



The International Marine Contractors Association

Representing offshore, marine and underwater engineering companies

newsletter
April 2003

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Preventing harm

IMCA's second annual safety seminar 'No Harm – What's the Problem?' was held in early February at Newcastle United's football stadium. This event built on the success of the earlier 'Working Safer Offshore' held the previous year.

"This year's event looked at where delegates left off last year, how far we've come since and how we can, and will, continue improving safety performance," explains Hugh Williams. "Early in 2002 the Council published a safety statement that very much set the scene: 'The target for IMCA is an injury-free workplace. As part of the process to achieve this, a substantial continuous improvement in the LTIFR (lost time incident frequency rate) figures is to be achieved in 2002 by making use of the IMCA initiatives and by each member's use of its safety management system. Accordingly, IMCA encourages all members to set aggressive targets in order to achieve the ultimate goal of an injury-free workplace.'"

Some 87 delegates from nine countries attended the sessions that focused on current IMCA safety initiatives and they rose to the invitation to provide input based on their experiences either implementing their own safety initiatives or as part of the offshore workforce striving to stay injury free. The small group discussion sessions worked well and reported back to the seminar as a whole on how management and workforces can work together to enhance safety.

The seminar proved to be a highly stimulating couple of days with really frank presentations from those involved in offshore incidents, including what went wrong, the effects on those involved, what had been learnt and how similar incidents can be prevented in the future. There's a face plus family and colleagues behind every statistic and all can be harmed by an accident.

This year's event included a safety 'share fair' with IMCA members exhibiting and sharing their good ideas, current initiatives, experiences and best practice from their own organisations. This provided an opportunity for all delegates to spend time discussing with each company various aspects of how they are trying and succeeding to improve offshore safety; and learning from each other.

Speaking to delegates as they left after a tour of the Magpies' ground, it was clear that, like last year's event, the seminar had produced something extra – perhaps because of the combination of the right subjects with people committed to safety, perhaps because of the open way that all the delegates from different parts of IMCA's membership felt free to talk about this very important matter.

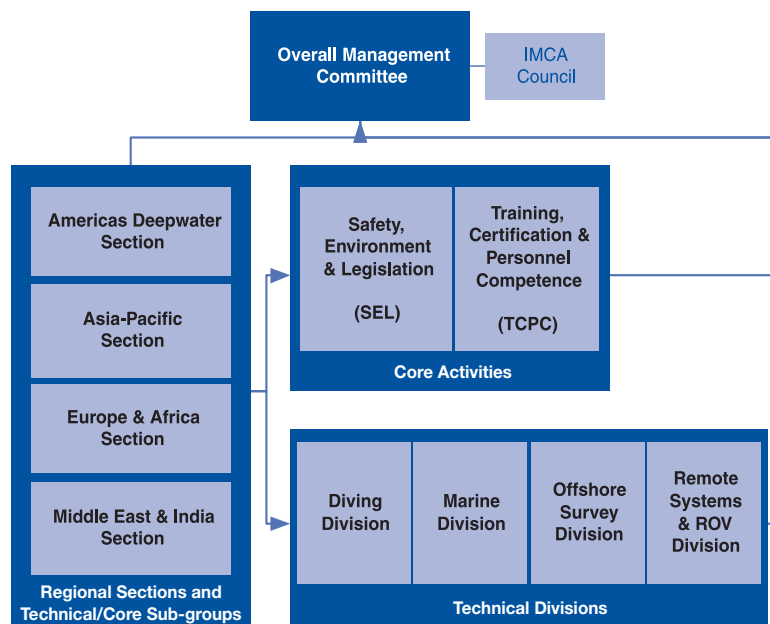
The real value however of this event will be the accidents it prevents.



Courtesy of Technip-Coflexip

Incident reports featured strongly at the Newcastle safety seminar, with lessons learned passed on for the benefit of other members. IMCA is also initiating a study aiming to produce guidance on wire rope inspection - see page 4

Which bit does what?



IMCA's worldwide and regional structure must evolve to accommodate a growing global membership. Here is an up to date appraisal of how and what the various parts of IMCA do.

The **Overall Management Committee (OMC)** is charged with managing the Association. **IMCA Council** - comprising one senior representative from each of the International Contractor (ICO) members - exists to guide and provide overall policy.

