

CHANGES TO MAJOR HAZARDS INSTALLATIONS REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The safety of Major Hazards Installations (MHIs) will be enhanced with two key changes to the MHI regulatory framework. This enhancement is planned to take effect in 2017.

Adoption of Safety Case Regime for MHIs

2 The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) will be introducing a set of MHI Regulations under the Workplace Safety and Health Act (WSH Act) to implement the Safety Case Regime and streamline existing Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) regulatory requirements for MHIs.

3 Under the Safety Case Regime, MHIs have to prepare Safety Case reports which consolidates all SHE protocols and demonstrate to the authorities that they have managed their SHE risks to as low as reasonably practicable. This ensures that MHIs take on greater responsibility for the risks they create while at the same time, giving MHIs the flexibility to tailor their risk mitigating measures to best suit their needs. The Safety Case Regime is also utilised in Europe, UK and Australia for management of MHIs.

Management of MHIs to be Centralised under the new National MHI Regulatory Office

4 To better enhance coordination among the regulatory agencies, a National MHI Regulatory Office (NMRO), led by MOM, will be set up. Through the NMRO, authorities will have better oversight of all SHE aspects within MHIs and the necessary interventions to safeguard the integrity of MHIs and safety of our workers. For the MHI industry, the NMRO would also serve as a single regulatory front for all SHE matters.

MHIs in Singapore

5 MHIs comprise petroleum refining, petrochemical manufacturing facilities, chemicals processing plants and installations where large quantities of toxic and flammable substances are stored or used. There are currently about 100 MHIs in Singapore, including oil refineries, petrochemical plants, and bulk storage terminals.

MHIs a Key Priority for MOM

6 The oil refining and petrochemical industry is one of the largest contributors to Singapore's manufacturing output. Many of these investments comprise facilities classified as MHIs as they handle large volumes of highly hazardous chemicals in a complex operating environment. While the likelihood of a major MHI incident is generally low, the consequence could be catastrophic. Ensuring the integrity of MHIs is paramount, both to our economy as well as the wellbeing of our workers and the public.

MHI Regulators

7 MHIs are currently regulated by three agencies. MOM regulates MHI workplace safety and health, the National Environment Agency (NEA) regulates MHI environmental impact and control of hazardous chemicals and the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) regulates the transport, storage and use of flammable substances and the relevant fire safety provisions, including emergency preparedness.

Timeline

8 The Workplace Safety and Health (MHI) Regulations is targeted to be enacted in 1H2016. Industry and regulators will be given a year to prepare and build up capabilities before the new requirements come into effect in 2017.

Benchmarking MHI Regulatory Framework against Established International Practices

9 In May 2013, MOM led a multi-agency study mission with representation from MOM, SCDF, NEA, EDB, JTC, WSH Council and the Singapore Chemical Industry Council (SCIC) to study how leading WSH countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands manage MHIs. Following the study mission, an Inter-Agency Taskforce¹ was established to review the existing MHI regulatory framework to enable better oversight of SHE risks in the MHI sector.

Industry Feedback

10 We have consulted key MHI industry players and SCIC and their preliminary feedback was positive. They welcomed a single regulatory front for MOM, NEA and SCDF and were open to the introduction of a Safety Case Regime. We will continue to work closely with them to develop technical Safety Case guidance and build capability of the MHI industry, to achieve an effective and efficient regime that strikes a balance between safety and economic considerations.

¹ The Inter-Agency Taskforce on MHIs was led by MOM and comprised representatives from MOM, MHA/SCDF, MEWR/NEA and MTI/EDB/JTC.