

WORKING IN THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY IN NORWAY



(Updated February 2011)

About the industry

The petroleum / Oil & Gas sector is Norway's largest industry and accounts for 22 % of national value creation. By 2010, Norway has produced and delivered about 40 percent of the expected total oil & gas resources on the Norwegian continental shelf. While 35 per cent are reserves yet to be developed, 25 per cent are undiscovered resources, two thirds of which are expected to be gas and one third oil. The easiest barrels have been found and produced, so that the way ahead will be demanding in terms of expertise, technology and costs.

During 2010 there was a decrease in the accrued oil and gas investments. The uncertainty regarding the crude prices in 2009 resulted in the postponement of many planned development projects. These postponements have led to lower development investments in 2010. Extraordinary comprehensive maintenance stoppages on many fields in the third quarter of 2010, and limited rig capacity during 2010 have contributed to lower than expected investments within the investment area fields on stream.

What is the demand for workers in the oil and gas industry?

There is a demand for:

- Senior, experienced engineers (piping, sub-sea, process, electrical, mechanical etc).
- Some skilled personnel within drilling, well-service and maintenance on production platforms, such as drill technicians, construction workers, industrial painters (coating), and industrial isolators.

Only 35 percent of the employees in the oil industry in Norway work offshore. Most oil service and equipment companies also use skilled personnel in occupations that combine onshore and offshore work. Some jobs are found through contact networks and by recommendations. Various skilled candidates may also be able to find work in land-based industry, as unemployment in Norway remains the lowest of all European countries at less than a third of the EU27 average.

How to find work in the Oil and Gas industry?

The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) has a database containing all published vacancies. (only in Norwegian) Go to www.nav.no and choose "ledige stillinger" to find the job vacancies.

- select the category "Industry, bygg etc."
- select the subcategory "Olje, gass, bergverk" and region(s).
- enter relevant key words ("ingeniør, mekanisk, offshore" etc) in the text box below. In some cases you can type these key words in English. Press "Søk".

For access to vacancies via telephone, call NAV Service Centre +47 800 33 166. (Opening hours: 08.00 - 15.30)
The same vacancies are to be found at the EURES mobility portal.

Many companies have their own homepages where they publish vacancies. On the Yellow Pages web site (www.gulesider.no), you will find lists of relevant employers.

General information about working and living in Norway is available on the NAV EURES web sites. (www.eures.no/english). You may contact your nearest EURES adviser for information about working conditions, accommodation, salaries.

Language, education and training requirements

The working languages in the oil industry are Norwegian and English. For safety reasons, fluency is required in at least one of these languages. Most employers prefer proficiency in Norwegian. If Norwegian skills are absent, many employers will require at least a minimum of very good English skills. Norwegians who fulfil the requirements for offshore vacancies will often be preferred.

To find language courses, you should contact the Norwegian embassy/consulate in your home country.

In order to be admitted for work on oil rigs, you need specific safety courses. The safety courses are conducted at schools approved by The National Association of Oil Companies (“OLF - Oljeindustriens landsforening”), which is responsible for the safety on offshore installations. You will find a list of all schools and courses on their homepage. (www.olf.no) (www.nutec.no). The courses are expensive and usually conducted in Norwegian. A few courses are offered in English. In addition to the safety course, a medical certificate confirming fitness for work on oil rigs is required. Please note that a safety course and/or medical certificate alone do not qualify you for a job.

Relevant higher education for this sector is typically an engineering degree (3-5 years) in petroleum, petroleum technology, geology/geophysics, drilling, reservoir or similar degrees. Other technical disciplines are applicable, such as IT, project management, logistics etc. For approval of foreign higher education contact the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (“NOKUT”).

Relevant lower education is Polytechnic school diplomas (2-3 years) with petroleum technology, as well as drilling, well service, welding and electrical studies. The oil industry also hires skilled workers in processing, industry mechanics, and other mechanical disciplines. You need to document your skills with a confirmed certificate from school, college or university. In addition you should have relevant work experience and reference persons who can be contacted by a prospective employer.

Wages and taxes

In Norway there is no single legal minimum wage that applies for all branches and professions. But organisations (employers and unions) regularly negotiate wages and working conditions, resulting in a wage agreement (“*tariffavtale*”). Member companies commit themselves to pay wages according to agreements achieved between the parties. Very often you will find that your wages are set according to the above mentioned wage agreement.

The wages in the industry varies depending on your experience and i.e. engineering discipline. A mechanical engineer with 1-3 years experience may start with a yearly salary of NOK 450 000 (€ 53,000 @ NOK 8,50). Senior engineers will naturally earn more. Offshore supplements/benefits apply.

When you work for a Norwegian employer, you are required to pay tax in Norway. If you reside in Norway for less than six months, special tax rules apply. Bring your employment contract and passport to the nearest tax office (“*skattekontor*”) and apply for a tax card (“*skattekort*”). If you start working without a tax card, the employer will deduct 50% tax. Otherwise the tax usually amounts to around 1/3 of your pay. See the Norwegian Tax Authority (www.taxnorway.no) for more information. The typical tax deduction in Norway, irrespective of job type and before deductions are made, is 36 per cent, including the mandatory national insurance contribution of 7, 8 per cent.

You may also contact the Service Centre for Foreign Workers (www.sua.no) for more information.

Important things to consider.

Many Norwegians seeking work on oil rigs already have the required safety course and medical certification, as well as relevant education and experience. Job seekers with this background are naturally preferred by employers, meaning that it may be easier to get a job offshore if you already have experience from the oil and gas sector onshore.

Note that in some countries there might be agencies or persons that exploit job seekers by demanding money for incorrect information and prospects about jobs on oil rigs. Every month oil companies receive hundreds of letters from people from all over the world applying for offshore work. We recommend not sending applications in this way, as this is not the way the companies recruit personnel. Look for actual vacancies on the companies' websites or at NAV and Finn, (www.finn.no) and only send an application if you have adequate qualifications.

Links to Oil and Gas companies

- www.bp.no
- www.conocophillips.no
- www.dongenergy.no
- www.exxonmobil.no
- www.gazdefrance.no
- www.marathon.com
- www.eninorge.no
- www.shell.no
- www.petoro.no
- www.statoil.com
- www.talisman.no
- www.total.no
- www.aibel.no
- www.halliburton.com
- www.akersolutions.com
- www.slb.com

Related information

- <http://eures.europa.eu> (Eures job Mobility Portal)
 - www.offshore.no (Industry Journal ,only in Norwegian)
 - www.oilinfo.no (Industry Journal, information about employers, vacancies)
 - www.olf.no (The Norwegian Oil Industry Association)
 - www.udi.no (The (Directorate of Immigration))
 - www.atil.no (The (Labour Inspection Authority))
 - www.nokut.no (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education, "NOKUT").
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