Two **Core Committees** and four **Technical Division Management Committees** are the world-wide voice of IMCA in their discipline. They are responsible for work (studies, development of documents, organising seminars, etc) aimed at a worldwide audience. From time to time IMCA will form an **ad-hoc workgroup** (or steering committee) to address a particular issue or topic. For example, one workgroup is looking currently at marine insurance, another at DP in supply vessels, and a third at updating a standard marine construction contract. Such groups report to the part of IMCA that formed them (the OMC, a core or technical division management committee). When their work is complete they disband.

Most committee members are volunteers drawn from IMCA

member companies. The majority of groups meet in Europe currently because that is where the bulk of them are based. In due course, as the centre of gravity changes, these committees may meet elsewhere.

IMCA does not have country-based 'chapters' like some other trade associations. The interests of members are covered locally by four geographic or **regional sections** (based on time zones), though more sections may be added in due course. Regional sections report in management and political terms to the OMC and in technical terms to the six worldwide core/technical division committees. Sections are encouraged to form **sub-groups** to echo the six worldwide committees. Such groups report in management terms to their section (chairman) but in technical terms to the respective worldwide core/technical division management committees. To enhance information flow and reporting, all regional section chairmen are honorary members of the OMC. Similarly, the chairmen of all regional sub-groups are honorary members of their respec-

tive worldwide core/technical division management committees. The minutes of all section and sub-group meetings are also circulated to the relevant worldwide committees.

IMCA has a small secretariat of five permanent staff (three technical and two administrative). This team is responsible for administering IMCA, recording the work of all meetings, managing studies commissioned by the committees, and generally facilitating the work of association through the committees. The Secretariat reports to OMC.

Last but by no means least, IMCA is not a standard-setting body so *it does not issue standards*. It collates good practice from its entire worldwide membership and disseminates this in the

form of guidance available to the whole membership. No guidance or other information can be issued on behalf of IMCA without the approval of OMC. Regional material may be approved and published within guidance, but this will usually be done by way of a specific annex. Where clients make IMCA guidelines a contractual condition of their contracts, the client is choosing to render this guidance a 'standard' for the services it is purchasing.

IMCA promotes Adam

Adam Hugo has won a well earned promotion to the position of Support Services Manager for his pivotal role at the secretariat. Adam has successfully combined a 'day job', supporting IMCA's administration and technical output for members with creative development of the public and members-only websites and routine responsibility for electronic communication and the secretariat's own computer network.

Charity Ball

IMCA's annual Charity Ball will take place on 20 June at the popular Marcliffe, Pitfodels in Aberdeen.

The event provides a great opportunity to meet fellow members, entertain colleagues or clients and raise funds for the chosen charity.

The evening starts with drinks and continues with a three course dinner in the ballroom.

Entertainment will be provided by the Atholl Smith Jazz Trio, Slinky (a band from Falkirk), a guest speaker and a casino. Booking information will be circulated shortly, but please mark your diaries now!

To book accommodation, please call the hotel direct on +44 (0)1224 861000 or info@marcliffe.com

With the globalisation of IMCA gaining momentum, the association is winning greater worldwide recognition and support for its role as the offshore contracting industry's primary global facilitator. Equally, as the organisation expands rapidly to encompass many different cultures, the pace and extent of change presents a tremendous challenge to ensure the organisation's focus and activity remains within its established role. While IMCA welcomes the application of its best-practice guidance in client contracts to help drive up safety across the sector, some elements of the membership remain unclear that IMCA is not a standard setting body issuing rules for the industry.

Safety continues to receive a high level of attention among members and it was encouraging to see such high attendance at IMCA's recent safety seminar held in Newcastle. One of the most interesting topics highlighted at that event was the impact of cultural attitudes upon safety practice and the value of behavioural safety analysis as a tool for analysing when and why people in safety critical positions can make inappropriate decisions due to their own cultural assumptions.

Meanwhile, as IMCA expands, global events are undermining the development of new growth opportunities offshore. Most especially, contractors and their clients are being hit hard by the combined effect of a general economic downturn and the rapid escalation of insurance premiums. Since 9/11 net global insurance markets have contracted dramatically. Taken together these threats make it both harder and more important that IMCA should sustain its focus on safety best practice and continue to grow into an organisation of global stature.

