

Health and Safety Legislation Consultation

Acetylene Safety Regulations 2026

Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture

Rheynn Chymmyltaght, Bee as Eirinys,



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Opened 3Dec 2025

Contact

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Overview

The Isle of Man (IOM) has jurisdiction over its territorial waters but currently does not have a comprehensive offshore health, safety, and environmental framework to regulate work activities offshore.

To address this gap, the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture (DEFA) is reviewing and updating specific legislation to align with UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) standards. This will enable offshore work to proceed under internationally recognised safety regulations, supporting future offshore energy developments.

To ensure consistent health and safety standards across both land and sea, the updated legislation will apply to work undertaken onshore and offshore within the Island and its territorial waters. This process has the added advantage of updating legislation in key areas to align with the latest UK legislation.

This consultation specifically relates to the following draft legislation:

- **Acetylene Safety Regulations 2026**

Recognising the potential impact on IOM businesses, DEFA will implement a phased approach designed to give businesses sufficient time to prepare for compliance. Following public consultation and incorporation of any necessary amendments, the Department aims to submit the proposed legislation to Tynwald in early 2026, with a target commencement date of 1 Aug 2028.

DEFA welcomes stakeholder and public feedback on the updated and proposed health and safety legislation, and where appropriate any associated guidance documentation, through this public consultation process.

What these Regulations do

Before this draft legislation, acetylene use on the IOM was governed mainly by general health and safety law under the applied Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.

This provided broad duties for safe handling of gases but did not include a dedicated acetylene regime. Additional controls came from Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) guidance, marine safety notices for oxy-acetylene on ships, and licensing requirements for certain industrial gas activities. However, there were no specific prohibitions on liquid or solid acetylene, nor a structured licensing system for manufacturing or compressing acetylene gas, which the new Regulations now introduce to close gaps and align with modern UK standards.

The IOM **Acetylene Safety Regulations 2026** set out a legal framework to control the manufacture, storage, transport, and use of acetylene on the IOM. They aim to prevent serious hazards such as explosions and uncontrolled combustion. They prohibit liquid and solid acetylene entirely and restrict the use of compressed acetylene gas, allowing it only under tightly controlled conditions.

Any high-risk activity, such as manufacturing, compressing, or filling cylinders, requires a licence from the Department of Environment, Food and Agriculture, with strict criteria for premises, equipment, and operational safety. The Regulations also include detailed technical safety requirements for equipment and systems, mandate cylinder colour standards, and empower the Department to grant exemptions where safety is not compromised. Overall, their purpose is to protect workers and the public by reducing risks associated with acetylene to the lowest level reasonably practicable.

Practical Implications of the Introduction of the 2025 Regulations

The practical implications of introducing the IOM **Acetylene Safety Regulations 2026** compared to the current situation are significant:

- **Dedicated legal framework:** Previously, acetylene was covered only under general health & safety laws. The new regulations create a specific regime for acetylene, closing gaps in control.
- **Clear prohibitions:** Liquid and solid acetylene will be completely banned (Regulation 5), and compressed acetylene gas will be restricted to defined safe conditions; something not explicitly regulated before.
- **Licensing requirement:** Activities such as manufacturing, compressing, or filling cylinders with acetylene will now require a licence, with strict criteria for premises, equipment, and operational safety. This introduces formal oversight where previously only general duties applied.
- **Technical compliance:** Businesses must meet detailed safety standards for equipment, manifolds, flame arrestors, valves, and cylinder colouring, which will likely require upgrades or replacements.
- **Operational impact:** Companies handling acetylene will need to review processes, apply for licences, train staff, and possibly invest in infrastructure to comply with new requirements.
- **Regulatory flexibility:** The Department gains powers to grant exemptions and enforce compliance, adding both control and adaptability compared to the current broad, less prescriptive framework.

In summary, the new regime moves from general duty-based compliance to a specific, licence-controlled system with technical standards, increasing administrative and operational obligations but improving safety assurance.

