



M.O.S.T.

McMillan Offshore Survival Training

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M.O.S.T. Newsletter – September 2013

From the desk of John McMillan

In a recent maritime magazine, I read an article titled “RESCUED FISHERMAN STAYED AFLOAT ON BOOT”. The article mentioned that a fisherman spent nearly 12 hours in the waters offshore using only his rubber boots as a floatation device throughout the ordeal. The location of this ordeal was in “cold” waters off the coast of New York.

My initial thought was “Where did he learn that skill?” Most training organizations in the colder water regions of the US do not teach such skills that focus on warm water techniques...like the removal of one’s clothing for floatation or the drown proofing skills. I being in the Boy Scouts many years ago, our troop learned how to use clothing as a floatation device and since all of my neighborhood buddies were in the same troop, I thought it was a requirement to be in the Boy Scouts. Not true!

The concept of training is that one must attend a formal class, take a written test and then receive a “certificate” upon completion of chosen competency skills. However, training can be accomplished by watching TV (Deadliest Catch, Titanic or Jaws), attending conferences and talking to the USCG about their rescue procedures once on scene or reading a survival book that tells stories of what others did to survive.

However, that fisherman knew that his boots could keep his airway open until rescue arrives is not important. The important fact is he did the skill and can return to his family.

COURSE INFORMATION

FISHING VESSEL DRILL CONDUCTOR TRAINING

For those lobster fishermen who are applying for their commercial lobster license, the State of Maine requires this course before receiving your license. The course is a 1-day class that reviews the emergency actions required during an ABANDON SHIP, FIRE, MAN OVERBOARD or FLOODING. Once completed trainees are now “certified” to

conduct monthly emergency drill on their vessels. At this time, there are no requirements from the State of Maine for a refresher-training program.

For those fishermen who already have their commercial fishing license, this training will be required in 2015. Your local USCG Fishing Vessel Coordinator can provide more details on this regulation.

Courses are offered around the State on a monthly schedule. Most classes are conducted in Belfast, Maine but courses can be schedule in your location with a minimum number of interested fishermen registering.

More details can be provided by calling (207) 338-1603 or my cell phone (207)233-0787.

By the way, we do teach trainees to use their boots as lifejackets!

HELICOPTER UNDERWATER EGRESS TRAINING – HUET

Our 1-day HUET class is conducted in conjunction with the Maine Maritime Academy Continuing Education Department in Castine, Maine. This course also includes water survival techniques as once a person survives the helicopter ditching they must survive until rescue arrives....with or without lifesaving equipment.

This course has gained the attention of the offshore oil/gas companies and is now required before an employee can fly in a helicopter to their offshore location. The course includes both lecture, hands on in-water participation, and are scheduled quarterly or as requested.

- Industry has not set a definite expiration date on the length of certification. Most companies set their own “refresher” training requirements, which go from 2 – 5 years. Check with your HSE department to find out their requirements.

To avoid industry confusion, we receive calls asking about METS training. METS stand for Modular Egress Training System and is an underwater training simulator. HUET is the name of the class. Our helicopter simulator is a multi-person simulator with each person having his or her own emergency exit to operate. The fundamental of underwater egress training and correct actions to perform are what is important in this training. Our training mission is to provide confidence in the event of a ditching at sea and the ability to apply sound judgment and leadership during the emergency.

PORTABLE FIRE FIGHTING EXTINGUISHER TRAINING

This course is designed to introduce personnel to the proper handling of a portable fire extinguisher. It is a 3-hour program that includes a brief lecture about fire theory, fire classifications and proper use of the portable fire extinguisher.

This course is being conducted at local Universities for faculty and staff members and other business locations where employees would be exposed to potential fire hazards.

This course is also very useful for personal fire prevention planning, as just about everyone owns a portable fire extinguisher but few know its limitations...or theirs for that matter.

OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST

CALIFORNIA TRAINING SCHEDULE

With the interest in HUET training in the offshore oil and gas industry, we have received interest from individuals in California who are working internationally or in the Gulf of Mexico where HUET is required. As many of you know, helicopter transportation is limited on the West Coast due to the location of the platforms being “close” to land. Many companies use crew boats for transportation purposes.

With that said, our training has been classified as “Helicopter Survival” oriented. For those companies that do not use the helicopter, our training does include “Marine Survival Training” with the proper use of USCG lifesaving equipment, cold water survival, dangerous marine life encounters, surviving without lifesaving equipment and rescue procedures. We do have the ability to customize our training to meet company requirements. We can always exclude HUET if requested.

Since we are based in Maine, we do require a minimum number of trainees to travel to the West Coast. Due to the active aquatic programs during the summer months, it is difficult to arrange a pool during the summer timeframe. Unless a company can reserve a pool, our most popular time for training in California is Fall & Winter months. We all know that the weather in January – April is still a lot better than many places in the US.

We would encourage further discussion on training in California with companies that have interest to set up a schedule. We can be flexible with adequate time to schedule around company annual training programs.

INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES

We are presently working on setting up training in Equatorial Guinea. The last time we conducted training in EG was in 1998 for Mobil. Our plans are to access the options of what is presently going on for local training, what courses are of interest, what level of certification are of interest and develop a training agenda.

I am seeking advice from company representatives that operate in the EG waters to identify specific training needs focused on emergency preparedness and water survival related topics.

I conducted training in Nigeria from 1989-1999 and know that changes have occurred in West Africa. Back then, Water/Helicopter Survival training was just a good thought. Now it is required. My how things have changed!

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