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Emergency response training for the
cruise industry

Special Report
International Cruise Ship Industry

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Dutch-based training establishment now marketing its services to cruise ship operators

Following a long period as a training provider and its successful dedicated Emergency Response Services (firefighting service) offered to salvage companies, Falck Safety Services has intensified its marketing of Emergency Response Training (ERT) and STCW Manila amendments basic and refresher course training for the maritime industry.

The training centres in Rotterdam and Den Oever were approved by the Dutch administration for both STCW Manila amendments basic and refresher course training during the middle of last year. More recently Carnival UK and Holland America Group including its Holland America Line (HAL), Seabourn and Princess Cruise Line brands, chose Falck Safety Services as their preferred solution to train officers in emergency response.

Since the STCW Manila Amendments 2010 entered into force, Falck has developed an excellent combined training programme to reduce the time needed for the shipping industry without compromising on quality.

As a consequence of the STCW 2010 Manila amendments, current seafarer licenses will only remain valid after 1st January, 2017 when the required refresher courses have been completed.

Falck compiled a training standard in co-operation with other Dutch training providers. This standard contains the modules that need to be completed and

lays out how the new refresher courses should take shape.

The training standard offers the possibility to follow all four refresher courses separately, which will take seven days to complete. However, a second option is to take the combined course, in which all the mandatory elements will be covered together, which will last three to five days.

In addition to these two training programmes, Falck will deliver the standard as a Scenario Based Training (SBT). SBT is a type of training in which the working environment of the delegates will be made as realistic as possible. For example, real scenarios will be used in the training.

Starting point

SBT is aimed at getting away from the more stereotype training courses and Falck developed this type of training where the incident becomes the starting point. The participants then learn from their mistakes and are allowed to improve their responses by experience. "By making decisions, they will learn by experience," H (Harry) Klootwijk, international key account manager, maritime, offshore, renewable energy and ERT services, told Innovations.

Falck's experience in providing SBT for the offshore industry has shown that, compared to other types of training, delegates will reach a higher level of



Engine room fire training

education in a shorter period of time when placed in a recognisable environment. Falck claimed to be the first safety training provider in the Netherlands to offer a SBT for the maritime industry and thus far, is the only establishment that can offer this type of training in the country.

To cater for this type of training, Falck has built a training facility, which looks like a ship. During training, virtual reality is used, which is reasonably new to the maritime industry. This will enable extra scenarios to be incorporated into the training.

When there is a fire in, for example, the engine room, a warning will show up on the monitor(s) in the control room. From here, the crew has to activate the fire alarm, after which the fire team has to get mobilised, get dressed and follow the existing procedures.

Situational awareness when fighting fires could be the stability of the vessel when a lot of water is being pumped into the ship and the use of CO2 to fight the fire, ie how much air is in an enclosed space when using CO2. At the Maasvlakte training centre there is a fully operational rack of six CO2 cylinders for training purposes. The designated firefighters should be ready appropriately dressed in around three minutes, rather than much longer, which is often the case, Klootwijk explained.

Another scenario that could be thrown at the crew is how to deal with mustering and preparing people to board and use a lifeboat.

Soft skills are also focused upon, including taking command and control in various situations, to see how problems are resolved by working together.



Delegates on the bridge



Observation Delegates on the bridge

This training pattern gives Falck the opportunity to train the entire crew, from lower ranked seafarers to officers and Masters. For each scenario, Falck trainers will write an entire script. The virtual reality makes it possible to simulate the working environment of a specific ship, which brings the training even closer to reality.

In general, most of the scenarios are designed to discover where participants can improve their reactions to situations, which are levelled at them by the trainers. Procedures and hardware can be investigated during an incident and inadequate equipment identified. Falck has developed its own equipment at the training centre.

A maximum of 12 participants can be handled simultaneously and two to three courses can be run at the same time.

Evaluation of the training in the control rooms is possible through observation behind tinted glass. This allows course directors, industry experts and senior company personnel to sit in on the training courses unobserved.

Competency training

Falck also offers on board assessment and training. With this type of training a high level of competency can be reached and maintained. The training scene is the seafarer's ship, which brings it very close to reality and offers the option to train with his or her own familiar (safety) equipment.

Falck operates with one to two person teams to undertake the assessments. Klootwijk explained that the participants are encouraged to work with the assessors/trainers to gain vital experience in certain situations, which could threaten a vessel's safety and of all those on board.

Today, safety critical competencies are a priority for employers across diverse industries including shipping.

Indeed, given the increasing employer legal liabilities, many now often require more than a single certificate, qualification or ticket to provide

evidence that an individual is technically competent to do the job, perform a specific task, or operate machinery safely.

Employers also recognise that competency can diminish over time, and that there is increasing risk of competency failures in the gap between initial basic training and refresher training. This gap represents a real operational risk.

In response to this, a robust process for maintaining safety critical competencies is required. Any new model for the verification and improvement of competency must enable employers to confirm that current employees possess both the knowledge and practical skills required to meet safety critical standards: whether these are legal, professional or site-specific standards.

It must combine an advanced method of workplace assessment with on-the-job training to be successful and trustworthy.

Falck claimed that its unique approach to competency verification has been proven down the years. Feedback has been excellent, the company said.

Personnel, including emergency response crews, have been found to be far more confident in their

abilities with their skills remaining permanently at the highest levels.

Falck's approach provides a unique opportunity to align competency more closely with company policies, procedures and equipment when dealing with an incident, Klootwijk explained. By assessing the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and teams, and working directly to rectify any shortcomings, Falck can help develop an individual's ability, and ultimately build highly skilled and safe teams.

Individual company procedures can be used as a basis for dealing with an incident, as can company specific equipment to make the training more challenging and authentic.

Falck recently undertook an on board assessment for a large European Ferry company.

Today Falck is talking with a ferry company about crisis management training. The training centre offers Management of Major Emergencies (NOGEPa MoME) and Major Emergency Management Initial Response (OPITO MEM-IR) for Offshore Installation Managers (OIMs) and the company is looking to develop a similar training course for the shipping industry and especially ferry and cruise line companies.

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