

INDUSTRY STANDARD

NO. 35

Down-manning / Evacuation of Offshore Installations

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Document Control Sheet

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This document will be controlled in accordance with the Element NL/NOGEPA Industry Standard No. 80 on Standards and Document Control.

Terms and Definitions

AIS	Automatic Identification System
Coastguard	Dutch Coastguard
Emergency Evacuation	Immediate (complete) evacuation of all personnel from an offshore installation, triggered by an immediate or very imminent threat to human life or health. In this case, the OIM has declared the situation as an emergency situation and the evacuation will be executed by deployment of all available evacuation equipment, including Coastguard equipment (e.g. SAR-helicopter, the installation's Free Fall Life Boat (FFLB) or Fast Rescue Craft (FRC), Life-rafts, Emergency Response Towing Vessel (ERTV)) and other readily available evacuation equipment (e.g. commercial helicopters and/or (nearby) vessels).
ERTV	Emergency Response Towing Vessel
FFLB	Free Fall Life Boat
FRC	Fast Rescue Craft
HMI	Head of Mining Installation
KNRM	Koninklijke Nederlandse Redding Maatschappij
NOGEPA	Netherlands Oil and Gas Exploration & Production Association, since 16 May 2022 rebranded to Element NL. All industry standards and guidelines, MIAs, training and medical examinations, transport conditions, and environmental protocols will continue to operate under the name NOGEPA.
NUC	Not Under Command
Offshore installation	A fixed dedicated offshore facility for the production of gas, oil, electricity or generation of high voltage.
OIM	Offshore Installation Manager ¹
Place of Safety	Any onshore location, offshore installation or vessel where facilities for the temporary safe reception and care of personnel are available.
Precautionary down-manning	Evacuation (partial) of all non-essential personnel from an offshore installation, in anticipation to a (potential) threat to human life or health, executed with equipment arranged by the operator of the installation or by a nearby vessel (e.g. standby vessel, walk-to-work vessel, commercial ship). In this situation,

¹ Within some Operator organizations also known as HMI (Head of Mining Installation).

	the OIM has not declared the situation (yet) as an emergency situation.
SAR	Search and Rescue
SARIS	Search and Rescue Information System

Important Nomenclature used in this Standard

In the context of this Standard and when so used to describe a method or practice:	
'shall'	means that such method or practice reflects a mandatory provision of law (in Dutch: <i>dwingend recht</i>). Such method or practice is mandatory for those who are the addressees of such provision (mostly the operators). A Standard can describe or quote, but not amend, mandatory provisions. When an operator in exceptional cases for technical, operational or HSE reasons cannot comply, exceptions shall be documented and reported, and risks mitigated. Please note that this does not release the operator from the obligation to comply with the law*.
'should'	means that such method or practice reflects a Good Operating Practice. An operator is generally expected to apply such method or practice, but a specific situation may require a specific alternative. In other words: the operator complies or explains, and documents the explanation*.
'could'	means that such method or practice is of an advisory nature or mentioned by way of example. An operator is not obliged to comply and is not obliged to explain if he does not comply.
* Please refer to Section 2.3 of Industry Standard 80 (Standards and Document Control), for further explanation on an exception of a 'shall' provision, or on a comply-or-explain of a 'should' provision.	

1. Executive Summary

This Standard informs when to alert the Netherlands Coastguard in the process of decision making whether the offshore Mining Installation should be evacuated using the commercial or Search And Rescue (SAR) helicopter(s).

An OIM / HMI (further referred to as 'OIM') may decide on precautionary down-manning or emergency evacuation of personnel from the installation based upon the sense of urgency of an incident, extreme weather or a (potential) security threat.

Two types of evacuation are distinguished in this Standard:

1. Precautionary Down-manning;
2. Emergency Evacuation.

For both evacuation types the preferred way to evacuate an offshore installation is by helicopter.

In case of Precautionary down-manning the evacuation is executed by mobilising commercial helicopters. This remains valid as long as the situation is not declared by the OIM as an Emergency.

In case of an emergency evacuation, the Operator (OIM or operator's Emergency Response Team) shall notify the Coastguard the need to evacuate personnel by SAR helicopter. In case high numbers of people need to be evacuated, civil helicopters might be required with the support of other Element NL operators and their contracted helicopter operators, to identify how much helicopter capacity is available for evacuation and determine if this is a better option than using the SAR helicopter.

