
Topic 1: HUEBA

Documents

- 1.1 February 25, 2000 C-NLOPB letter
- 1.2 May 15, 2000 CAPP letter
- 1.3 June 19, 2001 CAPP letter + attached five page Research Summary
- 1.4 February 12, 2003 C-NLOPB letter
- 1.5 March 20, 2003 CAPP letter + attached 17 page EBS Discussion Paper
- 1.6 April 8, 2003 C-NLOPB letter
- 1.7 Helicopter EBS Risk Assessment 2005
- 1.8 Helicopter Underwater Escape Breathing Systems Workshop Summary Report; March 1, 2006
- 1.9 March 13, 2007 C-NLOPB letter
- 1.10 May 22, 2007 CAPP letter
- 1.11 February 02, 2009 CAPP HUEBA Task Force Meeting Notes
- 1.12 May 2009 HUEBA Implementation Plan

Topic 2: Survival Suits

Documents

- 2.1 CAN/CGSB – 65.16 – 2005 Immersion Suit Systems
- 2.2 CAN/CGSB-65.17-99 Helicopter Passenger Transportation Suit Systems
- 2.3 February 24, 2009 CGSB letter
- 2.4 March 20, 2009 C-NLOPB letter
- 2.5 May 21, 2009 CAPP letter
- 2.6 May 28, 2009 CGSB letter to CAPP; May 26, 2009 letter + attached Project Agreement
- 2.7 August 2009 CAPP comments to CGSB

Topic 3: BST/BST-R Course Quality Review

Documents

- 3.1 Standard Practice for the Training and Qualifications of Personnel
- 3.2 Summary of Survey Results
- 3.3 July 16, 2009 CAPP letter + BST and BST-R Course Reviews at the Marine Institute (MI); report revised to October 2009
- 3.4 July 16, 2009 CAPP letter + BST and BST-R Course Reviews at Survival Systems report

Topic 4: Escape, Evacuation and Rescue Guide (EER)

Document

4.1 August 28, 2009 CAPP letter + final draft EER Guide

Topic 5: U.K. Helicopter Task Group

Document

5.1 Emergency Response – Lessons Learned

Topic 5: U.K. Helicopter Task Group

5.1

Emergency Response - Some of the Lessons from 1 April

This world has changed and is changing rapidly. News media organisations are instantaneous, intensive and incessant – they are also global and this has a huge impact on crisis management. Anyone and everyone can see breaking news as it happens and this in turn can intensify media interest as well as generate enquiries from families and friends of people involved – and from the thousands of people who may not be involved. This is especially true during the early stages before details have narrowed down concerns to a particular asset or company.

In the event of a multi-fatality accident, what was sufficient emergency response a few years ago will no longer suffice. Delays in information, inaccuracies and apparent withholding of information all combine to create a very negative picture – with the media, with the public and with genuinely concerned callers.

The levels of stress for people involved in responding to an emergency can be almost intolerable and this requires careful consideration.

Doing the right thing by families, friends and colleagues of any victims after a tragedy can also be fraught with potential dangers.

On June 16 the companies and organisations involved in responding to the 85N helicopter tragedy on April 1 came together to share lessons learned so that all of us can be better prepared for the next major emergency. This paper sets out some of the key lessons that can be applied across the industry. There were many other lessons that each organisation learned about their own specific arrangements,

We also listened to lessons that came from the Morecambe Bay tragedy in 2006 and have taken relevant parts into the recommendations.

SCOPE

Although these recommendations come from the helicopter crash on 1 April, they can be applied more broadly. The emergency response was centred on Aberdeen and some of the content has a local slant that may not translate directly into other regions.

Emergencies can vary hugely – these recommendations are based on the very-rare catastrophe of a multiple-fatality accident offshore in the UKCS. They apply mostly to Operating Companies, Drilling Companies and larger Contractors who have larger groups of people travelling and working offshore and who could be exposed to an accident causing multiple deaths.

Ahead of an emergency

Do you know who is supposed to do what in an emergency?

Knowing, in advance, who is supposed to do what can make a lot of difference. As well as exercises and training, all of your senior managers need to know the roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in an emergency.

Get all your senior managers to read "Responding to Emergencies in Scotland" – available on the web.

All parties involved worked well together in April – there is little doubt that good co-operation will happen in future emergencies although this will always be easier if people know their role and companies are focussed on dealing with families and friends of casualties.

Do you run practical tests and exercises that really test communications interfaces?

Running emergency response exercises is invaluable – especially if you can try to test real interfaces.

Do you have a programme of exercises in place that you are following and do they test real interfaces?

Do you have enough people trained to respond?

Several of the companies involved explained how they were "lucky" that the accident happened when it did (2pm on a weekday in April) – at other times they might not have had the people to respond.

One company involved had almost 40 staff in response – including the provision of 'relief cover' for the team as the emergency progressed.

How many people do you have in your emergency call-out list? Do you know how many would be available to respond when needed?

Do you have the right people to deal with enquiries from relatives?

This was extremely stressful and several of the companies involved are reconsidering their options. Some are considering out-sourcing this key role, others are concerned about potential delays in setting up an outsourced service.

Who do you have as designated relatives response?

How many do you have? Do you have enough to provide relief cover?

How well trained are they?

