

<b>HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE</b>		<b>HID SHORT LIFE CIRCULAR</b>	
<b>Hazardous Installations Directorate</b>		<b>SLC/2006/03</b>	
<b>Author Section:</b>	<b>HID CI 2</b>	<b>OG Status:</b>	<b>Fully Open</b>
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<b>STATUS: For Action by HID CI Inspectors</b>			

TO:

HID CI 1- 5 (Band 0 – 4) and Regulatory Compliance Officers (RCO's)

## **SAFETY REVIEW PROGRAMME – OIL/FUEL STORAGE SITES**

### **PURPOSE**

The Buncefield Major Investigation Board released a [Progress Report](#) on 21st February. This has been made available to CI staff. The report refers to a Safety Alert which has been issued with a covering letter to operators to COMAH operators (Annex 1). Its primary target is oil and fuel storage sites and asks duty holders to review the safety of their operations and plant and to report the findings to HSE by Easter 2006. CI operational teams are being asked to follow up those reviews to check on progress and ensure that all appropriate safety measures are in place and operational. Other COMAH sites which have smaller but similar facilities are being asked to advise their local inspectors of any action they have taken.

Due to the extremely tight deadlines within the programme it has not been possible to issue full guidance and information in one document. **This initial note is to help CI Operational Teams prepare for the first stages of the Programme.** More detailed guidance is still being prepared. The timetable for the operational programme is:

### **TIME TABLE**

- |      |   |          |
|------|---|----------|
| i.   | Safety Alert to all COMAH operators sent by CI4   | 21-02-06 |
| ii.  | Meeting with Trade Associations   | 24-02-06 |
| iii. | List of sites sent prioritised for attention to CI Teams  | 27-02-06 |
| iv.  | Review Report Form issued to CI operational Teams   | 03-03-06 |
| v.   | Guidance on issues to cover in the site review and reporting form to CI operational teams         | 03-03-06 |
| vi.  | Site contacts to be completed and CI inspectors report of findings submitted to Programme Manager | 13-04-06 |

- v. Operator's findings on review to be submitted to HSE 17-04-06
- vi. Summary report on findings to Head of Division 31-05-06

1. Meeting these deadlines will mean a considerable amount of unplanned work at an already busy period in our work year. CIMM recognises the difficulties this will impose on operational staff. This work should be given priority over other work with the exception of urgent investigation of serious accidents or incidents. Conflicting priorities should be resolved at Team or Unit level.
2. The operators' responses to the Safety Alert, together with the HSE on-site inspections, will provide the evidence on which to base any future advice once further information flows from the Buncefield investigation team.

## ORGANISATION

3. This assurance programme is being co-ordinated by a small Bootle-based CI team reporting to Kevin Allars, chaired by Ron De Cort and managed by Ian Travers.

## SCOPE

4. The Safety Alert has been sent to **all COMAH sites** currently registered on CIS. However, the inspection programme will focus on those sites which store and handle large quantities of oil and fuel as flammable liquids. A list of such sites will be sent to B2 Team leaders. **Team leaders are asked to check this list for completeness and notify the programme team of any changes prior to the inspection being undertaken.**

## ACTION

5. CI inspectors should endeavour to visit all relevant COMAH oil/fuel storage sites as soon as possible, and if practicable, before the operators complete their assessments. **CI operational teams should start planning for these visits immediately.** In exceptional circumstances, where this is not feasible due to the number of sites to be visited and geographical constraints, inspectors should contact the site to check progress. Every effort should be made to include EA/SEPA inspectors in the visits.
6. Operators should be expected to have made progress with reviewing their arrangements in line with the Easter completion date. Inspectors should discuss any reasonably practicable improvements that should be made and if necessary, take enforcement action to ensure timely improvements are implemented.

## STANDARDS OF COMPLIANCE

7. Further guidance on the aspects to be reviewed will be issued shortly. In preparing for the site visits inspectors should focus on the areas covered in paragraphs (a)-(f) of Step 4 to the Safety Alert. The aim should be to verify that the on-site risks are ALARP, and in particular for COMAH TT sites, that

the necessary measures specified in the Safety Report are in place and fully functioning.

## **SITES RECENTLY INSPECTED**

8. Where already available, information from inspections completed since 11 December 2005 may be used to complete the assessment reports providing that all the issues have been adequately reviewed.

## **RECORDING AND SUBMITTING THE FINDINGS**

9. The CI assessment report form should be provided to operators as this will ensure consistency of approach. Operators may wish to use this form to report the outcomes of their reviews to HSE. However, in such cases separate returns will be required from each party as HSE visits may be completed before the operator has completed their review and vice versa.

## **LINES TO TAKE DURING SITE INSPECTION**

10. Inspectors should adhere closely to the lines set out in the Safety Alert and information contained within the MIB Progress report. Inspectors should not further speculate on the causes of the incident, as the full cause is still to be clearly determined. The purpose behind this programme is to provide assurance that there are not similar circumstances which could give rise to a release of a large quantities of flammable substances elsewhere. The issues contained in the Safety Alert represent key controls expected to be in place and are not the definitive underlying causes of the incident.

