



## **Never another major accident – PSA main issue 2020**

*(Anne Myhrvold – Petroleum Safety Authority)*

Norway became an oil nation in the winter of 1969 with the discovery of Ekofisk. The five decades since then have yielded major successes – and major accidents. In 2020, the 40th anniversary of the biggest of these in Norwegian oil history – the Alexander L Kielland disaster - is commemorated. It is also 10 years since the Deepwater Horizon disaster.

These milestones are being used by the PSA to challenge the industry – **Never another major accident** is our main issue for 2020

The petroleum sector has learnt a lot about risk over 50 years. And we know that good safety depends on its ability to reduce risk.

The ambition of continuously improving safety both will and must characterize the future for this industry. That is a collective responsibility for companies, employees and government.

### **The PSA therefore asks**

- how can we continue to learn – and to use what we have learnt?
- what changes and new measures are your company and your organization implementing to reduce the risk of fatalities?
- how should we work to prevent a new major accident?

### **Deepwater Horizon**

The 10th anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon disaster fell on 20 April 2020. A blowout on this drilling rig in the Gulf of Mexico led to an explosion and fire.

Eleven people were killed in the Deepwater Horizon disaster, and several others suffered serious injuries.

The drilling rig sank after two days, but more than four million barrels of oil continued flowing out of control from the well for 87 days until it could finally be capped.

In the wake of the incident, the PSA devoted substantial resources to reviewing investigation reports and learning lessons with an eye to applying them to Norway's petroleum operations.

Follow-up of Deepwater Horizon has included:

- updating drilling and well standards
- developing well-capping equipment for use with blowouts
- advances in barrier and risk management.

## Alexander L Kielland

A major accident is the most-feared scenario. The biggest in Norway's oil history happened on 27 March 1980, when Alexander L Kielland capsized in the North Sea with the loss of 123 lives.

In 2020, it is 40 years since the Alexander L Kielland disaster. Through videos and reports, we explain how this accident led to improvements in safety – and its significance for today's work on safe operation.

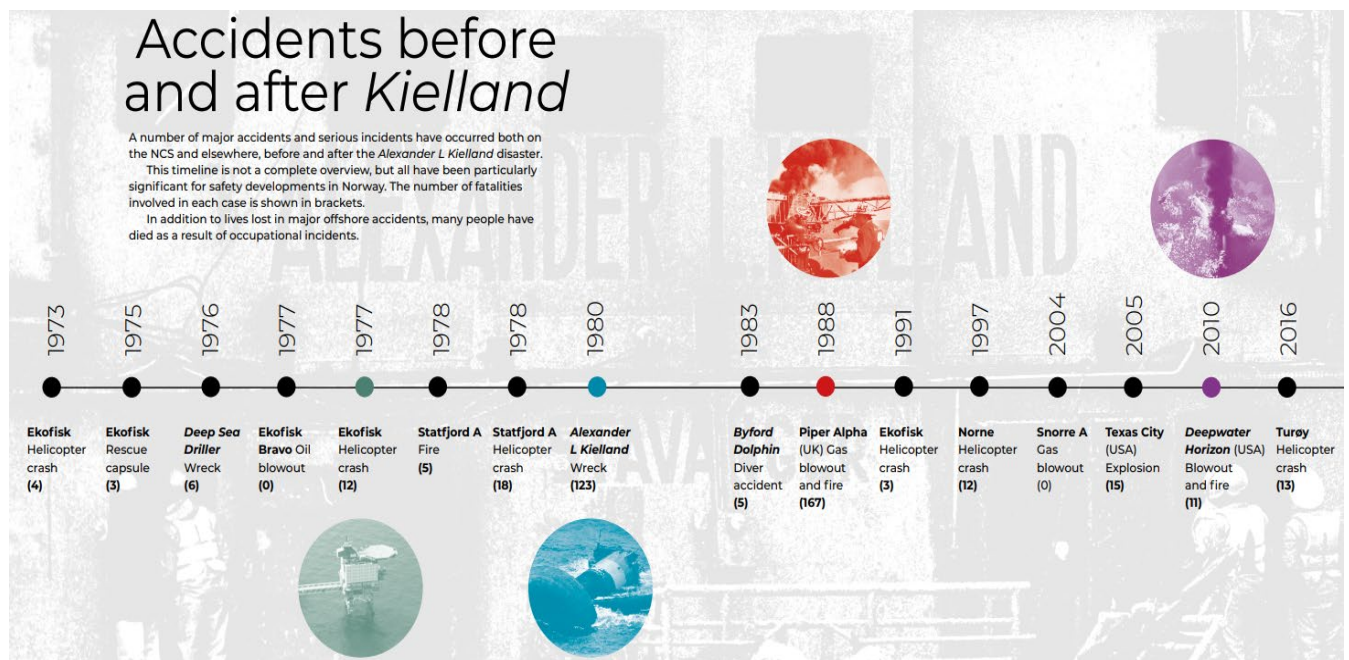
The Mayday call from the flotel came at 18.33 on that dark evening. A leg had been torn off, it quickly listed, took in water and overturned completely in just 20 minutes.

Weather conditions were poor, and fog descended. A high south-easterly wind produced waves six-eight meters high in strong currents.

The official inquiry report in April 1981 attributed the disaster to fatigue cracking in a weld, which led to one of the five support columns being lost. Disaster was then unavoidable.

This major accident was a turning point, not only for the industry but also for the whole country. We have worked differently on safety since 1980 – on regulatory roles, development of the regulations and not least clarifying the responsibility of the companies. The companies are the ones responsible for safety – every single day.

The figure below shows some of the major accidents that have had an impact on development of safety work within the Norwegian Petroleum activities.





We recognize that other major accidents have had equally major impact and learning across the world, such as the Montara oil spill in Timor Sea (fall 2009) and Ocean Ranger, semi-submersible mobile drilling rig that sank in Canadian waters on February 1982.

Although good safety work has been done through the years, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of learning from accidents. PSA focus on prevention of major accidents and continuously carry out audits and investigation.

Important and lasting changes and improvements have been made to the regime following the major accidents, and it is imperative that we still learn from each other to get even better at preventing major accidents in the years to come. Through 2020 our focus and challenge to the industry is – **Never another major accident.**

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