As oil companies seek to push risk on to the shoulders of their contractors IMCA can help develop and promote a collective response to this problem. To that end IMCA has commissioned consultants to assess options for IMCA members faced with clients unable to get crucial routine insurance or indemnities to cover either equipment or personnel required for basic offshore project and maintenance work. The results of this research will be reviewed at an event planned for Houston in May where IMCA has invited major clients from the oil and gas sector to come and discuss how best to apportion indemnity and insurance risk in the future.



IMO Developments

Since the last newsletter, SEL, TCPC and Marine Division information notes have been issued covering topics arising from IMO committee meetings, including the application of MARPOL Annex 1 to FPSOs and FSUs, issues concerning fast rescue boats, atmospheric oil mist detectors, proposals for the protection of fuel tanks against collision and stranding, training in the use of ship-borne automatic identification systems (AIS), the International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code, and the training of ship and company security officers.

Lots of documentation accompanies IMO committee meetings which needs to be studied beforehand. IMCA's observer status at IMO enables it to learn of proposals and provides an opportunity for members to feed in to those proposals thus making a difference to international maritime regulations.

Wherever possible IMCA uses information notes to advise members of issues arising in papers submitted by various delegations which might benefit from your input. Members' input has recently been of particular value in respect of the proposed modifications to MARPOL Annex 1 for FPSOs and FSUs and in respect of proposals for emergency towing systems.

Your further comments and contributions will always be welcome.

IMCA Overall Management Committee

President & Chairman: Steve Preston, Heerema Marine Contractors

Vice-President: Frits Janmaat, Allseas Group

Chairman Diving: Alan Forsyth, Subsea 7

Chairman Marine: Hugo Bekker, Allseas Group

Chairman ROV: Kevin Kerins, Oceaneering International

Chairman Offshore Survey: Alf Parker, Subsea 7

Chairman SEL: Chris van Beek, Heerema Marine Cont.

Chairman TCPC: John Greensmyth, Technip-Coflexip

Vice-Chairman Diving: Georges Arnoux, Stolt Offshore

Vice-Chairman Marine: Pete Somner, Subsea 7

Vice-Chairman ROV: Dave Walker, Technip-Coflexip

Vice-Chairman SEL: Mike O'Meara, Subsea 7

Vice-Chairman TCPC: Brendan Kelly, Oceaneering Int.

Chairman, Americas Deepwater Section:

John Reed, Heerema Marine Contractors

Chairman, Asia-Pacific Section:

Andy Bolton, Technip-Coflexip Oceania

Chairman, Middle East & India Section:

Steve MacMillan, J Ray McDermott Diving Div.

IMCA Technical Director: Jane Bugler

IMCA Chief Executive: Hugh Williams

FAQs

Following the 2002 competence workshop, the TCPC committee is now working on developing a set of 'frequently asked questions – and answers' that are relevant to the IMCA competence guidelines. It is proposed that the FAQs will be available on the IMCA website for use by people unfamiliar with the IMCA competence guidelines and will provide additional guidance at a reasonably high-level – not too detailed, more as a signpost giving an overview and to direct enquiries toward the appropriate part(s) of the website, where a fuller understanding of the competence assurance and assessment guidance could be obtained.

A number of topics have been identified for inclusion in the question and answer set, such as the need for competence and competence schemes, dealing with experienced people new to the scheme, and revalidation of competences.

If anyone has any particular topic they feel would benefit from an FAQ, please let Jane Bugler know.

Revised Competence Guidance

IMCA issued its Competence Assurance & Assessment guidelines in 1999, which set out a time-frame for implementation of the scheme within member companies. The TCPC committee has been working on updating the guidelines and is finalising the revised text – the Scheme Implementation Guidance Document. As well as providing a framework within which members can produce their own competence scheme, the revised document also provides implementation guidance on new personnel entering a competence scheme, experienced personnel entering a competence scheme for the first time, and on existing personnel within a company scheme. The document includes the performance criteria developed by the Offshore Survey and Remote Systems & ROV divisions, the additional positions which have been added to the scheme since it was produced in 1999 and guidance on completing the IMCA Record of Competence. The new guidelines should be available shortly.

