



UK GOVERNMENT TO AMEND WORKING TIME LEGISLATION

The UK DTI employment minister intends to lay legislation before Parliament in September to fix the jurisdictional issue involving what's defined as the "offshore UK" in current regulations implementing the EU Working Time Directive. The joint offshore industry group, including IADC, maintains that existing law limits its reach to 12 miles offshore. That's one of the bases for the appeal the group's taking to the Scottish employment tribunals in October. The change in definition extending the jurisdiction to the entire UKCS will be from 1 October and will not be retrospective. If the lawyers prevail in arguing that past cases involving offshore work beyond the 12-mile limit aren't jurisdictional, most of the existing cases will fall away.

US CONGRESS AT ODDS OVER OCS ACCESS

The US Senate has passed an offshore energy bill that would open new acreage for leasing in the Gulf of Mexico as soon as next year. It would make available 8.3 million acres of the remaining unleased portions of the original Lease Sale 181 in the MMS eastern GOM planning area within a year of the date of enactment. Additionally, the bill would lift the moratoria on significant acreage south of the 181 Area all the way to the edge of the Exclusive Economic Zone. The bill also proposes a system for sharing offshore revenue with the producing states of Texas, Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. For new production in these areas, 50% of the revenue would go to the federal treasury, 37.5% would go to the producing States, and 12.5% would be set aside for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

TERRORISM PREVENTION RULES MAY COST GOM OPERATIONS

The Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has proposed rules that would require persons traveling on international commercial flights and voyages provide electronic manifest transmissions no later than 60 minutes prior to the departure of a vessel for a foreign location. This will affect operations in the US Gulf of Mexico.

CBP also has proposed new rules that would require US citizens and non-immigrant aliens entering the US from locations within the Western Hemisphere to present a valid passport for entry. The rule could be implemented by January 2007, nearly a year in advance of the legislative mandate. With regards to MODUs, this would require a person traveling between a MODU that is not "attached" to the seabed (i.e., in transit, stacked) and located more than 3 miles from shore to an entry point in the US to possess either a valid passport or an MMD (Merchant Mariners Document). Many comments to the docket had suggested the rule be delayed until January 2008; however, CBP and the State Department have both rejected this suggestion.

Accordingly, IADC suggests that companies working on the US OCS act quickly to assess which of their employees will require passports.

LIBERIA TO PROVIDE PLATINUM SERVICE TO IADC MEMBERS

IADC's Ballast Control & Stability Accreditation & Certification Program has been granted provisional approval by the Liberia International Ship & Corporate Registry (LISCR). As part of an agreement to assist LISCR with licensing exam updates, IADC members participating in that effort will be entitled to receive "Platinum Service" from LISCR. This special service includes front-of-the-line priority for licensing requests and other matters, along with online processing and expedited problem resolution.

OSHA MAY MODIFY HAZARD COMMUNICATIONS STANDARD

The US Occupational Safety Health Administration is considering modifying its Hazard Communications Standard to make it consistent with the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS), adopted by the United Nations. This would involve changing the criteria for classifying health and physical hazards, adopting standardized labeling requirements, and requiring a standardized order of information for safety data sheets. IADC will continue to monitor this rule, and when OSHA publishes its questions, IADC will seek input from members. ♠

