

---

STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

---

**1996 No. 228**

**Offshore Installations and Wells (Design and Construction, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996**

**Part IV**

**Wells**

**General duty**

**13.—**(1) The well-operator shall ensure that a well is so designed, modified, commissioned, constructed, equipped, operated, maintained, suspended and abandoned that—

- (a) so far as is reasonably practicable, there can be no unplanned escape of fluids from the well; and
- (b) risks to the health and safety of persons from it or anything in it, or in strata to which it is connected, are as low as is reasonably practicable.

(2) The provisions of regulations 14 to 19 and 21 are without prejudice to the generality of the requirements of paragraph (1) save that, where regulation 17(2) places a duty on the duty holder for an installation, the well-operator is not under the same duty.

**Assessment of conditions below ground**

**14.—**(1) Before the design of a well is commenced the well-operator shall cause—

- (a) the geological strata and formations, and fluids within them, through which it may pass; and
- (b) any hazards which such strata and formations may contain,

to be assessed.

(2) The well-operator shall ensure that account is taken of the assessment required by paragraph (1) when the well is being designed and constructed.

(3) The well-operator shall ensure that, while an operation (including the drilling of the well) is carried out in relation to the well, those matters described in paragraph (1)(a) and (b) shall, so far as is reasonably practicable, be kept under review and that, if any change is observed in those matters, such modification is made, where appropriate, to—

- (a) the design and construction of the well; or
- (b) any procedures,

as is necessary to ensure that the purposes described in regulation 13(1) will continue to be fulfilled.

**Design with a view to suspension and abandonment**

**15.** The well-operator shall ensure that a well is so designed and constructed that, so far as is reasonably practicable—

- (a) it can be suspended or abandoned in a safe manner; and
- (b) after its suspension or abandonment there can be no unplanned escape of fluids from it or from the reservoir to which it led.

### **Materials**

**16.** The well-operator shall ensure that every part of a well is composed of material which is suitable for achieving the purposes described in regulation 13(1).

### **Well control**

**17.—(1)** Before an operation in relation to a well (including the drilling of a well) is begun elsewhere than at a borehole site to which the Borehole Sites and Operations Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995(1) apply, the well-operator shall ensure that suitable well control equipment is provided for use during such operations to protect against blowouts.

(2) In the case of an operation to which paragraph (1) applies which is begun—

- (a) from an installation, the duty holder; and
- (b) otherwise than from an installation, the well-operator,

shall ensure that equipment provided pursuant to paragraph (1) is deployed when the prevailing well and operational conditions so require.

### **Arrangements for examination**

**18.—(1)** Before the design of a well is commenced or adopted the well-operator shall make and put into effect arrangements relating to the well of a kind described in paragraph (2) or (where such arrangements already have effect in relation to another well) apply such arrangements, with any appropriate modifications, to the well.

(2) The arrangements referred to in paragraph (1) are arrangements in writing for such examinations, by independent and competent persons, of any part of the well, or similar well, information, or work in progress, and the making of such reports and recommendations, as are suitable for ensuring (with the assistance of such other measures as the well-operator takes) that the well is so designed and constructed, and is maintained in such repair and condition, that—

- (a) so far as is reasonably practicable, there can be no unplanned escape of fluids from the well; and
- (b) risks to the health and safety of persons from it or anything in it, or in strata to which it is connected, are as low as is reasonably practicable.

(3) The well-operator shall review and revise arrangements as often as may be appropriate.

(4) The well-operator shall ensure that the arrangements, any revision of them, and reports and recommendations pursuant to them are kept at an address in Northern Ireland notified to the Department, until the expiration of six months after the arrangements and any revision of them cease to be current.

(5) In the case of a well which, at the coming into operation of these Regulations, is completed, the well-operator shall make and put into effect or (as the case may be) apply the arrangements referred to in paragraph (1) within 1 year after such coming into operation.

(6) In the case of a well, the design of which was commenced or adopted before the coming into operation of these Regulations, but which is not, at such coming into operation, completed, the well-

operator shall make and put into effect or (as the case may be) apply the arrangements referred to in paragraph (1)—

- (a) forthwith; or
- (b) within 1 year after such coming into operation, in a case where a well consent was given not more than 1 year before such coming into operation.

(7) For the purpose of this regulation a person shall be regarded as independent only where—

- (a) his examination will not involve the consideration by him of an aspect, of a thing liable to be examined, for which he bears or has borne such responsibility as might compromise his objectivity; and
- (b) he will be sufficiently independent of a management system, or of a part thereof, which bears or has borne any responsibility for an aspect, which he might consider, of a thing liable to be examined, to ensure that he will be objective in discharging his function.

(8) In this regulation “well consent” means a consent in writing to the commencement of drilling of the well—

- (a) of the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry required by clause 19(1) of the model clauses contained in Schedule 4 to the Petroleum (Production) (Seaward Areas) Regulations 1988<sup>(2)</sup>;
- (b) of the Department required by clause 12(1) of the model clauses contained in Schedule 2 to the Petroleum (Production) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1987<sup>(3)</sup>,

in a case where the clause is, pursuant to the relevant Regulations, incorporated in a licence.

### **Provision of drilling etc. information**

**19.**—(1) Where an operation to which this paragraph applies is being carried out on a well the well-operator shall cause to be sent to the Department, at such intervals as may be agreed or, failing agreement, at intervals of one week calculated from its commencement, a report comprising the following information—

- (a) the identifying number, and any slot number, of the well;
- (b) the name of any installation or vessel involved;
- (c) a summary of the activity in the course of the operation since its commencement, or the previous report;
- (d) the diameter and true vertical and measured depths of—
  - (i) any hole drilled; and
  - (ii) any casing installed;
- (e) the drilling fluid density immediately before making the report; and
- (f) in the case of an existing well, its current operational state.

(2) Paragraph (1) applies to—

- (a) a drilling operation;
- (b) a workover operation;
- (c) an abandonment operation;
- (d) an operation consisting in the completion of a well;
- (e) any other operation of a kind involving substantial risk of the unplanned escape of fluids from a well.

---

(2) [S.I. 1988/1213](#); to which there are amendments not relevant to these Regulations

(3) [S.R. 1987 No. 196](#)

### **Co-operation**

**20.** Every person who is, or is to be concerned (in whatever capacity) in an operation in relation to a well (including the drilling of a well) shall co-operate with the well-operator so far as is necessary to enable him to discharge his duties under regulations 13(1) and 17.

### **Information, instruction, training and supervision**

**21.** In the case of a drilling, well intervention or workover operation to be carried out on a well—

- (a) from an installation, the duty holder; and
- (b) otherwise than from an installation, the well-operator,

shall ensure that the operation is not carried out, unless it is carried on in circumstances where the persons carrying out the operation have received such information, instruction and training, and are being so supervised, that the risk to health and safety from such operation is reduced to the lowest level that is reasonably practicable.