Environmental Indicators

IMCA has been developing a set of environmental performance indicators (EPIs) and guidance on how to use them. The work was done over two phases – the first resulted in a report outlining a set of potential EPIs which was circulated to members. The second phase involved a pilot exercise using the draft guidelines to assess which potential indicators were feasible to use. The trial period is now coming to an end. Results of the trial will be used to revise the guidelines so that the final document will be readily useable by IMCA members wishing to monitor and measure their progress towards better environmental performance.

Wire ropes

Wire ropes continue to be a tough on-site issue. The SEL and Marine committees are jointly considering developing a guidance document with the aim of reducing incidents.

TCPC Information Notes published since Issue 26

TCPC 02/03	International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code
TCPC 03/03	Training in the use of shipborne AIS
TCPC 04/03	EU proposals for acceptance of marine certificates of competency from non-community states
TCPC 05/03	International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code
TCPC 06/03	Training of ship, company and port facilities security officers

TCPC Core Committee

Chairman: John Greensmyth, Technip-Coflexip
Vice-Chairman: Brendan Kelly, Oceaneering International

Monique Laros, Allseas Group
 Ed Danson, Fugro-UDI
 Donald Beezer, Global Marine Systems
 Paul Smith, Stolt Offshore
 Eric Law, Subsea 7
 Mike Lloyd, Technip-Coflexip
 Brian Robertson, Technip-Coflexip
 Sarah Willetts, Thales GeoSolutions
Americas Deepwater Section: Mark Canada, Transocean
IMCA Schemes Administrator: Vicki Graham

Training Opportunities

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Leading Performance Indicators

Members will recall information note IMCA SEL 05/03 set out the proposed new leading performance indicators. A number of companies have advised that the data required for such indicators already exists in-house and can be provided. The SEL committee has agreed that it would be a useful addition to the IMCA statistics if, where possible, the Association collected and published information on leading performance indicators for last year (2001), namely:

- Safety observation frequency rating (SOFR)
- Injury events reporting level (RAL)
- Line management visit rating (MVR)
- Lessons learned rating (LLR)

If you can provide your company statistics on any one or more of the four indicators, please send them to Jane.Bugler@imca-int.com

SEL Information Notes

published since Issue 26

- SEL 05/03 Leading safety performance indicators
- SEL 06/03 International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code
- SEL 07/03 Protection of fuel tanks against collision and stranding
- SEL 08/03 Working Time Directive: Application to 'offshore workers' on the UKCS
- SEL 09/03 EU consultation on simplifying small claims litigation
- SEL 10/03 EU proposals for acceptance of marine certificates of competency from non-community states
- SEL 11/03 IMCA 'working at heights' video
- SEL 12/03 International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code
- SEL 13/03 IMCA safety flash system
- SEL 14/03 FSO & FSU developments (MARPOL)

Send in Your Safety Statistics Please!

IMCA wrote to members in January this year, seeking information on company statistics for 2002. In that letter, a response by the end of March was requested.

Many members have already sent in their statistics, but we would be grateful if those who have not yet done so would like to contribute to this key benchmarking exercise.

We look forward to receiving your statistics as soon as possible.

SEL Core Committee

Chairman: Chris van Beek, Heerema Marine Contractors
Vice-Chairman: Mike O'Meara, Subsea 7

Richard Curtis, Diamond Offshore Drilling
 David Rankin, Global Maritime
 Mat Schreurs, Heerema Marine Contractors
 Sal Ruffino, Saipem
 Ken London, Stolt Offshore
 Allan Hannah, Technip-Coflexip
 Wallace Robertson, Well Ops UK

Americas Deepwater Section: Wayne Seelbach, Cal Dive International
Asia-Pacific Section: Des Power, Subsea 7 Asia-Pacific

Drug & Alcohol Policy

IMCA is now publishing the first of its guidelines intended to assist companies when drawing up or assessing drug and alcohol policy.


As legislation and cultures vary globally on this issue, companies have a range of different views on how their policy and procedure is formed. Any guidance can, therefore, only be generic and try to indicate the type of problems and issues that might arise when implementing particular parts of such a policy.

One of the most difficult aspects in this regard is that of taking samples for testing for drugs or alcohol. This is perhaps why the first subject that IMCA has chosen to tackle under this heading is specifically that of taking samples.

The guidance describes reasons for testing and the different types of test that a company might instigate, such as 'reasonable cause' testing, or 'testing following incidents and accidents' and so on.


It describes the procedures, location and the sorts of equipment needed to take a sample, the need for attention to forensic detail and the importance of record keeping. It also attempts to cover some of the problems that might arise.

