

UNECE

# Safety Guidelines and Good Industry Practices For **Oil Terminals**



UNITED NATIONS

# SAFETY GUIDELINES AND GOOD INDUSTRY PRACTICES FOR OIL TERMINALS



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Authors:

**Frank Candreva** (Det Norske Veritas Germanischer Lloyd, Oil and Gas, Belgium)

**Eddy De Rademaeker** (European Federation of Chemical Engineering, Belgium)

**Richard Gowland** (European Process and Safety Centre, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

**Alexey Isakov** (GCE Group, Russian Federation)

**Andy Roberts** (United Kingdom Petroleum Industry Association)

**Gerhard Winkelmann-Oei** (German Federal Environment Agency)

Reviewed by:

Secretariat to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

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# FOREWORD

Oil terminals store large amounts of hazardous substances and so can pose a serious threat to people and the environment, especially in the case of improper design, construction, management, operation or maintenance. An accident at an oil terminal may result in uncontrolled spills, fires and explosions, potentially leading to the loss of human life or to a major environmental catastrophe. The devastating effects on humans and the environment of such incidents, as well as their far-reaching and severe consequences, have been demonstrated by several major accidents in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) region in the past years.

Since the early 1990s ECE has committed itself to the prevention of, preparedness for and response to industrial accidents, especially those with transboundary effects. The 1992 ECE Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) helps to protect people and the environment by preventing such accidents, as far as possible, by reducing their frequency and severity and by mitigating their effects.

The effective and safe storage and distribution of oil products present technical and environmental challenges, while remaining essential for economic activity. As each facility is unique, a tailor-made and comprehensive approach is needed to ensure that oil terminals are operated in a safe, environmentally sound and economic manner. This should also be seen in the light of climate change, which may increase the probability of industrial accidents caused by natural disasters. Flooding can pose a major risk to oil terminals, in particular those located in the flood plains of major international rivers.

In response to the need to improve the safety of oil terminals, ECE member countries decided to develop safety guidelines and good practices for oil terminals within the framework of the project on hazard and crisis management in the Danube Delta, under the auspices of the Convention's Assistance Programme. The safety guidelines were developed by an international expert group and have been subject to consultations with international organizations, ECE member countries, operators of oil terminal facilities, financing institutions and non-governmental organizations. The Conference of the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention recommended the use of these guidelines by the ECE member countries during its last meeting in Geneva in December 2014.

I hope that these guidelines will be useful in supporting policymakers, oil terminal operators and the public in enhancing awareness and the implementation of good practices, procedures, safety standards and approaches to technical and organizational safety throughout the life cycle of oil terminals.

I look forward to the successful implementation of the guidelines across the ECE region, in particular by the Parties to the Industrial Accidents Convention and other countries in the region, so as to limit the number of incidents at oil terminals and the severity of the possible consequences for human health and the environment.

**Christian Friis Bach**



Executive Secretary  
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

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# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	III
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	V
LIST OF ACRONYMS	VIII
INTRODUCTION	1
OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE	4
DEFINITIONS	5
<b>PART 1– PRINCIPLES AND GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>6</b>
1. PRINCIPLES	6
1.1. General recommendations	7
1.1.1. Recommendations for Economic Commission for Europe member countries	8
1.1.2. Recommendations for competent authorities	9
1.1.3. Recommendations for oil terminal operators	12
<b>PART 2 — TECHNICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL SAFETY ASPECTS</b>	<b>16</b>
1. DESIGN AND PLANNING	16
1.1. Environmental baseline and impact assessment	17
1.1.1. Environmental baseline	17
1.1.2. Environmental impact assessment	18
1.2. Facility siting, lay-out and land-use planning	19
1.2.1. Facility siting and lay-out	19
1.2.2. Land-use planning	20
1.3. Safe design	21
1.3.1. Primary safety considerations	21
1.3.2. Secondary safety considerations	22
1.3.3. Tertiary safety considerations	23
1.4. Hazard management	24
1.4.1. Hazard management in the permitting stage	25
1.5. Emergency planning	28
1.5.1. Emergency plans — general	28
1.5.2. Internal emergency plans	29
1.5.3. External emergency plans	30
2. PROCUREMENT, CONSTRUCTION AND ASSET INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT	31
2.1. Quality assurance during construction and commissioning	31
2.2. Asset Integrity and Reliability	32
2.3. Hazard management during construction and commissioning	32
2.4. Managing the lifetime of ageing assets	33
2.4.1. Managing assets with a predefined operating lifetime	33

2.4.2	Managing assets with undefined operating lifetime	35
<b>3.</b>	<b>OPERATIONS</b>	<b>37</b>
3.1.	Process safety in operations	37
3.2.	Leadership and Safety Culture	38
3.3.	Governance system	39
3.3.1.	Roles and responsibilities	39
3.3.2.	Staffing and work organisation	40
3.3.3.	Process safety knowledge and competence assurance	40
3.3.4.	Education and training	41
3.3.5.	Operating manual	42
3.4.	Operating procedures and safe work practices	42
3.4.1.	Operating procedures	43
3.4.2.	Safe work practices for non-routine tasks	43
3.4.3.	Shift handover	44
3.5.	Management of change	44
3.5.1.	Management of technical change	45
3.5.2.	Management of organizational change	45
3.6.	Good industry practices for transport and storage of hazardous materials	45
3.7.	Management of abnormal situations	47
3.7.1.	Incident/accident investigation and reporting	48
3.7.2.	Performance monitoring and compliance assurance	48
3.7.3.	Incident/accident investigation and reporting	49
3.7.4.	Performance monitoring and compliance assurance	49
3.8.	Records management	50
3.9.	Audits and management reviews	50
3.9.1.	Audits	50
3.9.2.	Management reviews	51
3.10.	Learning from experience	51
3.11.	Maintaining the integrity and reliability of assets	52
3.11.1.	Inspection, testing and preventive maintenance during operations	52
3.12.	Hazard management during operations	53
3.13.	Emergency preparedness and response	53
3.13.1.	Warning and alert systems	54
3.13.2.	Emergency response equipment/installation	54

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二

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