



Communiqué

International Regulators' Forum Responds to Challenges of COVID-19 in the Offshore Petroleum Sector

May 7, 2020

The International Regulators' Forum (IRF), comprised of 11 countries' regulators of health and safety in the offshore upstream oil and gas industry, met this week via teleconference to share information about the COVID-19 pandemic and discuss the IRF's plans for the year ahead.

Participants discussed issues that the pandemic has created for the offshore industry in their respective jurisdictions, which include occurrences of illness in offshore workers in some countries, the challenges associated with physical distancing, reductions in personnel on facilities, and other preventative measures in offshore operations. The additional challenge of low oil prices globally was also discussed.

The IRF encourages the offshore petroleum industry to continue to build upon improved information sharing and measures taken to date to reduce the risks of transmission or spread of COVID-19. To date, best practices have included preventative quarantines, screening and testing of offshore workers, health and temperature checks before traveling offshore and again onboard facilities, physical distancing, adjustments to rotations and schedules, use of personal protective equipment, quick and thorough responses to positive cases on offshore facilities, and other measures that are consistent with public health advice.

Individual operators, industry associations, helicopter and other service providers, facility and vessel owners, contractors and sub-contractors, and members of the workforce all have important roles to play in responding to the pandemic. As always, the industry must focus on prevention, pay attention to the cumulative effects of risks, and maintain appropriate emergency response readiness.

In recognizing the current and upcoming challenges faced by the industry, IRF members also wish to underscore the importance of sustaining or enhancing asset and operational integrity through appropriate preventative and corrective maintenance, along with ensuring training and competency to reduce risks to worker safety and the environment. Cost-cutting measures in light of low oil prices must not be allowed to compromise the industry's performance in these areas, process safety, or barrier management in well control.

The IRF Conference that had been planned for this October in Australia will be rescheduled to October 2021. The 2020 IRF Annual General Meeting will proceed via teleconference this October. In the meantime, IRF members will continue to share information and best practices with a view to enhancing regulatory oversight and supporting industry measures to address the pandemic.

The members of the IRF are the offshore upstream petroleum health and safety regulators from Australia, Brazil, Canada (Chair), Denmark, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States.