

Guidance: UK national standard for marine oil spill response organisations

Updated: Added info re. delay in implementation of the UK national standard.

The Merchant Shipping (Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Convention(OPRC)) Regulations 1998 (SI 1988 No.1056) (as amended) state that certain UK ports, harbours and oil-handling facilities and all offshore installations on the UK Continental Shelf must submit OPRC Plans to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) (in the case of ports, harbours and oil handling facilities) or the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (in the case of offshore installations, as defined in the Regulation) for approval.

As part of the approvals process for ports, harbours and oil handling facilities to which the Regulations apply, the MCA require contingency plans to detail the contract they hold with an accredited third-party Tier 2 Oil Spill Response Organisation (OSRO).

BEIS similarly require responsible persons of offshore installations to detail in Oil Pollution Emergency Plans (OPEPs) any arrangements in place with an OSRO.

Following a consultation with industry on the creation of a UK National Standard for OSROs, carried out between January and March 2018, a final version has been published. The Standard will remain a living document, evolving with the requirements of industry and new best practice guidance, but any new amendments will be based on further dialogue and consultation between the appropriate government departments and agencies, approved Accrediting Bodies and the OSRO industry.

The date of implementation for the UK national standard has been postponed by two weeks. The delay is to allow time for the accrediting bodies approved to deliver the standard to co-ordinate on key areas of their schemes (not including price) to ensure that they are consistent in their assessments of OSROs.

The amendment to the OPRC guidelines for ports and the guidance notes for preparing oil pollution emergency plans, to state that only oil spill response organisations accredited under the UK national standard will be recognised for the purpose of fulfilling their specified Tier 2 response service requirements, will now be published on 24th September 2018. From this date, a one-year grace period will be in effect. During this time OSROs will still be recognised by the MCA and BEIS in their review of OPRC plans and OPEPS (respectively) for the purpose of Tier 2 service provision. Before the end of the grace period OSROs are expected to seek re-accreditation in accordance with the UK standard from an accrediting body which has been

approved by the MCA and BEIS to deliver this service. From the 23rd September 2019, OSROs which have not been re-accredited in accordance with the UK standard will no longer be recognised by the MCA and BEIS as fulfilling Tier 2 service requirements in their reviews of OPRC plans and OPEPs.

The MCA and BEIS will now be accepting applications from Accrediting Bodies wishing to be approved to deliver the UK Standard. Details on the requirements for provision can be found in the final UK Standard document. Proposed schemes of accreditation, detailing how the requirements have been fulfilled should be submitted by email to ukresponderstandard@mcga.gov.uk or by post to:

Counter Pollution and Salvage Branch

Spring Place

105 Commercial Road

Southampton

S015 1EG

Follow up meetings will be held after review of the proposed scheme by the MCA, at which point a Memorandum of Agreement for the delivery of this accreditation service on behalf of the MCA and BEIS will be signed. The version of the UK Standard published here is Version 1.

Any questions can be submitted to: ukresponderstandard@mcga.gov.uk

For details on which ports and harbours the OPRC Regulations apply to, see: [The Merchant Shipping \(Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Convention\) Regulations 1998, Regulation 3: Application](#)