Have you considered their individual suitability? In some companies people volunteer for the role – you should consider if this really is the best approach for your company.

If you were asked to set up a dial in number for concerned relatives – do you know how to do this ?

Could your switchboard cope and do you have enough lines?

Being Prepared for the Media

Today's media can be incessant and intrusive. As an emergency progresses you may be able to work with others in co-ordinating press conferences etc. but that may be many hours after the news breaks. During this time you need to deal with the media in some way.

Are your security arrangements enough to stop journalists approaching your emergency response team?

How would you deal with your employees being accosted by journalists outside your premises?

Do you have a media contact/focal point to direct calls to?

Can you rapidly change your web pages to direct media enquiries where you want them to go (and reduce unwanted contacts to other numbers)?

Do you have 'stock' information on your operations 'ready to go' in an emergency – e.g. how many people work where doing what etc?

Do you have one or more senior people fully trained and experienced to interface with the media?

Get the admin details right up front

Make sure you regularly check and update next-of-kin and 'expressions of will' data for all your teams.

Encourage everyone to have a valid last will and testament in place that reflects their current circumstances.

Encourage all limited company or agency sub-contractors to have adequate life-assurance provisions.

Check with your own insurance provider exactly what it would take to generate a payout in the event of a Major Incident and how long this might take.

Emergency Response Facilities

During the emergency, one company's Emergency Response Centre (ERC) was being redecorated and was out of use.

Make sure you know where you will run an emergency from whenever it may happen.

In the event of a Major Incident you should expect one, probably more, Police Liaison Officers (PLOs) to come to your ERC to help gather information on casualties and advise on communication.

You will need a separate room with telephones, internet/email access and communications both with your ERC and your relative response area – do you have this available? Will communications be possible through your corporate data "firewalls"?

Do you have a dedicated PLO co-ordinator as part of your procedures? If not, you should.

Emergency Response Procedures

Detailed checklists of required actions are vital to ensure that smaller details don't get overlooked.

Make sure you have procedures that force you to consider the welfare of your emergency response team – from providing refreshments and relief cover through to counselling support.

If you take large numbers of people out of your organisation to manage an emergency – have you thought about how you would manage day-to-day business?

During the emergency

Dealing with the media

Expect and be ready for intense media and public interest. On April 1 Grampian Police co-ordinated press conferences (4 in 48 hours) which really helped to manage the media for all concerned.

It is recommended that Grampian Police assume this role in future emergencies.

Release of information

For an accident involving fatalities, the Police have a legal obligation to gain permission from the Procurator Fiscal before releasing any information on the accident. This can lead to frustration and stress in dealing with media and concerned relatives and the Police are working closely with the PF's office to see how this can be speeded up.

It is recommended that Grampian Police reviews procedures for verifying the accuracy of information in different scenarios and for accelerating the potential release of casualty information to families.

Sending a company representative to the MRCC

If you send a representative to the Maritime coastguard Agency (MCA) – make sure they:

Know the role and they have been to the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre (MRCC) before.

Are senior and have a good knowledge of your company – including who to call

Understand why Vantage alone is not enough

Many people were frustrated on the day by delays in releasing casualty names. Some expressed surprise that the Vantage POB System was inadequate.

Whilst Vantage is a good operational system the data itself cannot be considered to be reliable enough to use for confirming casualty identification without corroboration.

On April 1 the Vantage System was accurate but there were doubts raised. A muster was held on Miller to cross check the flight manifest and Vantage records.

There is a lesson here – we should not expect to rely solely on Vantage during a Major Incident – the information is simply too critical and can only be considered accurate if it is corroborated and cross-checked. This applies more broadly to personnel details – inaccurate or partially accurate information is not good enough.

On April 1 the Vantage System showed flight 85N had landed – this information was, unfortunately, passed on to the family of one of the passengers giving them false hope. Also, on the day, Vantage was shut down to prevent the passenger details being viewed by other system users,

Make early contact with all involved parties

Whilst MCA and Grampian Police will co-ordinate emergency response and rescue efforts, it is likely that the operating company, (BP in this case) will have a significant emergency response effort. It is

Important that companies with people involved are contacted promptly and asked to send a suitable representative to the company response centre.

Your procedures need to ensure that involved companies are contacted promptly.

Following the emergency

There are no rules on what will be required after an emergency - this will depend on the nature of the accident and the specifics of those involved,

The establishment of a Humanitarian Assistance centre (HAC) as a meeting point for family, friends and colleagues of those who died was hugely beneficial – it was also a focal point for a host of support services.

Aberdeen City council in conjunction with Grampian Police will draw up plans for the establishment of a HAC for future emergencies of different sizes and will be seeking industry commitment to ensure that the funding of such a facility can be provided.

All companies who have offshore people should support efforts to plan for having a Humanitarian Assistance Centre..

The specifics of memorial services, funeral arrangements etc. will all be crucially dependent on the specific emergency and it is difficult to draw many generic lessons from this emergency. Be prepared to dedicate a lot of time and effort into managing all aspects of the aftermath – from supporting families through to providing counselling for colleagues and those involved in responding to the emergency. One lesson that can be drawn is the need to appoint a senior manager for each family involved – a role that could last many weeks after the emergency. Another vital lesson is that different families have different needs and these need to be respected.

Chairman – Helicopter Safety Task Group

30 June 2009