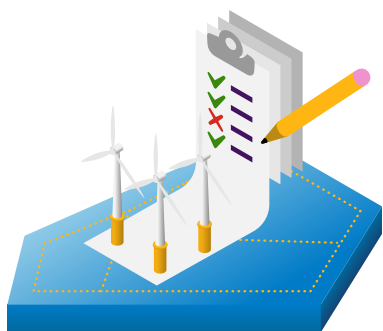




# Inspection and law enforcement of Offshore Wind Energy

Wind farms are enormous offshore technical structures. Which means that they have to comply with many requirements: safety (and other) requirements in and around the wind farm and requirements to limit the impact on marine life where possible. This applies to all phases of a wind farm's life cycle and the offshore electricity network that goes with it: from development to commissioning and operation of the wind farm and, ultimately, decommissioning. Inspection is necessary to make sure that these requirements, for example, are being complied with. The unit Inspection and Law Enforcement of Rijkswaterstaat Zee en Delta (RWS ZD) is the authority responsible for inspection and enforcement in the design, construction, operation and decommissioning of offshore wind farms and networks. In that respect, the unit also has a preventative duty and gives information and advice.

Want to learn more about offshore wind energy?  
Then see the [noordzeeloket.nl](http://noordzeeloket.nl) or [windopzee.nl](http://windopzee.nl) sites.



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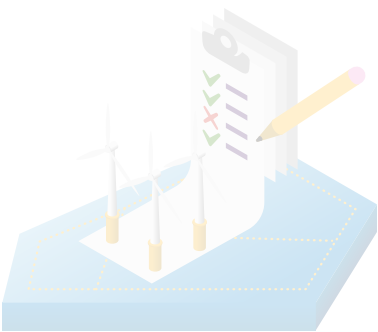


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## Preparatory work for a wind farm

Before a start can be made on construction of a wind farm, the Law Enforcement unit of RWS ZD assesses the work plans of the wind farm operators and grid operator TenneT. Any errors in the data or plans can thus be remedied at an early stage. In doing so, the unit tests whether the requirements comply with the [Waterdegre](#) and the applicable site decision. The unit furthermore tests whether the work plans meet the requirements specified in the water permit for the offshore grid.



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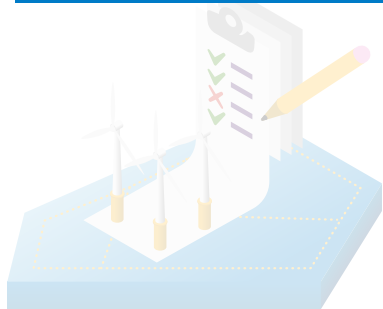


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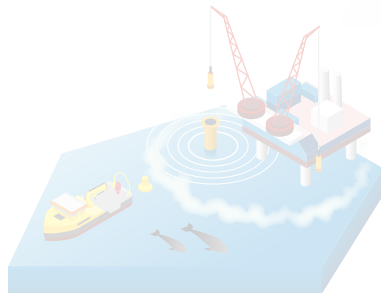
## Wind farm construction

Together with the National Mines Inspectorate (SodM), the Law Enforcement unit verifies whether work is proceeding in accordance with the rules and submitted work plans. For instance, Rijkswaterstaat conducts underwater noise measurements during the driving of foundation piles for the turbines. This enables RWS to check that the standards for underwater noise are not being exceeded and that, as a result, underwater life is not being disrupted too much. Inspections are also conducted in conjunction with the Coast Guard. They check, for instance, whether vessels - other than access traffic - are observing the safety zones that apply while the wind farm is being built.



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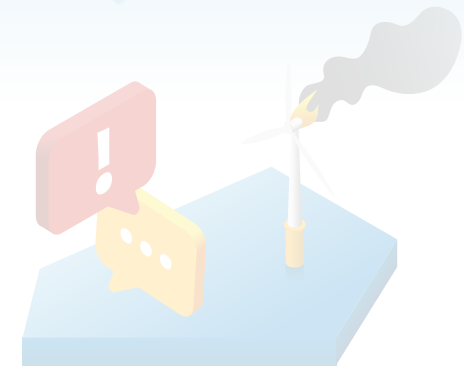
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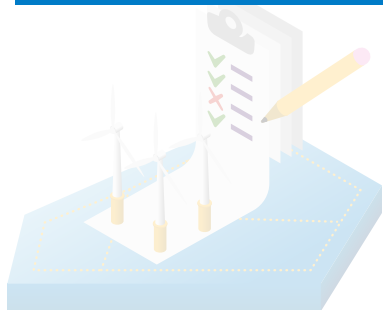


