

## Environmental Alert - Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFOA)

28th August 2024

Poly- and per-fluoroalkyl substances are known variously as PFOS, PFAS and PFOA substances and sometimes referred to as ‘forever chemicals’. These chemicals are very persistent and bioaccumulative, and they affect biological organisms in a variety of negative ways including disrupting endocrine processes. There is worldwide concern of the adverse impact arising from the use of PFOA substances on human health and the environment<sup>1</sup>.

With regard to the use and discharge of offshore chemicals, DMR expects to continue its practice of requiring chemicals that are for the purpose of oil and gas exploration, appraisal or production to be selected from the UK offshore ‘Definitive Ranked Lists of Registered Products’ unless otherwise agreed, with discharges being subject to risk assessment and risk minimisation. We note that chemicals with polyfluoroalkyl components are now being flagged with a warning in this list as ‘Endocrine Disruptor’, meaning they require a specific justification before consent can be considered, and this will likely become more restrictive with time.

Our current advice is that these chemicals are present, or being found, in a wide variety of chemical formulations and products where they were previously not expected or tested for. The chemical formulations involved may be linked to certain treatment processes or equipment such as produced water treatment processes and this issue may therefore have a bearing on selection and operation of equipment. Operators should be aware that PFOA substances may also be present in chemicals that are not within the scope of the UK Definitive Ranked Lists such as coatings, utility chemicals and chemicals normally found on ships. Operators should take this issue into account in their selection of chemicals and processes so that environmental risks are minimised, and we look to operators to examine their environmental management, design and supply chain processes at an early stage to address this issue.

1. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/611e31fbd3bf7f63b19cea2d/Poly-\\_and\\_perfluoroalkyl\\_substances\\_-\\_sources\\_pathways\\_and\\_environmental\\_data\\_-\\_report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/611e31fbd3bf7f63b19cea2d/Poly-_and_perfluoroalkyl_substances_-_sources_pathways_and_environmental_data_-_report.pdf)



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