

IADC's accreditation programs meet industry needs

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SINCE IADC LAUNCHED its Rig Pass accreditation program in 1994 followed by WellCAP the next year. Both programs have undergone continuous improvement to meet the demands of the drilling industry. In addition, IADC is now eyeing the development of new accreditation programs to further satisfy the industry's needs.

WellCAP – IADC's Well Control Accreditation Program – gained new prominence this year as the result of new regulations from the US Minerals Management Service (MMS). Rig Pass was given a new look, and the original HSE orientation was supplemented by a first-of-its kind accreditation for underbalanced operations (UBO).

In response to industry needs, both the WellCAP and Rig Pass programs have evolved to include a repertoire of new curricula, new technology, and new approaches to the solutions they were designed to provide.

WELLCAP: IADC'S FLAGSHIP PROGRAM

Probably one of the most comprehensive programs IADC has ever undertaken, WellCAP has set the pace for IADC in adapting to changing conditions within the industry. Originally launched with just a drilling curriculum, the program has consistently added new types of curricula at various levels.

In early 1997, a second task group was charged with developing a workover & completion curriculum for WellCAP. After undergoing the standard review process, that curriculum was adopted late that year.

MMS published new Subpart O training rules in October 2000 that began a two-year transition period to a new era of "performance-based" regulations. Under this new system, which became effective on 15 October 2002, MMS abandoned its traditionally prescriptive role, passing the bulk of the responsibility for providing training and evaluating employee competency to oil company lessees and their contractors. As the result of concerted efforts beginning in 2001 on the part of operators, drilling

contractors, and IADC, WellCAP has emerged as the benchmark standard for contractors and operators alike.

After the MMS published its proposal to revamp its training regulations, the IADC Well Control Committee was quick to respond by developing curriculums for coiled tubing, and wireline operations. With the addition of these elements in



February 2001, WellCAP curriculum documents existed for every type of well control curriculum for which MMS had required training.

At the same time development of the well servicing curriculum was taking place, IADC's Underbalanced Operations Committee saw a need for some type of training standard for UBO. Since the WellCAP accreditation scheme was already in place, they decided to create a UBO curriculum. That was also released in early 2001, with two schools since accredited to teach it.

These efforts were supplemented by later revision of the subsea drilling curriculum that included deepwater topics. The IADC Well Control Committee approved the revisions earlier this year. All previously accredited schools teaching the subsea curriculum must integrate the new topics into their programs by 1 December 2002.

INTRODUCTORY LEVEL TRAINING

One of the most significant efforts undertaken recently was the revision of the introductory level of the drilling and workover/completion curricula. In mid-2002, the Well Control Committee consolidated these into a combined drilling/workover and completion cur-

riculum. The introductory level revision adopted a new approach, utilizing a Rig Pass style of self-certification and an avenue for programs that wish to teach at this level but not at the higher fundamental and supervisory levels. It requires a minimum of four hours of instruction delivered every five years. The Well Control Committee approved the revisions in late August, with the first introductory programs approved in September.

A second workgroup within the Well Control Committee is now developing a similar introductory level curriculum for well servicing operations, which will include coiled tubing, snubbing and wireline. The group is expected to be complete that project in November.

The Well Control Committee also issued guidelines in August that established minimum time requirements for different types of WellCAP courses. Previously, minimum hour guidelines had been established only for basic drilling, workover and completion, and subsea instruction. The new guidelines stated that any single-topic WellCAP course is to be at least 20 hours long. An exception is a stand-alone wireline course, which is required to be a minimum of 15 hours.

The addition of a second type of curriculum requires an additional eight hours of course time. Five additional hours are required for each other type of curriculum that might be added. A UBO WellCAP course must also be a minimum of 20 hours, though UBO instruction cannot be combined with other types of instruction.

ADJUSTING TO NEW TECHNOLOGY

While WellCAP defines a core curriculum and provides parameters for course construction, schools may vary from these specifications. To do so, they must demonstrate to the WellCAP review panel that their proposed methods or practices will result in acceptable well control instruction.

While variances are most commonly granted for items like maximum class size, the most significant example of a program differing from IADC's established criteria occurred when the

Review Panel was asked to review System 21, a computer-based training program. CBT Rig Pass programs had existed for several years, but System 21 marked an ambitious first attempt to apply the technology to well control training.

