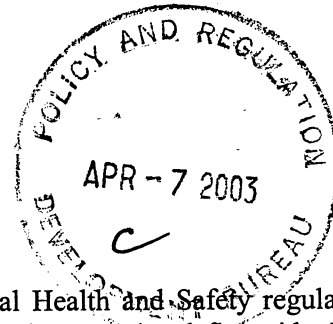


CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF OILWELL DRILLING CONTRACTORS
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April 1, 2003

Workers' Compensation Board of British Columbia
Policy & Regulation Development Bureau
P.O. Box 5350 Station Terminal
Vancouver, British Columbia
V6B 5L5



Re: Proposed amendments to occupational first aid regulations

This letter is in response to the proposed amendments to Occupational Health and Safety regulations relating to occupational exposure limits, duplication and redundancy and occupational first aid. More specifically, the proposed changes to occupational first aid are the primary concern.

These comments are written on behalf of the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors (CAODC). The CAODC is a trade association representing upstream Canadian petroleum drilling contractors — land-based, offshore, service rig contractors and associate companies.

The proposed movement from a prescriptive regulation system to that of a performance-based system of regulation creates a number of concerns for the CAODC. Performance-based systems rely on the subjectivity of hazard assessments conducted by an employer. Occupational first aid and employee safety is an issue that should be regulated and not left to potential human error or the subjectivity of a hazard assessment. As you are aware, Alberta attempted the performance-based system and it created mass confusion around responsibilities and duties of both the employer and employee. In fact, the guide to *Risk Assessment* became 10 to 20 times larger than the regulation itself.

In addition, performance-based systems can lead to increased pressure on employees to comply with the employers' hazard assessment, regardless of personal assessments. With prescriptive regulations, employees have the right to refuse any task that they deem unsafe and are protected from persecution by the Occupational Health and Safety regulations. However, without this protection, an employee may feel that mandatory participation in what they deem to be unsafe is paramount to the security of their employment. Consensus from many supervisors in the field is that they would prefer to be told what to do and have pre-set regulations to follow.

Another issue regarding the amendments is the apparent lack of time that industry was provided to review and comment on the proposals. Changes of this magnitude require a time period that allows for significant industry participation and comment. Unfortunately, no such time period was allotted for these proposals that allowed for adequate industry feedback. In addition, there have been rumblings of future proposals that would see Fall Protection regulations also moving towards a performance-based system. If this is indeed the case, the CAODC requests that a substantial review period is allotted for the proposal and additional public hearings are also considered.

Sincerely,

Derek A. Hibbard
Manager, Technical Services

DAH/da — 220.0