

PROPOSALS FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE GAS SAFETY (MANAGEMENT) REGULATIONS (NORTHERN IRELAND) 1997

This consultation relates to proposals by HSENI on amendments to the Gas Safety (Management) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1997 (S.R. 1997 No. 195) (GSMR).

The GSMR apply to the conveyance of natural gas (methane) through pipes to domestic and other consumers.

The Regulations cover four main areas:

- a) the safe management of gas flow through a network, particularly those parts supplying domestic consumers, and a duty to minimise the risk of a gas supply emergency;
- b) arrangements for dealing with supply emergencies;
- c) arrangements for dealing with reported gas escapes and gas incidents; and
- d) gas composition

The amendments relate to the inclusion of gas with a lower Wobbe number than currently permitted and consideration of alternatives to the control of gas content and characteristics which are currently prescribed in Schedule 3 of GSMR.

There are a number of safety and practicality questions which need to be addressed before making legislative changes, and HSENI is therefore seeking views on the set of changes below:

1. *A new lower Wobbe number (WN) limit*
2. *To incorporate the HSENI class exemption on Incomplete Combustion Factor (ICF) and the Soot Index (SI) limits in Schedule 3 and the introduction of a relative density of ≤ 0.700*
3. *To incorporate the HSENI class exemption limit of ≤ 1 mol% for oxygen in gases conveyed at pressures up to 38 barg*
4. *Clarity that biomethane pipelines are to be considered to be part of the gas network*
5. *Clarity that co-operation duties apply to operators of liquefied natural gas (LNG) import facilities*
6. *For a general duty on the industry to provide a continuously manned telephone service.*

These changes would enable:

- The adaptation of prescriptive NI regulation for gas composition contained in GSMR Schedule 3 that is restricting the sources of gas sitting outside of current specifications being used in the gas transmission and distribution network

- A greater diversity of gas resources to be accessed from biogas and across the North Sea including both the United Kingdom Continental Shelf (UKCS) and the Norwegian sector
- Reduced gas processing, potentially making gas supplies greener and easier to secure and more economically viable
- Regulations to be updated and modernised in order to ensure safety standards are consistently applied across today's gas network.

Further details regarding the proposed Regulations are set out in the consultation document.

The closing date for receipt of comments is no later than **noon on 14 April 2025**.