The guidance is expected to be available by the end of April.



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 website: www.msts-my.org

Americas Deepwater

The Americas Deepwater Section held its second meeting in the middle of February. John Reed of Hereema chaired what proved to be a popular and well attended event, where the chairmen or representatives from each of the five section sub-groups updated those present on their activities.

Marine

Phil Keaton, chairman of the Marine sub-group, reported that this team was developing a guideline on periodic DP trials for drilling units; once agreed this would be passed to the Marine Division Management Committee for consideration. The sub-group has identified twelve topics it wishes to address in 2003 so it anticipates a busy year ahead.

TCPC

Mark Canada, TCPC sub-group chairman, explained that this group was yet to meet. However, after he outlined a number of certification and personnel competence issues relevant in the Gulf of Mexico, a number of those present offered to provide relevant personnel from their organisations to become involved in the sub-group work.

ROV

Robert Keith, on behalf of the ROV sub-group, explained that the well-supported sub-group had already met three times. It was currently reviewing relevant IMCA documents and would suggest changes where appropriate.

Offshore Survey

Ian Edmonstone, Offshore Survey sub-group chairman, outlined the objectives of the sub-group which had met twice. The sub-group was also reviewing relevant documents and had identified that one of its objectives should be to provide technical input to other relevant IMCA activities.

SEL

Wayne Seelbach, SEL sub-group chairman, reported that this sub-group was working on a number of issues while also helping to organise the joint IMCA Marine and Safety seminar that is to be held in Houston on 5-6 November.

Promoting IMCA at OTC

IMCA recently discussed how best to exhibit at the Offshore Technology Conference. Members want to raise the profile of IMCA at such events without having an expensive stand.

The Americas Deepwater Section, IMCA Council and the Overall Management Committee have decided that a 'certificate' to be displayed on members' own stands and some documentation on IMCA might be more appropriate.

The intention is to promote IMCA and its work, both world-wide and through the Americas Deepwater Section while enabling members to benefit from an association with IMCA.

IMCA is offering:

- * a certificate with your company name and/or logo to display on your stand;
- * the IMCA brochure
- * a handout giving a brief description of IMCA, customised to suit your company.

IMCA hopes members will find this appropriate and want to take up this offer.

Those interested please contact Hugh Williams at the secretariat.

Middle East & India

The section held its quarterly meeting in UAE at the end of January. The chairman reviewed issues that had been discussed at recent IMCA technical and core committees. The well attended meeting also provided an opportunity for those present to review the revised IMCA world-wide structure and to identify Middle East & India Section representatives to the IMCA core and technical committees.

The section held a further meeting as this issue of the newsletter went to press. See next issue for more details.

Asia-Pacific

The most recent quarterly section meeting held in Perth was well attended by members from all IMCA technical divisions.

First off the meeting was updated on progress being made to finalise several IMCA guidance documents (on ROV mobilisation, the cross hauling of diving bells and use of surface supplied mixed gas diving) which had originally been instigated by Section workgroups.

Following on from the ROV mobilisation document a regional working group had now been set up to develop guidelines on the mobilisation of (air and saturation) diving spreads on to vessels of opportunity. Later the meeting was joined by representatives from a number of local client companies. Andy Bolton, Section Chairman, and IMCA's Technical Director, Jane Bugler, talked about the organisation and outlined some of the activities undertaken by IMCA locally and internationally.

The meeting was also pleased to welcome Andrew Pearce, from Australian Department of Mineral and Petroleum Resources. He presented an excellent summary of the requirements and implementation

Regional Section Officers

Middle East & India Section

Chairman: Steve MacMillan, J Ray
McDermott Diving Division
Vice-Chairman: Charlie Rogerson,
Consolidated Contractors Co.

Asia-Pacific Section

Chairman: Andy Bolton, Technip-
Coflexip Oceania
Vice-Chairman: Des Power,
Subsea 7 Asia-Pacific

Americas Deepwater Section

Chairman: John Reed, Heerema
Marine Contractors
Vice-Chairman: Dick Martin,
Subsea 7

dates for the new Australian Petroleum (Submerged Lands) (Diving Safety) Regulations 2002. Andrew Pearce also noted that he would be organising a workshop in the near future to help ensure a smooth transition for members having to comply with the new regime.

