



Energy & Industry Department Prime Minister's Office Note to Industry (NTI)

TOPIC Control of Major Accident Hazards (Amendment) Regulations 2017 (COMAH) Well Notification Requirements			Reference Number 2017/NTI/9
Approved by: Head of HSE	Issue date: 11 th Oct 2017	Expiry date: OPEN	Revision No: 1

Purpose

The Control of Major Accident Hazards (Amendment) Regulations 2017 (COMAH) regulation 12 requires a well operator to send a written notification to the Authority of any well operation, as defined in Regulation 3 and containing the particulars as specified in Schedule 6.

This NTI provides practical guidance on what well activities constitute a well operation, and thus require a notification to the Competent Authority.

Background

Well operators are sometimes uncertain as to which well activities must be notified to the Competent Authority. This applies in particular to well servicing activities.

The purpose of the written notification is to inform the Competent Authority of the forthcoming operation and demonstrate that the planned operation will be carried out safely. It should contain sufficient information for the competent authority to understand the nature of the operation and satisfy him that the risks to health and safety specific to the well have been identified and suitable precautions are being implemented.

Well operators will not receive a certificate from the competent authority to commence notified well operations. For a satisfactory submission well operators will receive only acknowledgement by the competent authority of receipt of the notification. They may commence operations after the notification period has passed, and provided it is safe to do so. Well operators are responsible for the safety of the well.

Identifying which well operations must be notified

The COMAH requirement to notify the competent authority is stipulated in regulation 12

12 (1) "Subject to paragraph (2) a well operator shall ensure that no well operation is commenced unless he has sent a notification containing the particulars specified in Schedule 6 to the Executive at least 21 days (or such shorter period as the Executive may specify) before commencing that operation.

(2) A well operator shall ensure that no well operation which involves –

(a) insertion of a hollow pipe in the well; or

(b) altering the construction of the well, is started unless he has sent a notification containing the particulars specified in Schedule 6 to the competent authority at least 10 days (or such shorter period as the competent authority may specify) before the start of that operation.

Well operation is defined in Regulation 3

“well operation” means –

(a) the drilling or construction of a well, including the restart of drilling after a well has been completed, suspended or abandoned by plugging; or

(b) any activity in relation to a well during which there may be an accidental release of hazardous substances from that well which could give rise to the risk of a major accident;

Within the “well operation” definition, part (b) has been further clarified, with guidance provided below on which well activities should be notified especially when there is potential of risk of a major accident, and which well activities may not require a well notification to be submitted to the Competent Authority.

So what well activities require notification?

Any activities where a well is being initially constructed or modified e.g.

- Any drilling activity;
- Running or recovering drill-pipe, tubing, casing or coiled tubing through the wellhead; or
- Any operations involving alteration of the construction *of the well*.

Wire-line and other operations requiring notification on a naturally flowing well are:

- Perforating a reservoir;
- Perforating or punching tubing;
- Replacing sub-surface safety valve (SSSV) or down hole safety valve (DHSV) with injection valve or “storm choke”, except as a short-term measure;
- Locking open SSSV/DHSV, except as a short-term measure;
- Setting gas-lift valves for the first time;

- Installation of tree saver; and
- Tree change-out.

So what well activities DO NOT require notification?

Notification is not required for the following well activities on a non-naturally flowing well

- Perforating tubing/reservoir when there is no chance of natural flow being initiated;
- Bailing;
- Change-out of wire-line set Electric Submersible Pump (ESP) or Hydraulic Submersible Pump (HSP);
- Change-out of gas-lift valve;
- Logging;
- Opening sliding sleeve;
- Perforating reservoir;
- Setting or recovering plug for water shut-off or zone isolation;
- Setting or recovering tubing plug;
- Setting or recovering pressure gauges;
- Tree change-out with like-for-like;
- Pulling and re-running pump rods; or
- change-out of rod pump or Progressing Cavity Pump (PCP).

Note: for any operation not listed above, there should be a notification to the Competent Authority.

If still in doubt, the well operator should assume that a notification is required.

Material change to notification of well operations

Material change is defined in Regulation 3

“material change” means any change in design or operations that is significant to require a re-submission of the notification or Safety Case, and includes –

- (a) *physical changes to the plant;*
- (b) *changes to operational parameters;*
- (c) *organisational or staff changes; or*

(d) *change in risk profile;*

The duty to inform the Competent Authority of a Material Change is stated in regulation 12 (3). *Where there is a material change in any of the particulars notified pursuant to sub-regulations (1) and (2) prior to completion of the relevant well operation, the well operator shall, as soon as practicable, notify the Competent Authority of that change.*

So what constitutes a material change in well operations?

Change of rig

A change in the rig to be used will constitute a material change. If at the time of the notification it is uncertain which rig is to be used, it is recommended that details of all likely rigs, as listed in the appropriate schedule to the regulations, are included. If this is done, the notification of material change needs only to identify the rig.

Drilling to a new target location

Changes in target, including side-track, can be accepted as a material change, rather than a new notification, where the change is due to unexpected geological conditions or mechanical difficulties in the well, but the geological objective of the well remains the same.

Sidetracks to a new target with a different geological objective will require a new notification unless sufficient details of the proposed sidetrack have been included in the original notification.

Where the operator plans to sidetrack for a new geological objective from a current well and the sidetrack has not been included in the original notification, it may be appropriate for competent authority to agree to a shortening of the notification period.

Major changes

Where changes to a notified activity alter the risk profile significantly such that they lead to a revision of important parts of the drilling or work-over programme, then a new notification is required. An example of this is where a decision is made to change from conventional drilling to managed pressure or under-balanced drilling.

Way Forward for reporting of Well Notifications

Well operators are directed to continue submitting well notifications to the Energy and Industry Department Prime Minister's Office (EIDPMO), Upstream Business Division copying the

EIDPMO-HSE/SHENA Wells MAH and Financial Focal Points, Paul Booley [paul.booley@energy.gov.bn] and Hj Rosmali Bin DP Hj Zakaria [rosmali.zakaria@jpm.gov.bn].

When planning to submit a Well Notification, well operators should request Hj Rosmali for a Finance Reference Number (FRN) and this shall be referred to in all communications regarding that specific well notification.

EIDPMO Upstream Business Division will continue to review all well notification submissions and respond via email to the well operator concerned. Implementation date for invoicing on well notifications will be **1st February 2018**.

A copy of this NTI can be found on the EIDPMO HSSE website
<http://www.ei.gov.bn/SitePages/Note%20to%20Industry.aspx>

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