

Offshore Accommodation Standards – Men and women sharing cabins

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Introduction

This notice explains HSE's policy and role in the inspection and enforcement of the requirement for separate cabins for men and women on offshore installations. It has been revised to clarify HSE's Operational Policy and in particular, to highlight the flexibility of HSE's approach and remind duty holders of the need to prevent sex discrimination.

Background

The Offshore Installations and Wells (Design and Construction, etc) Regulations 1996 (DCR), Regulation 12(1) and Schedule 1 paragraph 65 states that

where there are both men and women on offshore installations there shall be separate:

- sleeping rooms
- shower rooms, or the provision for separate use of shower rooms and
- lavatories and washbasins, or provision for the separate use of lavatories and washbasin, for men and women

DCR enacted the EU Directives (Health and Safety)/Health and safety at work/Mineral-extracting industries (drilling)/COUNCIL DIRECTIVE (92/91/EEC) (of 3 NOVEMBER 1992) into domestic legislation.

Separate cabins for men and women

The regulation requires men and women to have separate cabins offshore. The use of shower rooms, lavatories and washbasins can be provided for use by both men and women as long as there is provision for separate use (e.g. locks).

Exemption

HSE has no power to give an exemption from these requirements as they enact an EU Directive.

HSE's role

HSE's policy is that any intervention or subsequent enforcement action in relation to cabin sharing by men and women will be done on a 'reactive' basis only, eg where HSE receives complaints with regard to cabin sharing inspectors will investigate in accordance with HSE's procedures. HSE accepts that there will occasionally be circumstances where offshore operators will need to resort to cabin sharing by men and women. In such exceptional circumstances, where a risk assessment has been carried out by the duty holder prior to mobilisation offshore and both cabin occupants are content with the arrangements; HSE will take no further action when offshore inspectors are made aware of cabin sharing by men and women.

In managing these matters duty holders are reminded that they have duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the need to prevent discrimination by virtue of gender.

References

- [Offshore Installations and Wells \(Design and Construction, etc\) Regulations 1996 Guidance on Regulations L85](#)
- Operations Notice 82 Goals for the provision of accommodation on offshore installations
- [EU Directives \(Health and Safety\)/Health and safety at work/Mineral-extracting industries \(drilling\)/COUNCIL DIRECTIVE \(92/91/EEC\) \(of 3 NOVEMBER 1992\) \(92/91/EEC\)](#)
- [The Equality Act 2010](#)

This guidance is issued by the Offshore Major Accident Regulator (OMAR). Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.

