

HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE WIND ENERGY INDUSTRY

Andrew Sanderson (Associate) and Rob Elvin (Partner) are both with the Environmental, Safety and Health group at Squire Sanders Hammonds. Over the last 18 months they have been working closely with a number of industry bodies and organisations within the wind energy sector, advising on their health and safety obligations and responsibilities under various regulations.

Here, they give a brief overview of some of the key health and safety issues facing the wind energy sector in the coming period.

Health and safety regulation and enforcement covers virtually every aspect of business life within the UK. Business sectors are subject to greater and more stringent regulation than ever before and the wind energy sector is no exception to this.

Increasing challenges

The wind energy sector is facing increasing challenges in the future, specifically connected with the development and enforcement of health and safety regulation. These challenges will be applicable to both onshore and offshore operators to varying degrees.

During the course of 2009 the Health & Safety Executive (the 'HSE') produced a document entitled "HSE Scanning – Wind Energy", which looked at the development of onshore as well as offshore wind energy. They identified a number of areas that they considered to be of particular concern in this sector, namely working at height, slips and trips, contact with machinery, possible risk of electrocution or from a fire, construction in windy conditions, diving activities, siting the turbines and issues such as stepping from a boat to a turbine.



Andrew Sanderson

The fact that the HSE is focusing on this sector means that all organisations involved with wind energy should be ensuring that their health and safety policies and procedures are up-to-date and relevant.

Over the course of the next few editions of Wind Energy Network we will be looking at a number of the major areas relating to the health and safety impact on the wind energy industry, discussing them in detail. The areas that will be discussed will include:

- The implementation of the Machinery Directive and the impact this will have on the use of lifts and other devices within wind turbines
- The application of the Construction Design and Management Regulations to the planning phases of onshore wind facility
- The application and applicability of maritime law to offshore wind farm operations
- General health and safety concerns for the operations of wind farms both onshore and offshore



Rob Elvin

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