

UBO Committee completes draft of HSE guidelines

SEVERAL SUBCOMMITTEES OF the IADC Underbalanced Operations (UBO) Committee have been busy lately drafting guidelines and working on supplements to API specifications aimed at making UB operations safer, more efficient and more environmentally friendly.

"This is a very busy time for the group," remarked Committee Chairman **Mike DuBose, Rowan Drilling (UK) Ltd.** "The Committee has achieved a number of successes – the IADC UB Well Classifications System, the glossary of UB terminology and the UB Rig Pass and Well-CAP training programs just to name a few. I expect our new projects to be equally successful."

HSE IN UBO

The HSE & Training Subcommittee recently completed its draft document HSE Planning Guidelines. **John Ramalho** with **Shell** chaired the task group that developed the guidelines. The

guidelines will be submitted for adoption at the IADC Board of Directors meeting 23-24 April in Washington, D.C.

The guidelines are intended for use by integrated project teams involved in the design and implementation of underbalanced drilling operations. They provide information and guidance on HSE related activities in the planning phase of UB operations that have an impact on the operation's safety during the execution phase.

The guidelines are applicable to both onshore and offshore UBO. The IADC level of the well dictates how much of the guidelines will need to be implemented.

The guidelines are not intended to replace contractors' existing safety policies. They should be considered as a starting point for the operator, drilling contractor and UBD service contractor in developing their safety management programs and associated operational plans and procedures.

Each drilling contractor and UBD service contractor involved in the project should review and apply the guidelines according to its own policies and experience for the particular area and the risk level of the operation.

API 16A SUPPLEMENTS

The UBO Committee's Gap Analysis identifies existing technical specifications that apply to the equipment used in UBO.

For a particular risk level of a well, the gap analysis lists the elements of equipment that are typically utilized.

In addition to API specifications, the gap analysis also identifies various other standards such as ASME, ANSI and NACE. They have been prioritized and are being addressed by the UBO Committee. The UBO Committee has identified API Specification 16A as having the highest priority.

The Standards and Nomenclature Subcommittee formed a task group to draft a supplement to the API's specification 16A, entitled Drill-through Equipment. Since API specifications do not present-

ly address the use of equipment in UB applications, or equipment that is used only for UBO, a number of specifications have been identified by IADC's UBO Committee as needing supplemental information.

The UBO Committee has reached an agreement in principle with API providing that IADC will develop and write underbalanced supplements to API's existing specifications. API will review the supplements and hopefully adopt them.

Because API specifications are reviewed on a particular cycle, as the specifications are reviewed, the supplements from the UBO Committee that have been adopted by API will then be incorporated into each specification.

DRILLING FLUIDS

Recognizing that waste management is an important consideration in UB fluid selection and use, the Fluids Subcommittee recently broadened its scope and was renamed the Fluids & Waste Management Subcommittee.

The group has turned its attention to two areas related to drilling fluids; corrosion guidelines and, because foam is sometimes used in UB operations, API testing procedures for foam.

"The API test for drilling foam may not be suitable for today's underbalanced applications," said **Ken Fischer**, IADC's Vice President of Operations. "The subcommittee wants to take a new look at the process and may recommend changes to API's foam testing procedures."

GET INVOLVED

"The Committee is always looking for new people and companies to get involved," stated Mr DuBose. "Oil companies, drilling contractors and service companies all have something to contribute to this important work."

More information on the UBO Committee's activities and upcoming meetings can be found on the group's web site at <http://iadc.org/committees/underbalanced/index.html>. ■