

HID Chemical Industries Forum (CIF) Meetings			
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**INFORMATION ITEM FOR MEETING OF CIF
22 OCTOBER 2002**

**BEST PRACTICE IN PERMISSIONING
PROPOSAL FOR HID MEETING**

1. The role of HID's Operational Policy Unit (OPU) in permissioning policy includes the important aspect of promoting the use of best practice across the permissioning regimes enforced by HID, which include offshore safety, major hazards onshore, gas safety and explosives licensing. Promoting best practice involves partnerships between colleagues in HID and with the various industry sectors to develop ways of regulating, which incorporate the best features of each regime. Best practice in this context includes legislative, guidance and process aspects.
2. The longer term output will be to achieve convergence of principles and concepts, not to have the same regime for all sectors or a common set of regulations. This would be difficult anyway, with the onshore sector constrained by EU Directives, but it need not be a bar to achieving potential synergies, providing that full account is taken of industry-specific factors. Convergence should not be an end in itself – we should focus on sharing best practice and achieving changes for which we can demonstrate clear benefits. In delivering this, the HID permissioning regimes will converge naturally by stimulating an evolutionary process.
3. To achieve this, we need a clear view across HID of what lessons we can learn from each other and how they might be applied to the industries we regulate. We also need to involve external stakeholders, to maintain transparency and to take their views. At the moment there is little awareness of the topic, internally or externally, and as a result little motivation for those involved in one regime to learn from those in another.
4. A key step in this process is a meeting between representatives of HID divisions and industry to agree a common understanding of possible convergence of regimes and how it could be developed across the industries HID regulates. Such discussions, which would include SPD, would be aimed at working with industry to develop the best solutions, rather than presenting them with worked-up models for comment and would take into account current work on the RHHI discussion document (DDE15) and the review of offshore safety case legislation.

5. The timing of this initiative is ideal because it will allow the introduction of new practices to support proposed changes to the Offshore Safety Case Regulations and provide evidence for including additional changes to COMAH, which need to be incorporated in 2003 for implementation in 2004 required to deliver the latest amendments to Seveso II.
6. The initial focus for reviewing best practice should relate to the permissioning processes and the principles that support them. We think there is a second stage, which would look at how assessment judgements are made. This could look at best practice relating to assessment criteria and their use as well as ALARP judgements.
7. OPU has identified a number of areas where current practice should be reviewed and practice in each regimes looked at
 1. the indirect acceptance approach in COMAH is based on not issuing a Prohibition Notice. The benefits of a more positive approach in the offshore regime should be reviewed, for initial reports at least.
 2. the review/revision strategy required to keep a safety report/ case up to date. The more flexible approach in the COMAH regime rather than a complete assessment on a cyclical basis may offer an approach for the offshore regime.
 3. coping with change e.g. how the regimes deal with new build and changes in installations
 4. how we drive continuous improvement.

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