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## Management, maintenance, decommissioning

Once a wind farm is in use, Law Enforcement monitors management and maintenance. For that, too, there are requirements that have to be tested. The unit assesses, for instance, whether the administrative records of the wind farm's owner and grid operator TenneT show that there is a proper maintenance schedule, that preventative working methods are applied and that the potential for incidents is taken into account. In addition, the unit reviews the work plans if there are any changes to the wind farm, and monitors how such changes are implemented. Changes may, for example, include large-scale maintenance or replacement of components.



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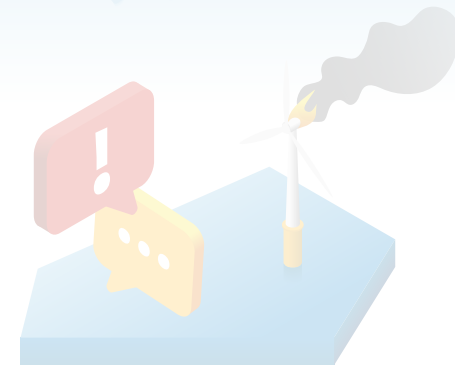
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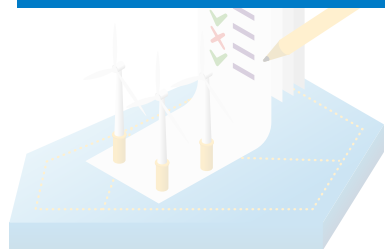


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## Law enforcement in the event of breaches

Where monitoring and inspections reveal breaches, the Law Enforcement unit of RWS ZD is authorised to impose administrative or management sanctions and criminal penalties. To do this, RWS follows the national law enforcement strategy. This may mean that an official police report is made, a warning given, administrative enforcement action taken or a final demand issued. This may occur in any of the various phases of a wind farm's life cycle, from preparation to construction, or management to subsequent decommissioning of the wind farm or offshore grid. In addition to RWS ZD, the National Mines Inspectorate (SodM) and the Coast Guard also have a mandate to act to enforce measures if offshore inspections reveal that immediate action is required.



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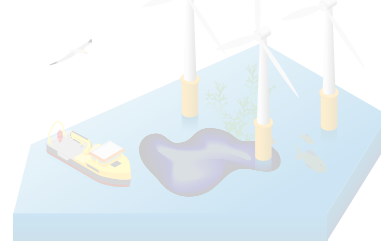
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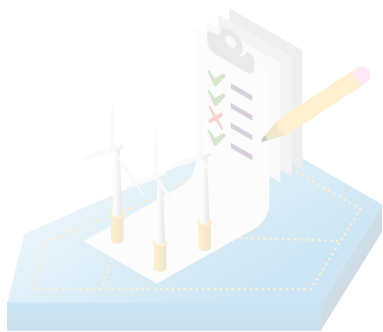


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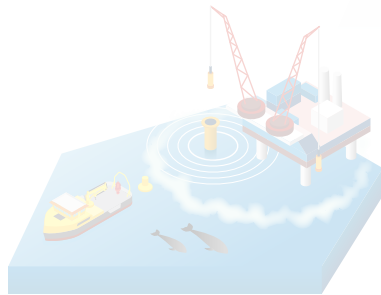
**Incidents in and around a wind farm**

In the event of incidents in and around a wind farm under construction - such as a fire or a collision between a vessel and a turbine - Law Enforcement has no immediate role. However, any incident will be brought to the attention of the unit immediately, and it will keep a finger on the pulse. When dealing with incidents, Law Enforcement has the usual duties: it assesses plans for decommissioning and recovery of components, and monitors how this is implemented.



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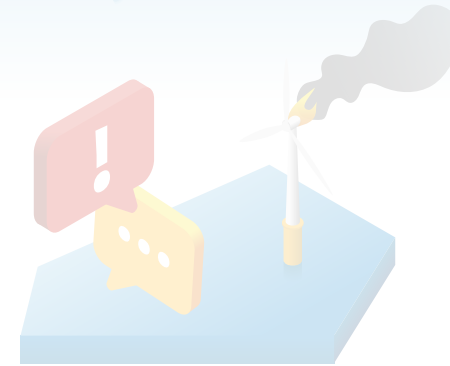
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