The conduction of evacuation should always be determined by the OIM in close conjunction with the Coastguard. Evacuating personnel might go to nearby offshore installations or onshore reception location.

Operators shall set-up and maintain their (site) specific emergency evacuation procedures.

2. Purpose, Background and Focus

The purpose of this Standard is to inform Offshore Installation Managers (OIMs) and offshore installation operators about the process of decision making regarding two types of evacuation applicable to offshore Mining Installations in which evacuation could be executed by using the commercial and/or Search And Rescue (SAR) helicopter(s).

The reasons for requiring a down-manning or an evacuation of an offshore installation can be diverse. These may be of an external nature (e.g. a drifting, not under command (NUC) vessel on a (near) collision track with an offshore installation), or of an internal nature (e.g. an industry process related threat). However, also other internal and/or external threats to human life or health on an offshore installation may apply, at the discretion of the OIM.

This standard focuses primarily on the interfaces between the OIM, the offshore installation operator, the Coastguard and other supporting parties. The procedures described in this Standard do not replace any of the organization's specific Emergency Response Plans and Protocols.

3. Types of Evacuation

In case of a potential or imminent threat to human life or health (e.g. a drifting, not under command (NUC) vessel on a (near) collision track with an offshore installation or an industry process related threat), the OIM of the affected offshore installation may have to decide on evacuation of personnel.

Depending on the urgency and the availability of evacuation equipment, 2 types of evacuation are distinguished:

1. Precautionary down-manning;
2. Emergency evacuation.

3.1 Precautionary Down-manning

Precautionary down-manning may be required in a situation where there is no immediate threat to human life or health at the very moment, but there is a real possibility of the situation deteriorating and requiring an emergency evacuation in due time².

In order to reduce the number of people having to be transferred during an emergency evacuation, a precautionary down-manning is the first step. It is noted that precautionary down-manning is (initially) not considered as an emergency and therefore a SAR helicopter will not be deployed.

The OIM of the affected offshore installation may take the decision to start the precautionary down-manning of non-essential personnel, in close consultation with the Coastguard.

The preferred way to precautionary down-man an offshore installation is by commercial helicopter. Alternatively, down manning could be determined by OIM in alignment with the Coastguard: by a nearby vessel (e.g. standby vessel, walk-to-work vessel, commercial ship). The latest mentioned alternative methods in particular could be applicable in case of non-availability of commercial helicopters outside working days as well as in case of low visibility due to fog at the transfer routes.

In case of a precautionary down-manning at daytime during working days, the Operator (e.g. the (Senior) Operator of the installation assisted by the onshore Operator's Emergency Response Team) should initially contact commercial helicopter operators and other offshore operators to identify how much commercial helicopter capacity and/or

² For instance, such a situation is deemed to exist as soon as information becomes available that a drifting vessel may pass an installation at a distance of 2 Nautical Miles (Nm) or less.

vessel capacity is readily available for the down manning and determine if this is sufficient.

If this is found sufficient, the precautionary down-manning can be executed by the operator(s). This should be done in close contact with the Coastguard, to be able to act rapidly if deteriorating conditions should require upscaling to an emergency evacuation.

3.2 Emergency Evacuation

An Emergency Evacuation is necessary once an immediate or very imminent threat to human life or health requires an immediate evacuation of all personnel from the installation. In this case, the OIM has declared the situation as an emergency situation.

In case of an emergency evacuation, the complete crew has to evacuate the offshore installation immediately by all available evacuation means, including Coastguard equipment (e.g. SAR-helicopter, the installation's Free Fall Life Boat or Fast Rescue Craft (FRC), Life-rafts,, Emergency Response Towing Vessel (ERTV)) and other readily available evacuation equipment (e.g. commercial helicopters and/or (nearby) vessels).

3.3 Criteria to Determine the Evacuation Type

The following criteria should be considered by the OIM, in close consultation with the Coastguard and the onshore Operator's Emergency Response Team, when deciding on a precautionary down-manning or an emergency evacuation:

1. The remaining time until the (potential) threat could occur in reality.
2. The transit time of the SAR-helicopter(s), commercial helicopter(s) and/or other rescue units until arriving on-scene.
3. The on-scene weather and sea state conditions.
4. The passenger capacity of the units taking personnel from the installation to a place of safety.
5. The enroute times for the units taking personnel from the installation to a place of safety.
6. The endurance of the helicopter(s) and refuelling possibilities.
7. The time it will take to complete the down-manning or evacuation.

