

Changes to Workplace Exposure Standards

19 October 2026

From 1 December 2026, Australia's Workplace Exposure Standards (WES) will transition to Workplace Exposure Limits (WEL).

Until 30 November 2026, the existing Workplace Exposure Standards continue to apply. The revised WEL list includes changes to exposure limits for some airborne contaminants, new listings and updated advisory notations.

What this means for offshore duty holders

NOPSEMA considers the revised Workplace Exposure Limits to represent the continuation of the Workplace Exposure Standards referenced in Regulation 3.5 of the OPGGS Safety Regulations 2024.

NOPSEMA will apply the revised WELs in its assessment, inspection and compliance activities from 1 December 2026.

What duty holders should do

Duty holders should, by 30 November 2026:

- identify airborne contaminants used or generated in their operations and review

the revised WEL list for changes relevant to those contaminants;

- assess whether revised limits affect existing risk assessments exposure, monitoring and controls; and
- control exposure by implementing appropriate control measures where required and verifying that existing control measures remain effective.

Airborne contaminants relevant to offshore operations

Depending on the activities undertaken, examples of changes in the revised WEL list that may be relevant to offshore operations include:

- diesel particulate matter, which is a new WEL entry at 0.01 mg/m³ TWA as respirable elemental carbon;
- hydrocarbons and petroleum-related airborne contaminants with revised limits, including petrol, toluene and ethylbenzene;

- airborne contaminants associated with drilling and well construction activities, including barite, lime and Portland cement;
- metals and other airborne contaminants associated with welding and allied processes, including manganese, nickel and zinc oxide; and
- other airborne contaminants used or generated during offshore operations, including construction, maintenance and decommissioning activities.

These examples are not exhaustive. Duty holders should review the revised WEL list to identify changes relevant to the airborne contaminants used or generated in their operations.

The legislation

Duty holders have a responsibility to identify, assess and control risks associated with occupational exposure to airborne contaminants. This includes ensuring exposure to airborne contaminants does not exceed applicable exposure limits and implementing appropriate control measures.

More information

Duty holders should refer to Safe Work Australia's revised Workplace Exposure Limits and supporting information to identify changes relevant to their operations.

Related documents

[Changes to Workplaces Exposure Limits, Safe Work Australia. May 2025](#)

Contact

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