Other legislation is Mentioned in the Legislation

The draft IOM **Acetylene Safety Regulations 2026** reference several other pieces of legislation, mainly to define scope, ensure consistency, and align technical standards. Here's a breakdown:

1. The IOM **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 (as applied to the IOM)**

- Where mentioned: Regulation 1 (Title and enabling powers), Regulation 3 (Application), Regulation 4 (Interpretation).
- Why: This is the parent Act under which these regulations are made. It provides the legal authority and applies to the Isle of Man through an Application Order.

2. The UK **Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2009**

- Where mentioned: Regulation 4 (Interpretation), Regulation 6(2)(c) and (d).
- Why: Sets standards for cylinders used for compressed gases. The new regulations require compliance with these for acetylene cylinders during storage, transport, and sale.

3. The UK **Acetylene Safety (England and Wales and Scotland) Regulations 2014**

- Where mentioned: Regulation 4 (Interpretation of "old pressure receptacle").
- Why: Provides reference for classification and treatment of old pressure receptacles to ensure consistency with UK practice.

4. The EU **Transportable Pressure Equipment Directive (Directive 2010/35/EU)**

- Where mentioned: Regulation 4 (Interpretation of "cylinder").
- Why: Defines standards for transportable pressure equipment, ensuring harmonization with EU/UK safety requirements.

5. **International Standards (ISO)**

- Where mentioned: Regulation 6(3) and Schedule paragraph 6.
- Why: Specifies compliance for flame arrestors with BS EN ISO 5175-1:2017 or equivalent international standards.

Consultation Objectives

The following are the objectives of this consultation:

1. **Legislative alignment:**
Assess stakeholder support for aligning Manx health & safety legislation with UK standards, ensuring consistency and regulatory compatibility.
2. **Regulatory scope and clarity:**
Identify specific areas within health & safety regulation that may require additional focus, clarification, or enhancement to meet industry needs and best practices.
3. **Industry impact and readiness:**
Understand potential challenges for IOM-based businesses in adapting to the new framework, including operational, financial, or compliance-related concerns.
4. **Support mechanisms:**
Identify the support needs of stakeholders (e.g., guidance, training, transitional arrangements) to facilitate effective implementation and compliance with the new regime.
5. **Feedback on draft legislation:**
Collect stakeholder input on the draft legislative instruments for each stage of consultation.
6. **General feedback:**
 - Provide an open channel for additional comments, concerns, or suggestions to inform the development of a robust and responsive health & safety framework.

IOM Health & Safety at Work Inspectorate

When any new legislation is introduced the Department is conscious of the need to ensure that the best guidance documentation is available. The current [IOM HSWI website](#) states the following:

- *“UK legislation and their associated codes of practice is best viewed as an illustration of good practice which may be helpful in explaining the general duties imposed by the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974”.*

Differences between UK HSE ACOPs and UK HSE Guidance

When referring to UK codes of practice, better known as “Approved Codes of Practice (ACOPs)” it is important to note and be aware of the differences between UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) guidance and a UK HSE issued ACOP. UK HSE clarifies the differences here: [Legal status of HSE guidance and ACOPs](#).

When reading a UK HSE published ACOP, individuals and organisations should be aware of the presentation convention; which is normally explained within the documentation. A

common standard is that ACOP text is set out in bold, accompanying guidance in normal type, with the text of the actual Regulations in italics.

It should also be noted that whilst certain UK Regulations have an associated ACOP, others only have guidance. As an example there is no longer an ACOP for the **UK Construction (Design and Management) Regulations (CDM) 2015**; it was replaced by guidance when the regulations were last updated.

Using UK HSE Guidance Documents with IOM legislation

When referring to UK ACOPs and guidance to assist with compliance of IOM legislation, individuals and organisations must be aware that whilst the intent is to align with the UK best practice, there may still be specific elements of the IOM legislation that are different to UK legislation. Examples being different paragraph and section/article numbering or elements of the UK legislation being omitted (e.g. if UK is referring to legislation not currently in place or applicable on the IOM).