The next Asia-Pacific meeting is to be held in Bangkok, Thailand on 8 May 2003. The format for the day will again be a morning members meeting with a client briefing meeting in the afternoon.

ROV Mobilisation Guidelines

IMCA has recently published the 'ROV Mobilisation' guidance note (IMCA R 009). From the award of a contract to the first in-water test of the remotely operated vehicle (ROV) there are a significant number of issues that need to be addressed by both the onshore and offshore ROV team. Each mobilisation is unique and needs to be planned in a comprehensive and structured manner.

Each ROV operator will have its own management system to cover its internal requirements. The ROV mobilisation guidelines are intended to complement and support those systems and to provide guidance to enable all personnel to be aware of possible requirements in preparing and mobilising an ROV system and its crew on to a vessel. The document is in a check list format.

The guidance note is not designed to be exhaustive, but intended to cover the minimum requirements that may be expected of ROV operators and their clients particularly where ROVs are mobilised onto vessels of convenience. A number of countries have national regulations that apply to ROV operations taking place within waters controlled by that country. Naturally, where national regulations exist, these must take precedence over the guidance document.

Remote Systems & ROV Division Management Committee

Chairman: Kevin Kerins, Oceaneering International
Vice-Chairman: Dave Walker, Technip-Coflexip

Doug Graham, Fugro-UDI
John Davies, Global Marine Systems
Andrew Beveridge, Rovtech
Keith Robathan, Sonsub
Colin Mackay, Stolt Offshore
Paul Brain, Subsea 7
Alan Edwards, Thales GeoSolutions

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Scott Wagner, Oceaneering International
Asia-Pacific Section:
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European Diving Technology Committee

EDTC recently published a new document entitled 'Diving Industry Personnel Competence Standards'. This aims to draw together all the accumulated knowledge of EDTC member countries in the area of competence requirements for various grades of diving personnel. The document provides a 'high level' minimum set of competences for a person to function safely and efficiently at most grades for personnel working in the diving industry, both inshore and offshore. It does not specify in detail the way in which such competences should be achieved. It is intended as a reference document for individual organisations or countries seeking to develop their own detailed requirements.

The document is available on the IMCA website and the EDTC website at www.edtc.org

Canada

The Diver Certification Board of Canada was recently set up and will be responsible for certifying the training and experience of commercial divers who wish to work in operations related to petroleum activities off the east coast of Canada. The certification will satisfy the requirements of the National Energy Board and the offshore petroleum boards (who used to oversee such certification). It will also meet the requirements of the Canadian Standards Association on competency for diving operations. Valid certificates issued prior to the setting up of the board will continue to be accepted but diving personnel are encouraged to apply for a DCBC certificate.

Information on the application process is available on www.divercertification.com

Surface Supplied Mixed Gas Diving

Responding to a proposal from the Asia-Pacific Section, IMCA has now developed guidance on surface supplied mixed gas diving operations using a mixture of helium and oxygen as the breathing gas. Identifying good practice the guidance pays special attention to safety considerations – covering operational limits, personnel requirements for divers, supervisory and manning levels, risk assessment, equipment need and failure, and recovery of an injured diver. The document explains that the technique does not offer an effective alternative to saturation diving and sets out the operational limitations for the method due to the inherent risks involved. The guidance is now being prepared for publication and should be available shortly.

Diving Division Management Committee

Chairman: Alan Forsyth, Subsea 7
Vice-Chairman: Georges Arnoux, Stolt Offshore

Fred Pope, Divex
Bill Macdonald, Global Industries Asia Pacific

Anthony Barnes, J Ray
McDermott Diving Division
Ian Mackenzie, National Hyperbaric Centre
Bjørn Kahrs, Norwegian State Diving School
Derek Beddows, Technip-Coflexip
John Fortner, Torch

Asia-Pacific Section: RP Singh, Stolt Offshore Asia Pacific/
PT Komaritim

Middle East & India Section:
Steve MacMillan, J Ray
McDermott Diving Division

New Dutch Rules

The Dutch made important changes to their offshore diving regulations in January to amalgamate two previously separate regimes for offshore and all other types of diving. All diving now comes under the working conditions legislation in the Netherlands (the 'Arbo' rules) though the State Supervisor of Mines (SodM) remains responsible for enforcing offshore diving regulations.

