

| Health and Safety Executive Board |                               | HSE/ 14/99  |      |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------|------|
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## Approval to publish the revised ACOP L122 *Safety of Pressure Systems*

### Purpose of the paper

1. To seek the Board's approval to publish the revised ACOP L122 Safety of Pressure Systems.

### Background

2. The Lofstedt Report required HSE to review all its ACOPs, and HSE agreed to complete this process by the end of 2014.
3. L122 Safety of Pressure Systems provides guidance on the Pressure Systems Safety Regulations 2000 (PSSR) and places duties on users of pressure equipment at work.
4. The aim of PSSR is to prevent serious injury from the hazard of stored energy as a result of a failure of a pressure system or one of its component parts. With the exception of the scalding effect of steam, PSSR does not cover the hazardous properties of the contents that are released, for example toxic substances. These are covered by separate legislation.
5. HSE carried out extensive consultation with key stakeholders prior to the formal public consultation, which was conducted from 1 September to 13 October 2014. The findings of this consultation (and the earlier consultation on all the ACOPs in 2012) showed that stakeholders felt that the ACOP was fit for purpose. Thus the revision sought to improve and update, but not radically change, the ACOP.

### Self-employed exemption

6. HSE has recommended that all work on pressure systems is excluded from the self-employed exemption from health and safety legislation due to the risks involved. Assuming that this situation remains the case, the wording in this ACOP is accurate with regard to self-employed people's duties under PSSR.

### Results of the public consultation

7. This is the first revision of the PSSR ACOP since its publication in 2000. Key stakeholders were consulted individually prior to the public consultation, and their comments were incorporated into the draft that went out for wider public consultation. For example, the new Appendix on small pressure vessels in

schools was the outcome of discussions with CLEAPSS, the educational organisation for school science.

8. The revision incorporated comments from specialists within HSE and from responses to the 2012 external consultation on all ACOPs, during which stakeholders indicated that the PSSR ACOP was fit for purpose. The changes are therefore mostly editorial and not controversial. For example, the “decision tree” (“Do these regulations apply to my pressure system?”) has been moved from the back to the front, to make it easier to find this information more readily. Other changes include: updating references, putting paragraphs into a more logical sequence and making material more concise where appropriate.
9. The 2014 public consultation generated around 40 detailed responses, from all sectors of the economy including industry (50% of replies), health and safety consultants (30%), local and national government, charitable organisations, emergency services and trade unions.
10. The small number of responses seems very low; however, the raw figures can be misleading. For example, one of the detailed responses was from the Safety Federation (‘SAFed’), which had consulted its members and incorporated their comments in its response. SAFed member companies employ over 2,600 highly qualified engineer surveyors, who provide a wide range of statutory inspection services throughout the UK. SAFed members are one of the main users of the ACOP. Another response came from the trade union, Unite.
11. There were five questions asked in the consultation; four specific and one general, along with two general free text sections for respondents to expand on their answers and make further suggestions for improvements. Overall, across the four questions which asked for agreement or disagreement with the actions taken, there was 92% agreement with the changes made. For example, for question 1, which asked if the overall approach to the review of this ACOP was correct (i.e. update and clarify the text and improve the structure rather than making significant changes to the content), all the responses except two agreed with our approach.
12. Of the two responses that disagreed with our approach, one wanted a different style of document entirely, and the other wanted a change to the wording of Regulation 8, which was outside the scope of the review. Two respondents commented in question 5 that the HSE e-bulletin alerting them to the consultation had arrived when the consultation was already underway, so they had not had the full six weeks to consider it, and another questioned the need for a review of this ACOP at all, given that it was seen as fit for purpose already.
13. There were many positive comments on the improved readability, the new appendix for small pressure vessels in schools, and the changes to the ACOP structure, especially on moving the “decision tree” (on whether or not PSSR applies) from the back of the document to the front. Others commented on the use of appendices to provide details, for example, on different ways of measuring ‘equivalent pressures’. Comments included: “The new version is easier to navigate,” “more concise and has more direction,” “you can quickly

navigate to where you want to be” and “moving the decision tree could save a lot of unnecessary reading.”

### **Action**

14. The Board is asked to note the work undertaken to revise, update and consult on the ACOP L122 Safety of Pressure Systems and to approve its publication.

### **Paper clearance**

This paper has been cleared by the Regulation Committee.