Relevant UK ACOP or Guidance

- The UK **Acetylene Safety Regulations 2014** themselves are law, but there is no separate ACOP for acetylene. Compliance is assessed under Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) and general HSW Act duties.
- [Safe use of Acetylene” \(DSEAR guidance\)](#): Employers must conduct DSEAR risk assessment and follow ASR 2014 technical requirements
- [HSE INDG327 “Working safely with acetylene”](#) HSE web guidance to help duty holders comply with the law.
- Industry documents such as British Compressed Gases Association (BCGA) Codes of Practice and European Industrial Gases Association (EIGA) guidance are also best-practice guidance, not statutory ACOPs.

Summary

The introduction of the IOM **Acetylene Safety Regulations 2026** is a positive step forward for workplace and public safety. It replaces general gas safety rules with a clear, dedicated framework that addresses the unique hazards of acetylene. By banning liquid and solid acetylene, introducing a licensing system for high-risk activities, and setting detailed technical standards for equipment and storage, the legislation significantly reduces the likelihood of explosions, fires, and uncontrolled chemical reactions. It also aligns the IOM with modern UK and international best practice, giving businesses clarity on compliance and improving confidence in safety management. Overall, these changes enhance

protection for workers and the public while promoting a more robust and transparent regulatory regime.

Reasonable adjustments and alternative formats

The Department is committed to equal opportunities and our aim is to make our documents easy to use and accessible to all. The Department will take steps to accommodate any reasonable adjustments and provide such assistance as may reasonably be required to enable access or reply to this consultation. If this document is required in another format or assistance is required with accessing or replying to this consultation, please email DEFAOffshore@gov.im.

Responding to this consultation and questions

This consultation can be responded to by clicking on the 'Online Survey' link below. Alternatively you can download a paper version of this consultation from the links on the consultation hub and email it to DEFAOffshore@gov.im or post it to:

The Offshore Team
Department of Environment Food and Agriculture,
Regulation Directorate,
Thie Slieau Whallian, Foxdale Road, St Johns, Isle of Man, IM4 3AS.

About you

1. Which option best describes your interest in responding to this consultation?

- ☐ Member of public
☐ Isle of Man Government
☐ Business owner or Stakeholder
☐ Member of Tynwald
☐ Other (please specify)

Other:

2. Are you responding on behalf of an organisation or industry?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Organisation / industry:

Number of people or organisations represented:

3. Are you happy for us to contact you regarding your response if we need to?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes then please add your name and contact email address.

Name:

Email:

4. May we publish your response?

Please read our Privacy Policy for more details and your rights.

More Information:

- **Publish in full** – your organisation name, or the industry you represent, along with full answers will be published on the hub (your email will not be published)
- **Publish anonymously** – only your responses will be published on the hub (your organisation name, or the industry you represent, and email will not be published)
- **Do not publish** – nothing will be published publically on the hub (your response will only be part of a larger summary response document)

(An answer is required)

- ☐ Yes, you can publish my response in full
☐ Yes, you may publish my response anonymously
☐ No, please do not publish my response

Consultation Questions

1. Do you agree that the Isle of Man should follow UK standards and processes for health and safety laws and its regulation?
(Yes/No – Please tell us why you agree or disagree).
2. Are there any parts of the legislation being consulted upon that require more clarity to aid understanding and assist with compliance?
(Yes/No – If yes, please tell us which areas and why).
3. Is the proposed implementation strategy and timescale for the introduction of the IOM **Acetylene Safety Regulations 2026** appropriate for industry readiness?
(Yes/No – Please add any comments you may have).
4. Are there any specific support mechanisms (e.g., guidance, training, transitional arrangements) that would help you or your organisation prepare for the new legislation?
(Yes/No – If yes, please tell us what kind of support would be most helpful).
5. Do you have any other comments on the draft IOM **Acetylene Safety Regulations 2026** legislation attached to this stage of the overall consultation process?
(Comment Box)
6. Is there anything else you'd like to tell us about the proposed changes or the consultation process?
(Comment Box)