



# Media Release

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For Immediate Release

## **Safety alert highlights need for better cyclone response planning**

The National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority (NOPSA) today issued a safety alert to warn offshore operators of the need for an appropriate Cyclone Response Procedure.

The safety alert was prompted by a recent incident in which a construction vessel was unable to avoid a cyclone because its operator failed to put in place preparations to retrieve anchors and evacuate from its location in a timely manner.

The vessel weathered the storm until its final anchor parted, at which point the vessel was able to make way under its own limited capability to a safe location. Fortunately, no one was injured during the incident, although had the cyclone intensified, the outcome could have been more serious.

Some of the key lessons drawn from this incident include the need to consider location specific cyclone scenarios within the Cyclone Response Procedure including:

- Designated safe mooring areas
- Escape route/sail away restrictions
- Responses for cyclones and tropical lows approaching from various directions incorporating consideration of worst case forecast predictions.
- Helicopter availability
- Key construction activities and their required evacuation preparation times”

CEO of NOPSA, John Clegg said that the incident demonstrated the need for adequate cyclone response planning to cover a wide range of scenarios.

“Preparation and planning are the keys. In this case, the operator’s Cyclone Response Procedure failed to identify and address the risk of topical lows rapidly developing into cyclones and there had not been a sufficient level of cyclone drills and exercises.”

The incident is currently the subject of an investigation by NOPSA occupational health and safety inspectors.

NOPSA’s latest safety alert can be found at: [www.nopsa.gov.au/alert](http://www.nopsa.gov.au/alert)

**Ends.**

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*The National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority (NOPSA) is the occupational health and safety (OHS) regulator for the Australian offshore petroleum industry. NOPSA is a Commonwealth statutory agency that regulates under the Offshore Petroleum and Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2006 in Commonwealth waters and equivalent OHS legislation in designated coastal waters of the States and Northern Territory.*