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Notifying Next of Kin

A Guidance Document for the Offshore Energy Industry

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About this document

This Police Scotland document provides guidance to companies on procedures for notifying next of kin following a serious incident offshore, when one or more of the following triggers have been met:

- Early indication of multiple fatalities, multiple persons with life-threatening injuries and/or multiple missing persons.
- Appointment of a Police Senior Identification Manager (SIM).
- Establishment of a Police Operations and Coordination Centre.

It covers only the **initial** notification of next of kin about someone being involved in an incident offshore. In this context, involved means that the people are either missing, injured or apparently deceased. This guidance does **not** alter the existing procedure for companies making notifications to next of kin about incidents when the above triggers have not been met. Likewise this guidance does **not** alter the existing procedure for the Police notifying the next of kin of someone's death when this has been confirmed.

This document may be useful to those responsible for:

- Preparing emergency response plans, and
- Organising and training Relative Response and Emergency Response teams,

It covers the following:

1. Keeping next of kin information up to date
2. Gathering personnel-on-board data
3. Handling personnel-on-board information in an incident
4. Giving initial information to next of kin
5. How this procedure is likely to develop

The guidance applies only to offshore energy installations and associated activity, such as helicopter movements, where policing responsibility lies with Police Scotland. These installations are in the northern and central North Sea, and west of Shetland in Scottish waters of the UK Continental Shelf north of the latitude 55° 50' 00".

For incidents occurring out with these areas, companies should liaise with the appropriate Police Forces.

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1. Keeping next of kin information up to date

In an incident, Police may ask companies for next of kin information. It is important that companies keep information about next of kin up to date.

Companies should also have processes in place to access this information at short notice and at all times.

2. Gathering personnel-on-board (POB) data

Most oil and gas companies in the Police Scotland area use the Vantage system developed by LOGIC (Leading Oil and Gas Industry Competitiveness)

Police Scotland will use companies' Vantage POB data as a source of information during incidents. It is accepted that some companies use other personnel tracking systems and data from such systems may also be used by the Police.

The option to use further methods to confirm personnel on board, such as requesting a call to muster on an installation, will remain and can be used if required.

3. Handling personnel-on-board information in an incident.

If one or more of the triggers detailed above are present, then it is almost certain that a Police Liaison Officer (PLO) will be deployed to the company where the Emergency Response to the incident is being coordinated from. PLOs may also be deployed to other Emergency Response Rooms (ERR).

In an incident, it is a priority to get a personnel-on-board list. In most cases the PLO will obtain the list from the company and pass this to Police Scotland Divisional Headquarters, Queen Street, Aberdeen. In the absence of a PLO the company may be asked by the Police to email the POB list to Police Scotland Divisional Headquarters, Queen Street, Aberdeen or the POB list may be collected by Police.

If there is any objection to the company contacting the next of kin, the Officer in receipt of the list will make direct contact with the company's ERR or alternatively the ERR contact will be made by the PLO or the North Area Control Room Inspector.

4. Giving initial information to next of kin

Information about people involved in the incident

This is the procedure for initially contacting next of kin to confirm that someone has been involved in an incident offshore. In this context, involved means that the people are either injured, missing or apparently deceased.

The company coordinating the emergency response for the incident is responsible for making sure arrangements are in place for getting this message to next of kin. The wording of this message will require to be agreed with or drafted by Police Scotland. The message will not normally include any specific information regarding whether the person is injured, missing or apparently deceased.

The company responsible for the overall coordination of the emergency response may liaise with any other contractors or service companies as appropriate to ensure the task of initially informing next of kin is completed. Ultimately, this coordinating company is responsible for ensuring that all the messages are passed.

Information about people not involved in the incident

If next of kin contact companies about relatives who are not believed to be involved in the incident and it is confirmed they are at a place of safety (i.e. people who are not injured, missing, or apparently deceased), Relative Response teams may give this information. This procedure is currently followed by many companies.

Appointing a single point of contact for next of kin

The company may wish to nominate a single point of contact for next of kin of those involved in the incident to provide further help such as welfare support and counselling.

5. How this procedure is likely to develop

The guidance will be reviewed and updated periodically to take into account learning from exercises and incidents.