures or guidelines are there to make unambiguous decisions to disconnect and sail away?'

A copy of the checklist may be obtained from the NOPSA website.³

¹ Petroleum (Submerged Lands) Act 1967

² <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/media/Media%20Release%20-%20Coogee%20Resources%2022-11-2007.pdf>

³ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/document/Prompt%20Sheet%20-%20Sail%20Away%20Preparedness.pdf>

- NOPSA reminds new operators proposing to enter Australian waters that early discussions with NOPSA to discuss the OHS regulatory framework are encouraged. This framework is a general duties regime using the safety case approach. Typical preliminary steps prior to submission of a safety case by the operator of a facility include the registration of an operator of the facility and agreement with NOPSA on the scope of validation. More detailed information on entry to Australian operations is available on NOPSA's website.⁴
- Operators and other responsible persons are reminded about their obligations to keep the workforce, and in particular any Health and Safety Representatives, informed about health and safety issues. For example, reports of NOPSA inspections must be provided to the facility OHS committee, or to HSRs if there is no committee (Schedule 7, clause 40(5) of the PSLA) and HSRs must be given copies of any Improvement or Prohibition Notices that are issued by OHS inspectors (clauses 35(9) and 36(9)). Notices must also be displayed at the facility. NOPSA has become aware of several occasions where this has not occurred.
- NOPSA would also like to remind all relevant parties about its accreditation of HSR training courses.⁵ All accredited courses are initial training courses, and operators and employers are obliged under Schedule 7 of the PSLA to send HSRs to such a course. Whilst some training providers may offer HSR refresher courses, these are not accredited by NOPSA - operators and employers may agree to send previously trained HSRs to these courses, but are not under any obligation to do so under the PSLA.
- During a recent facility inspection an OHS inspector was challenged by the person in charge when requesting a copy of documents relating to the inspection. Clause 31 of Schedule 7 of the PSLA provides powers for OHS inspectors to enter and search facilities. More specifically, it provides for the inspector to take extracts from, or make copies of, any documents at the facility. It should be noted that a person may be guilty of an offence if they obstruct or hinder an OHS inspector in the exercise of their powers. A presentation on Powers of OHS inspectors is available from the NOPSA website.⁶
- The Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Management of Safety on Offshore Facilities) Regulations 1996, state that NOPSA may require the operator of a proposed facility or an existing facility to provide a validation with respect to the facility. NOPSA has prepared a revised validation policy⁷, available from the website, which describes the process in more comprehensive and specific terms. NOPSA has withdrawn its previous guideline GL63.

⁴ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/operator.asp>

⁵ http://www.nopsa.gov.au/hsr_training.asp

⁶

<http://www.nopsa.gov.au/presentation/NOPSA%20Presentation%20on%20Powers%20of%20OHS%20inspectors.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/document/N-4200-PL0286%20-%20Validation.pdf>

- An alert has been issued about an engine room fire on a MODU that caused significant damage, and put the rig out of operation for several weeks. The alert examines the causes and lessons learnt from the incident.⁸
- NOPSA is planning two half day workshops on its National Programmes. One will be held in Perth on 25 February and the other in Melbourne on 29 February. We are inviting industry speakers to share their experience of systems to manage facility integrity and lifting operations. More details will follow shortly.

NATIONAL PROGRAMMES:

- Findings from two aspects of the Facility Integrity National Programme are now available on the NOPSA website:
 - Findings from accidents and dangerous occurrences during Q3 2007 have been included in a revised presentation.⁹ Causes contributing to major accident events included defective equipment or parts (24%) inadequate preventative maintenance (22%), procedures not followed or inadequate (13%) and equipment design (12%).
 - Findings from the completion of prompt sheets during NOPSA planned inspections are identified in a new presentation.¹⁰ Management systems for Facility Integrity did not meet good practice expectations in 16% of cases, with 43% partially and 41% fully meeting expectations. The main weaknesses identified were incomplete auditing and review by operators of their systems.
- A significant lifting operations incident which occurred earlier in the year has been addressed through an animated safety alert¹¹ which is now available on the NOPSA website. The video illustrates the factors which contributed to a near fatality.

STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS:

- NOPSA management attended a meeting of the APPEA HSO Committee. The committee shared with NOPSA their concerns regarding consistency of regulatory activities, regulation creep, consultation regarding NOPSA's approach to research, and levies issues.

The committee shared with NOPSA their willingness to be more proactive regarding health and safety, and noted their achievements in establishing the industry CEO leadership forum and five subcommittees.

⁸ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/alert/alert17.asp>

⁹ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/presentation/Presentation - Facility Integrity - Accidents and Dangerous Occurrences.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/presentation/Presentation - Facility Integrity - Planned Inspection.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.nopsa.gov.au/alert/alert18.asp>

INTERNATIONAL:

- On October 12 an MI-8 helicopter operated by Azalhelikopter crashed during a medivac from the Khazar-4 jack-up drilling platform operated by the Azerbaijan State Oil Company, SOCAR¹². All four helicopter crew and the two passengers were killed. The cause is not currently known. The accident occurred in good weather but at night, and night flying is recognised as being higher risk.

The accident has some parallels to the Mumbai High North accident in 2005, in which a vessel struck the platform whilst attempting to transfer an injured person during adverse weather. The two incidents illustrate the need to offset the risks of medivac, in particular at night or during bad weather, against the immediate danger to the injured or ill persons.

- A fire in a turbine module on the Thistle oil production platform in the northern North Sea on 25 November required the evacuation by helicopter of 116 of the 159 persons on board. All personnel were reported to be safe, and the fire to have been extinguished. The facility is operated by Petrofac on behalf of its owner, Lundin Petroleum¹³.
- NOPSAs notes with interest the preparation of the Norwegian Oil Industry Association's (OLF) report on risks associated with G forces in free fall lifeboats and the significant work undertaken to upgrade lifeboats throughout the Norwegian Continental Shelf. Press material is available from the OLF¹⁴ and the Stavanger Aftenblad¹⁵.

¹² http://www.contact.com.az/index.php?type=news&lang=en&news_id=1560

¹³ http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/north_east/7111750.stm

¹⁴ <http://www.olf.no/english/news/?52110>

¹⁵ <http://web3.aftenbladet.no/english/englishnews/article552533.ece>

REGULATORY ACTIVITIES in November 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 one revised Safety Cases were accepted.

One revised and one new Safety Case were rejected.

21 Safety Cases are still under assessment:

- Three new Safety Cases
- 16 revised Safety Cases
- Two Pipeline Safety Management Plans
- One Diving Safety Management Plan
- One Field Development Plan
- One Scope of Validation

Inspections

11 Inspections and one audit were conducted. Issues included:

- Cyclone preparedness and Management of Change.
- HVAC testing.
- Hazard registers/noise control plans.
- Permit To Work system, man overboard & use of cranes, working at height.
- Management of temporary repairs.

Incidents & Complaints:

12 Dangerous Occurrences and two Lost Time Injuries were reported.

Of the reported incidents, significant points to note include:

- one was a fire (gas power turbine)
- one was a major gas release
- one was a significant gas release
- two were LTIs involving crushed finger and jarred knee injuries
- one could have caused death or serious injury
- one was a marine collision
- one involved a substantial risk of accident at a pipeline
- five incidents could have caused lost time of three days or more
- one was an event requiring immediate further investigation

There were four complaints reported.

Enforcement

Five Improvement Notices were issued for:

- Hazardous area electrical equipment did not meet acceptable standards.
- Repairs to inert gas system did not meet the performance standard in the safety case.
- Cranes designated for man overboard rescue were not equipped with winches rated for lifting personnel.
- Permit To Work system inadequate.
- Work flotation vests did not provide head support.

No Prosecution Briefs were prepared.

No Prohibition Notices were served.

No Letters of warning/advice were issued.

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

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