The revision of Recommendation 92/6 was a long process, which resulted in OSPAR Recommendation 2001/1 for the Management of Produced Water from Offshore Installations. The recommendation was considered as a breakthrough for the management of the discharge of produced water. The key points of the OSPAR Recommendation 2001/1 are summarised below:

- Each contracting party should ensure that the total quantity of oil in produced water discharged into the sea in the year 2006 from all offshore installations under its jurisdiction has been reduced by a minimum of 15% compared to the equivalent discharge in the year 2000 from all offshore installations.
- As from 1 January 2002, new or substantially modified existing installations should take as a point of departure the minimisation of discharges and where appropriate, the achievement of zero discharges of oil in produced water into the sea.
- The performance standard for dispersed hydrocarbons is reduced from 40 mg/l to 30 mg/l by the end of 2006.
- Each contracting party has to make a complete review of existing installations, of BAT (Best Available Technology) and BEP (Best Environment Practice) used for the management of produced water and to present it at Offshore Industry Commission (OIC) 2006.
- It was agreed that the OIC should review the method for the determination of dispersed oil in produced water with a view to establishing a new method based on ISO 9377-2 Gas Chromatography and Flame Ionisation Detection (GC-FID) in 2003.
- It was also agreed that OIC should propose to the Commission in 2003 one or more reference method(s) for the determination of aromatic hydrocarbons and as appropriate other hydrocarbons with the exception of dispersed oil.

NEW REFERENCE METHOD

In 2003 at the OIC meeting in London, it was officially agreed that a new reference method based on a modified version of the ISO 9377-2 method should be recommended. In the modified method n-pentane is specifically used as an extraction solvent, also large volume injection and high resolution GCs are used. Total amount of dispersed oil is determined by subtracting the TEX(Toluene, Ethylbenzene and Xylene) from the total oil content as calculated by integrating from C7 to C40 of the chromatogram. The new reference method came into effect from 1 January 2007.

To implement the new reference method OSPAR produced an Agreement in 2006 entitled "Oil in Produced Water Analysis - Guidelines on Criteria for Alternative Method Acceptance and General Guideline on Sample Taking and Handling".
At its latest OSPAR OIC meeting, which was held in Copenhagen in February 2006, a draft OSPAR Recommendation 2006/X amending OSPAR Recommendation 2001/1 was put forward.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information on environmental regulatory issues, and the relation and connection between the various international bodies, the following three papers are recommended for reading.


E. Garland, "Discharge of Produced Water in the North Sea - Where are We, Where do we go", SPE97048, a paper presented at Offshore Europe 2005 held in Aberdeen, Scotland, U.K., 6 -9 September 2005.

Juan Fernando Caicedo Restrepo, Environmental Legislation Concerned With Offshore Platform Discharges, a paper presented at TUV NEL's 5th Oil-in-Water Monitoring Workshop, 21-22 May 2003, Aberdeen, UK. Further information on this can be found at www.tuvnel.com