## **ENFORCEMENT**

11. Where the visits highlight significant deficiencies in the control of risk then appropriate enforcement action should be taken. Inspectors should ensure that enforcement action is in accordance with HSC's Enforcement Policy Statement. Inspectors should utilise the Enforcement Management Model to guide and record enforcement decisions.
12. Inspectors are asked to advise the Programme Management Team at the earliest opportunity when minded to take enforcement action. To ensure consistency where an Improvement Notice is being considered the Programme management team will facilitate a peer review. Depending on availability CI B2 team leaders may be asked at short notice to participate in these reviews. When considering prohibition action inspectors are asked to alert the Programme Management team so that a suitable upward briefing may be prepared. For urgent action the inspectors should first contact Ian Travers, and if not available, Ron de Cort and then Kevin Allars.

## **CHARGING**

13. This review is being undertaken as part of HSE's regulatory function under COMAH and should be charged to the duty holder in line with HSE's cost recovery policy.

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

At any stage of the programme please contact - Ian Travers - CI2A - Tel: 0151 951 3834, VPN: 523 3834, Fax 0151 951 4980 -[ian.travers@hse.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ian.travers@hse.gsi.gov.uk)

## **ANNEX 1**

21<sup>st</sup> February 2006

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **CONTROL OF MAJOR ACCIDENT HAZARD REGULATIONS 1999**

Please find attached a 'Safety Alert', which I am sending to all COMAH site operators following the Buncefield oil/fuel storage depot incident in December.

This safety alert is primarily for the attention of those companies operating similar oil/fuel storage facilities. However, this type of installation (more modest in scale) may also exist on other sites.

If you are an operator of an oil/fuel storage site or similar can you initiate the review requested in the safety alert prior to HSE making contact with you as outlined. It would be appreciated if you could let me know by Easter what you have done.

All other COMAH operators are advised to review their arrangements for any similar facilities. If you have found it necessary to take such action please let your local inspector know what you have done.

Yours sincerely,

Kevin Allars  
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## **SAFETY ALERT TO OPERATORS OF “COMAH” OIL/FUEL STORAGE SITES**

The Buncefield incident on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2005 has demonstrated the capability of a very large hydrocarbon leak to create a massive explosion with a destructive power beyond the typical ‘worst case’ normally used for on- and off-site emergency planning purposes, and as the basis for advice to planning authorities on off-site development options. The incident is a reminder of the need for operators to maintain the highest levels of plant integrity and operational capability. There are nearly 100 sites around Great Britain with consent to store quantities of oil or other fuels that make them subject to the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations 1999.

Whilst the precise causes of the incident at Buncefield have not yet been fully identified, HSE advises that operators of similar installations:

- review the safety of their operations and plant to ensure that major accident hazards are being well managed,
- ensure that staff are adequately trained and competent to manage these hazardous operations,
- ensure that management systems are robust, and subject to effective review,
- ensure that relevant good practice precautions are in place and fully operational, and
- ensure that there are appropriate measures in place for responding to, and dealing with, emergencies involving loss of containment.

In order to ensure that this happens HSE has formed an inspection team charged with developing a staged programme comprising:

**Step 1:** Meeting with key trade associations, UKPIA, TSA, CIA, BCDTA and others as appropriate, to identify a set of issues that operators should review, so as to ensure relevant good practice precautions are in place. Also to continue to encourage the trade associations to work with their members to promote sharing of, and learning from information from major accident precursor events.

**Step 2:** Developing a targeted and nationally consistent action plan.

**Step 3:** Writing to all operators requesting they review their operations, informing them of the forthcoming inspection programme, and asking them to report the outcomes of their reviews to HSE by Easter 2006.

**Step 4:** Inspections at all sites covered by this alert, to:

- (a) Confirm the pattern of storage of flammable substances in the tanks on the sites.

- (b) Encourage operators to review storage tank utilisation so as to minimise the potential for off-site risks, whilst also maintaining high standards of on-site safety.
- (c) Review preventive and mitigation measures in place, including appropriate safety management systems, to ensure they represent good practice.
- (d) Review the adequacy of maintenance arrangements for storage tanks and bunds, and their associated safety critical equipment such as level measuring and alarm systems.
- (e) Check that operators have revisited their assumptions for provision of equipment for detecting and dealing with loss of containment and flammable atmospheres.
- (f) Continue to encourage operators to review and to promote sharing of, and learning from information from precursor events, so as to ensure continued learning of lessons applicable to major accident prevention.

Visits to ALL oil/fuel storage sites that fall under the COMAH Regulations **will be undertaken without delay**, and, if practicable, before the operators complete their further assessment (Step 3 above). When HSE Inspectors visit the sites, or speak to the operators, they will expect the operators to have made progress with reviewing their arrangements in line with the Easter completion, and will discuss any reasonably practicable improvements that should be made at that time. If necessary, HSE will use its enforcement powers to ensure that timely site-based improvements are made.

When more precise information on the cause of incident is determined, further advice will be issued to the industry, together with a plan for HSE and, if appropriate, the relevant environment agency staff (either EA or SEPA) to follow up on key issues aimed at preventing a re-occurrence of a similar incident to that which occurred at Buncefield.

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21<sup>st</sup> February 2005

**This SAFETY ALERT has been copied to ALL COMAH operators, together with UKPIA, TSA, CIA and BCDTA trade association headquarters. It has also been copied to members of the Chemical and Downstream Oil Industry Forum (CDOIF), and to COMAH Inspectors in HSE, EA and SEPA.**