



NOTICE TO OPERATORS

NIGHT LAUNCHES and RECOVERY OF FAST RESCUE CRAFTS (FRC)

June 5, 2015

File No. 20,100.28

PURPOSE

The purpose of this notice is to advise operators of the intention of the Canada-Newfoundland & Labrador and Canada-Nova Scotia Offshore Petroleum Boards (the Boards) to require that by 2019 designated Standby Vessels conduct 25% of FRC drills (i.e. at least 6 drills in any 12-month period) at night.

For further clarity, during the Standby Vessel's annual survey in 2019, it will have to be demonstrated that in the preceding 12 months the crew will have conducted at least 6 FRC launches and recoveries at night (i.e. between civil dusk and civil dawn).

BACKGROUND

The Boards have issued jointly the Atlantic Canada Standby Vessel (AC-SBV) Guidelines, which will come into effect 12 months after their publication, i.e. in April 2016. Section 4.6.2 of the guidelines stipulates that FRC drills should be carried out at least twice per crew rotation and not less than biweekly.

Standby vessel crews have to demonstrate their ability to effectively respond to emergency situations in expected conditions such as hours of darkness and less than ideal sea states. It should be noted that many of the high-profile offshore disasters, including the Ocean Ranger, Piper Alpha and Deepwater Horizon, occurred at night.

Experience from other jurisdictions, most noticeably the North Western European Area, has shown that this goal is achievable within 3 years. This can be accomplished through a program of repeated training and drills, whereby launching and recovery of the FRC is attempted at gradually more challenging, but controlled, conditions until the crews develop the skill and confidence to routinely and safely launch and recover the FRC offshore at night and during adverse weather conditions.

PLAN

It is proposed that the Standby Vessel Guideline Working Group continues to meet with the purpose of developing an implementation plan towards achieving this goal. It is also proposed that the Working Group visit the North Sea to witness similar training and drills and determine lessons learned in that jurisdiction while achieving this goal. A meeting will be convened in the near future to discuss this plan further.