

Training for emergencies on offshore installations

Offshore Information Sheet No. 1/2014

(Issued February 2014)

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Introduction

1 This sheet deals with the training of offshore personnel with specific emergency response duties, and those who may be affected by an emergency.

Background

2 In the event of an emergency, offshore personnel may be required to make decisions and take rapid action to save their life, and the lives of others. To deal with such sudden and infrequent events, adequate and sufficiently realistic training is required.

3 It is necessary for offshore personnel to gain an awareness of the hazards they face and for their training to provide them with the skills, knowledge and practical experience necessary to conduct the tasks required in the demanding environment of an emergency. This applies to both those personnel who are required to deal with an emergency and for the rest of the workforce who may need to take emergency action to save themselves.

4 Realistic training will enable:

- improved identification and understanding of the hazards faced;
- a better assessment and management of the risks involved;
- improved competence from a greater understanding of the tasks to be performed, and the appropriate ways of undertaking them;
- the capabilities of individuals and the team to be determined; and
- improvements in equipment or processes to be identified.

5 It has been argued that the risks associated with emergency response training prevent dutyholders from conducting realistic training. While training should be properly risk assessed and managed, the risks should be balanced against the uncontrolled risks associated with a real emergency, and the tasks required of staff in such a demanding situation. Training should be conducted under controlled conditions, and risks should be significantly lower than in a real event.

6 Training that is not sufficiently realistic may mean that staff are inadequately prepared to deal with real situations, and may have unrealistic expectations of their own capabilities. This could be detrimental to both themselves and others. The Annex to this sheet contains some practical examples, identified during inspections, where dutyholders have improved training to provide appropriate levels of realism.

Action

7 Dutyholders should review the tasks likely to be carried out during an emergency and ensure that their emergency response systems are adequate. These systems will consist of personnel, equipment, and procedures; all three elements should be fit for purpose to ensure that the performance standard can be met.

8 Dutyholders should ensure that personnel are trained and capable of performing the tasks expected of them, and that they are provided with suitable and sufficient equipment to undertake those tasks.

9 Dutyholders should ensure that procedures are clear, practical and concise. Procedures should be practiced to ensure that they are capable of being conducted in challenging situations.

10 Dutyholders should assess the effectiveness of the training against the required tasks and the overall performance standard, to ensure that the training is adequate.

Annex

Examples of improvements to make emergency training more realistic:

1 Where the only means of escape is by donut, don't rely on a video alone for training. Practical training should also be provided.

2 Don't rely on a verbal briefing alone for launching a Skyscape when it may be appropriate for the core crew to have experienced partially lowering the Skyscape during training. This also applies to the use of davit liferafts.

3 Provide lifeboat seat familiarisation for all crew members. This is especially important in relation to freefall TEMPSC (totally enclosed motor-propelled survival craft).

4 Provide comprehensive 'site-specific' familiarisation training in a lifeboat for all crew members. The core crew should spend time in the boat with an instructor (usually a trained coxswain) so that they are familiar with the various systems in the boat – they will be called upon to operate some of these systems during the lifeboat launch.

5 TEMPSC coxswains should practice operating the secondary engine start system on their TEMPSC offshore.

6 Coxswains should be clear about the following site-specific actions:

- TEMPSC launch actions – fuel tap location; drain plug location; lowering release wire main and alternate release; operation of compressed air supply. Pre-launch check lists should be displayed in the TEMPSC.
- TEMPSC operations actions – initial course to steer; awareness of wind/wave direction; knowledge of sea-anchor and its operation; importance of occupants remaining seated and secured (risk of capsizing), recovery procedures.

7 Crew should practice the deployment of an escape ladder down the side of an FPSO.

8 Emergency response teams should practice rescuing an injured person (using a mannequin) from columns/pontoons.

9 Exercises should include worst-case scenarios.

10 Emergency response teams should practice handling casualties, using realistic weights and negotiating stairwells and awkward areas (including using stretchers).

11 Where evacuation is by TEMPSC, emergency response teams should practice evacuating with realistically loaded stretchers.

12 Drills should be held on the use and operation of liferafts. Guidance should be provided on how to launch them (site specific), what's in them, and the initial actions to be taken when in them.

Relevant legal requirements

Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974

Offshore Installations (Prevention of Fire and Explosion, and Emergency Response) Regulations 1995

Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999

References

Oil & Gas UK Ltd *Guidelines for the Management of Competence and Training in Emergency Response* 2010 Issue 3

Oil & Gas UK Ltd *Guidelines for the Management of Emergency Response* 2010 Issue 3

Further information

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance.

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