IADC reviewers closely examined the program to ensure its content contained all required curriculum elements. One expert spent nearly 60 hours to actually complete the program for his report to the Review Panel. After two special, separate meetings and lengthy deliberations, the panel agreed to award provisional accreditation for a period of one year, during which time it would continue to be evaluated by the panel.

The decision sparked controversy within the Well Control Committee that resulted in a survey on CBT well control distributed to IADC members worldwide. The results were mixed, reflecting the diverse opinions in the committee itself. Following the survey, the Review Panel agreed to reconsider their initial decision. By this time, all members of the panel had completed at least portions of the program themselves. They modified some of the conditions placed on the program – requiring a manual and kill sheet in addition to the electronic version in the program – but let their original decision stand.

After more than a year of examining the program, the panel requested additional specific changes to the modular tests within the program, as well as suggesting language be included in the vendor's single-user contract for the system. System 21 will be fully accredited once the panel is shown that all required changes have been made and all existing computer units updated.

RIG PASS: A NEW LOOK

Members of the IADC Underbalanced Operations Committee appreciated the Rig Pass "brand name" to the extent they developed their own specialized orientation. The committee, which had earlier developed the WellCAP Underbalanced Operations Curriculum, wanted a program that would supply the basic knowledge needed by anyone entering an underbalanced operations site for the first time.

UBO RIG PASS is designed for providers of basic instruction for anyone new to

an underbalanced drilling environment. As with the Rig Pass HSE Orientation, the UBO Orientation is modularized in specific topic areas. The core curriculum consists of five main elements: underbalanced technology, worksite safety, personal protective equipment, hazard communications & materials handling, and occupational health.



HISTORY OF WELLCAP AND RIG PASS

WellCAP was officially launched on 1 January 1995. Applications began to slowly arrive at the IADC office. The first course and site visit was conducted in Jakarta, Indonesia. By the end of 1995, 13 schools had applied for WellCAP accreditation. Since then, the program enjoyed steady growth, which was only accelerated by the Offshore Operators Committee's (OOC) position on the new MMS regulations. By October 2002, there were 51 accredited schools that had delivered WellCAP instruction in 10 languages to nearly 34,000 students from 246 locations in 49 countries around the world.

Rig Pass likewise was created in response to a need voiced by IADC members. In late 1993, there was a move among some groups in the Gulf of Mexico to mandate attendance at a safety orientation they had developed.

Many contractors objected to being forced to pay for a program that many viewed as more generic and of lesser quality than their in-house programs.

Members of the IADC Accident Prevention Committee (now known as the HSE Committee) rallied. Their response was what became known as Rig Pass, system of accrediting HSE orientation programs, be they offered in-house or by

commercial schools.

A number of operators now require RIG PASS instruction for crews operating on their sites, notably PEMEX in Mexico and Saudi Aramco in Saudi Arabia. Several US operators also require it in the Gulf of Mexico, and its use is widespread elsewhere in Latin America (cards are available in Spanish).

As of October 2002, Rig Pass accreditation had been awarded or was pending at 61 schools that had provided HSE orientation from 136 locations in 11 countries. More than 85,000 Rig Pass cards have been distributed. In addition, IADC has received the first applications from schools wanting to teach UBO orientation.

NEW ACCREDITATION PROGRAMS

As an established, experienced accrediting organization, IADC is now responding to the needs of its members by exploring additional programs. An example is an accreditation program for ballast control, jackup stability, and/or dynamic positioning for offshore vessels, an issue first raised by IADC's North Sea Chapter Training Working Party (TWP).

In October, Mr. Kropla visited the Saudi Aramco training facility. In addition to assisting with the center's Rig Pass accreditation, he discussed using the center as part of a pilot program for a system that could become an overall system for accrediting facilities that provide general rig crew training.

Finally, the IADC Training Committee has recently formed a workgroup to study the concept of a system that would accredit in-house competency programs developed by drilling and service companies.

More information on IADC's accreditation programs can be found on IADC's web site at www.iadc.org. WellCAP and Rig Pass also have their own sites (www.wellcap.org and www.rigpass.org, respectively). The latest curriculum guidelines and other documents pertaining to accreditation criteria and procedures can be downloaded in PDF format.

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