IMCA is currently gathering information about what these changes require of diving contractors working on the Dutch continental shelf. All divers, diving supervisors and diver medics wishing to work in Dutch waters must also hold Dutch certificates by 1 January 2004. The Netherlands Diving Centre (NDC) has been appointed to issue these and information is awaited about how to apply for such certification.

Information notes will be issued on both topics in due course.

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Inter-Vessel Survey Data Telemetry Standardisation

With the growing trend towards multi-vessel operation and with survey contractors using different survey navigation software suites, IMCA's Offshore Survey Division Management Committee felt that a level of standardisation in data telemetry would be in the industry's interests.

A standard protocol for the transmission and reception of general format positioning data has been developed and, following a successful trial, has been issued as guidance note *IMCA S 006*.

Offshore Survey Division Management Committee

Chairman: Alf Parker, Subsea 7

Andrew McNeill, Fugro-UDI
Dave Roberts, Fugro-UDI
Ray Morgan, Stolt Offshore
Oddvar Misund, Stolt Offshore AS
Walter Steedman, Subsea 7
Will Primavesi, Thales GeoSolutions
Americas Deepwater Section:
Ian Edmonstone, Subsea 7

Offshore Survey Information Notes

published since Issue 26

S 02/03 IMCA safety flash system

Diving Information Notes

published since Issue 26

D 03/03 Offshore diving supervisor and life support technician certification

schemes: Acceptance to sit examinations

D 04/03 IMCA safety flash system

Digital Video for Offshore Survey & Inspection

The Hydrographic Society in Scotland recently held a half-day seminar on 'Digital Video for Offshore Survey and Inspection – Current Status, Future Prospects'. The aims of the seminar were to review the current status of digital video and its application to survey and inspection and to open an industry debate on issues of standardisation and compatibility of deliverables.

The very high turnout, over 110 delegates, testifies to the fact that digital video is now a hot topic. With predictions that VHS/S-VHS analogue video will be obsolete within the next 2-4 years, operators and contractors are turning their attention to how the inevitable transition from analogue to digital should be managed.

The event opened with a presentation from David Whitcombe (Shell Expro), looking at digital video from the end client's perspective. The main message was that digital video should not simply be viewed as a direct replacement for analogue video, but that it should be treated as an integral component of digital information systems (such as GIS). In this way information previously accessible only in video review suites can be made available to the desktop PC user across the whole organisation.

This was followed by presentations covering an overview of some of the technical aspects of digital video, including digitisation, compression and image quality and a review of a number of existing and imminent digital video technologies.

A further presentation covered some of the operational issues involved when using digital video systems, reviewing the factors that should be considered when selecting a suitable system. This involves not only the choice of acquisition system, but more importantly the form of the final deliverables - formats, data storage requirements, summaries/clips and integration to the end client's systems.

The final presentation was by Will Primavesi (Thales GeoSolutions), speaking on behalf of IMCA's Offshore Survey Division Management Committee. He explained that IMCA was aware that there were many unresolved issues to do with the standardisation and compatibility of digital video deliverables. Will then outlined the most significant of these and announced that IMCA was to set up a workgroup with the aim of producing guidelines for digital video deliverables.



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Simulators

Simulators are well established in marine training, particularly for radar and ship handling. They are now used for training in marine crane operations, with one believed to be interlinked with an offshore vessel bridge simulator. They are used for ROV training and project planning; and they are heavily used in DP training centres plus, to some extent, for onboard DP training.

While simulator realism is improving all the time, competence schemes have yet to place a value on their worth compared with time spent on real operations. The view is that simulators, while invaluable in training personnel, have yet to be shown suitable for inclusion in a competence scheme.

This issue is therefore being examined by the TCPC committee which will review the need for a methodology on the use of simulators in training.

Views from members on this issue are welcomed. Contact philip.wiggs@imca-int.com.

DP Guidance for Offshore Supply Boats

IMCA has set up a working group to develop industry good practice guidelines for DP supply vessels. Representatives from IMCA's marine committee as well as from clients and supply boat operators are involved in the group. The group is considering a number of issues including annual DP trials, vessel documentation and training for DP supply vessels. It is hoped that the guidelines will be finalised later this year.