4. Down-manning and Evacuation Procedures (for Drifters only)

Note: Operators shall maintain (site) specific emergency evacuation procedures.

The procedures to follow when a drifting (NUC) vessel could pose a threat to an offshore installation can be broken down into the following 4 elements:

1. Notification of Coastguard;
2. Coastguard Actions - and Decision-making Process;
3. Coastguard – SAR-helicopter Crew Communication;
4. Organization Landing of Evacuated Personnel.

4.1 Notification of Coastguard

The Coastguard is notified about a NUC vessel via:

- Incident vessel: Vessel declares NUC via phone, radio or by any other communication means;
- AIS: Vessel changes AIS status to NUC vessel;
- Third Parties: Offshore Installation (local or onshore control room), Coastguard unit, other vessels.

4.2 Coastguard Actions - and Decision-making Process

The Coastguard gathers information and takes the following actions and decisions:

1. Determines problem and estimated repair time of the NUC vessel;
2. Verifies and communicates possibilities to anchor with the NUC vessel (be aware of pipelines!);
3. Verifies and communicates possibilities to tow the NUC vessel with the ERTV or a 3rd party towing vessel;
4. Determines drift of NUC vessel (direction/speed):
 - a. By AIS track-analyser;
 - b. Via information vessel;
 - c. Via real time SARIS – AIS – plotting;
5. Determines likelihood of collision with offshore installation(s);
6. Predicts time of impact;
7. Promptly alerts the OIM of the affected offshore installation(s).

The following actions are taken and decisions are made by the OIM, in close consultation with the Coastguard:

1. Determines situation in relation with total persons on board, evacuation time, weather conditions on-scene etc.;
2. Alerts the onshore Emergency Response support organisation of the operator(emergency number);
3. The Operator (e.g. the (Senior) Operator of the installation assisted by the onshore Operator's Emergency Response Team) contacts helicopter operators and other offshore installation operators to identify the helicopter and vessel capacity that can be made available to evacuate the installation;
4. Defines options and actions in consultation with Coastguard and supported by the Operator's onshore Emergency Response Team;
5. Determines evacuation type:
 - Precautionary down-manning, or
 - Emergency evacuation.

In case of a precautionary down-manning, the down-manning is further handled by the operator of the installation. This is done in close contact with the Coastguard, to be able to act rapidly if deteriorating conditions should require upscaling to an emergency evacuation. Further procedures are described in the operator specific procedures.

In case the situation is declared by the OIM as an emergency evacuation, the following should be taken into account:

- SAR helicopters from both heliports (heliports Midden Zeeland and Den Helder) need 20 minutes mobilization time (24/7);
- The average SAR helicopter speed (max. range) is 125 knots;
- The estimated travel time to installation varies from 30 minutes (platforms near airport) up to 120 minutes (the far North of the Dutch Exclusive Economic Zone (A-block)), both times excluding 20 minutes mobilisation time.
- The number of air assets that can be mobilized;
- Consideration needed for evacuation of drifting vessel's personnel;
- Possibility of mobilization of KNRM assets.

4.3 Coastguard – SAR-helicopter Crew Communication (Emergency Evacuation only)

In case of an emergency evacuation: the following essential information should be reported by the Coastguard to the SAR helicopter crew:

1. What is the tasking (SAR crew should be formally told that it is an emergency evacuation);
2. Name and call sign of the NUC vessel;
3. Name, position and communication details of the offshore installation;

4. Position or bearing / distance from Den Helder;
5. Total number of persons on board of the offshore installation and/or the NUC vessel (see point 2);
6. Refuel locations;
7. Cargo on board of the NUC vessel;
8. Weather on-scene;
9. What other SAR assets and/or civil assets are involved;
10. Evacuation of NUC vessel in consultation with the master of the vessel;
11. Evacuation to nearest offshore installation/vessel/land.

The preferred places of safety after evacuation are, in order of priority:

1. Manned offshore installation with sickbay/medic;
2. Normally manned offshore installation;
3. Normally unmanned offshore installation;
4. Any other Place of Safety.

Consideration: the path of the NUC vessel might cross various offshore installations.

4.4 Organization Landing of Evacuated Personnel (after Emergency Evacuation only)

1. The Coastguard determines, in close consultation with the Operator, where the evacuated personnel should be dropped off after they have been evacuated to a temporary Place of Safety.
2. A commercial helicopter pick-up should be organized by the Operator.
3. Accommodation for the NUC vessel crew should be organized by the Coastguard, in close cooperation with the vessel owner.