

Assignment 3: OHS in the Australian Offshore Petroleum Industry

20 marks (20%)

Background

On Monday 20th August 2012 two workers died as a result of an accident on the Stena Clyde, a mobile offshore drilling platform located off the Victorian coast approximately 90 km from Warrnambool. Pending a full investigation of the accident there are few details publicly available (as of 3 September 2012) of this workplace accident other than the reported cause appears to have been machinery failure killing one worker instantly and fatally wounding the other worker who died soon afterwards en route on the emergency flight to an onshore hospital. The deaths of these two workers are the first work-related deaths at an offshore facility for the Australian petroleum industry since the fatal accident on the Karratha Spirit, off the Western Australia coast, in September 2008.

The Stena Clyde is more correctly known in the petroleum industry as a semi-submersible mobile offshore drilling unit (MODU). It was built in 1976, can drill to depths of 5,000 ft below the water surface, has dimensions of overall length 109.2m and width 67.4m, and weighs over 3,000 tonnes. The Stena Clyde is currently located more than 3 nautical miles offshore from the Victorian coastline and since it is less than 200 nautical miles offshore it is in Commonwealth of Australia waters and so falls under federal jurisdiction. The Stena Clyde is owned and operated by Stena Drilling Limited (Scotland) which is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Stena AB (Sweden). The Stena Clyde is currently contracted to Origin Energy (Australia) to drill natural gas exploration wells in the Otway Basin. The Otway Basin is a significant source of natural gas supply for South Australia.

The National Offshore Petroleum Safety and Environmental Management Authority was established on 1 January 2012, superseding the National Offshore Petroleum Safety Authority, as the regulatory authority that administers the federal Offshore Petroleum Greenhouse Gas and Storage Act 2006. Accordingly it is currently the primary regulatory authority investigating the fatal accident on the Stena Clyde.

The deaths of these two workers has once again highlighted occupational health and safety (OHS) in the offshore petroleum industry in Australia. Immediately following news of this recent fatal accident on the Stena Clyde, the Australian Council of Trade Unions renewed its call for harmonised OHS laws and regulations across Australia inclusive of all locations (onshore and offshore) and all industries (including the offshore petroleum industry).

What You Need to Do

Prepare a well-researched report that identifies and analyses the existing OHS environment for the offshore petroleum industry in Australia.

How safe has the offshore petroleum industry in Australia been in recent years? How does it compare to "onshore" industries with regard to work-related incidences of serious injury and death?

Discuss the existing OHS legislative and regulatory environment for this industry as it applies to an offshore facility that may be located anywhere up to 200 nautical miles off the coastline of Australia's states and territories (excludes the ACT of course but includes external territories that are part of the Commonwealth of Australia).

Should Australia's OHS laws and regulations be harmonised so as to be completely uniform covering any location and any industry within the jurisdictions of the Commonwealth of Australia (including Commonwealth waters offshore) and its states and territories? Explain and fully justify your position.

General Requirements for This Assignment

- A written report is to be prepared using an appropriate academic writing style and to include a list of references. Refer to Deakin's Guide to Assignment Writing and Referencing for assistance on appropriate report styles and referencing. It is available online at <http://deakin.edu.au/current-students/study-support/study-skills/index.php>
- Read the Assessment Criteria guidelines in the Unit Guide for guidance on how this assignment will be marked. Make sure that any analysis you present is your own – not simply a summary of what is presented in source or reference materials. Your report must be an analysis report not a literature review.
- The word limit is 2000 words minimum to 3000 words maximum – not including the References section.
 - Word count includes the first word of the first section heading to the last word of the last section in your report (but it does not including the References section).
- The submitted report file format must be MS Word 2010 compatible (.doc or .docx).
- Do not simply present the information requested for this assignment in a question and answer format in your report i.e., do not reproduce the questions from the previous page in your report. You are required to develop and use an appropriate report style for this assignment that has a structure and layout to adequately address the issues required in a logical, compact, well researched, and effective manner. Marks will be deducted for not complying with this requirement.
- For this assignment your report style can be simple and basic. Don't waste time with fancy layouts, colours, cover pages, indexes, tables of contents, and so on. A simple text-based format is all that is needed with the report layout consisting of sections of text (with section headings). Use photos or diagrams sparingly and only if necessary and/or relevant to include in your report. Just use a basic and common text font such as Arial or Times New Roman with at least 10 point font size for body text. Single-spaced paragraphs are acceptable.
- There must be a Reference Section (Bibliography) in your submission. Marks will be deducted if it is omitted, not suitably formatted, or lacking more than at least six relevant citations. Use a suitable referencing style such as the recommended Harvard Style. Do not cite any material from unreliable sources such as Wikipedia.com (or Answers.com) and do not cite the lecture notes for this unit (since they are not publicly available).
- **Don't be tempted to plagiarise, cheat, or collude.** If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or collusion then refer to the Academic Honesty information provided for all units on DSO in the Unit Guide and Information folder. It is your responsibility to fully understand what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or collusion and what the consequences for students at Deakin University can be for offenders.
- Online and in-person resources and materials are available from Student Life for all students to assist with assignment writing and referencing skills. Student Life also provides online and in-person resources to assist with understanding plagiarism and how to avoid producing it in your academic work. You can access their online resources at <http://deakin.edu.au/current-students/study-support/study-skills/index.php>

Submission Deadline

- Monday 17 September by 11:59pm (Geelong Time). Your report must be submitted online on DSO in Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx file format) document in the Assignment 3 dropbox. Hard copies and other electronic file formats will not be accepted and will not be marked.