Lifting Safely

IMCA has attended a number of meetings related to the safety of lifting operations in the offshore industry. Most have a UK focus, although some are linked with European programmes, but the need for safety in lifting operations is a world-wide challenge.

Nevertheless, different parts of the industry have evolved working practices to suit their own operations, complete with specific terminology and perceptions. The complexity in some lifting operations subsea might not be familiar to those equally challenged by the other difficulties in lifting projects for a drilling operation and vice versa. Lifts aboard a contractor's vessel may be more complicated than the same task on a static platform. Lifts between two vessels or from a platform to a vessel bring their own specific hazards. One crew's idea of a heavy lift is mere routine to another.

Despite the range of offshore lifting operations, the UK Step Change group is trying to develop material to encourage all parts of the industry to adopt a common approach to lifting procedures. Draft material has been passed to the SEL, TCPC and Marine committees and IMCA has responded and provided material toward this project.

It is hoped that the end result should at least show how different parts of the industry relate to each other in respect of training, certification and competency and show a common approach to the safety of lifting operations generally.

Regardless of the apparent UK focus of this venture, IMCA is aware that, through the involvement of oil companies in the group, what evolves could pass on through company policies to affect global operations. Relevant IMCA committees are therefore keeping a watching brief on these developments.

Marine Safety Seminar

This year's annual marine seminar – the twelfth such event – is to take place on 5-6 November in Houston.

As this event is being held jointly with IMCA's SEL Committee, the theme of the two day meeting will be marine safety.

A steering group involving members of the Americas Deepwater Section as well as the Marine and SEL committee chairmen is currently putting together a varied and interesting programme. It is hoped to have sessions on deep-water DP operations, vessel security, compliance and enforcement issues in the Gulf of Mexico and safety and reliability of DP systems.

If anyone is interested in making a presentation please contact Jane Bugler as soon as possible. Although the event is still several months away, please note the date in your diary now.

Marine Information Notes

published since Issue 26

- M 05/03 Guidelines for conducting pre-ISM audit assessments
- M 06/03 International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code
- M 07/03 Protection of fuel tanks against collision and stranding
- M 08/03 Fast rescue boats
- M 09/03 Fire protection: Atmospheric oil mist detectors
- M 10/03 EU proposals for acceptance of marine certificates of competency from non-community states
- M 11/03 International Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code
- M 12/03 IMCA safety flash system

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New members

IMCA welcomes:

- *Alstom Schilling Robotics*
- *Anglo-Eastern Group*
- *BMT Salvage*
- *C&C Technologies Inc*
- *Cape Diving & Salvage Company (GUPCO)*
- *Kenz Cranes BV*
- *Middle East Navigation Aids Service (MENAS)*
- *Oceanscan Ltd*
- *PT Panji Adi Samudera (PAS) Maritime*
- *Subsea Petroleum Services*
- *URS nv*
- *Well Ops UK Ltd*

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Founded in 1870 to introduce the then novel tugs with propellers on the river Scheldt. Employing some 600 people, today URS operates a fleet of harbour and offshore assistance tugs, anchor handlers, diving support and salvage vessels. The most recent addition to the fleet is the Union Manta, a UT722 AHTSD of 205 tons bollard pull.

Contact: Walter de Schepper, T +32 3 545 1120. W www.urs.be

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Contact: Bill Morrice, T +44 (0)1224 226650, W www.well-ops.co.uk

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Contact: Ahmed Ramy, T +20 3 420 8015, F +20 3 542 3104

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loss prevention, vessel design/modification. Parent group BMT also has subsidiaries providing ship/offshore unit design/construction, environmental consultancy, oil spill response and reliability assessment.

Contact: Geoff Holland, T +971 4 331 3100. W www.wreckage.org

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Has designed and manufactured remotely operated underwater equipment since 1985. Produces the Remote Systems Engine (a modular system for underwater propulsion, actuation, control, and communication) and the QUEST line of work-class ROVs. Also the world's leading supplier of manipulator systems for ROVs and cable trenching machines used in offshore oil, telecoms, scientific, and military operations.

Contact: Jason Stanley, T +1 530 753 6718. W www.schilling.com

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Published quarterly to promote knowledge of safety and technical matters affecting the marine, underwater and engineering industry.

Succinct, positive contributions of potential interest to a wide cross-section of IMCA members are welcome.

Views expressed on these pages do not automatically reflect policies or positions of IMCA itself.

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