

TECHNICAL GROUP OF THE MEPC ON
OPRC-HNS
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Agenda item 8

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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Status of IMarEST Marine Salvage and Counter Pollution Special Interest Group

Submitted by the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST)

SUMMARY

Executive summary: The Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST) has established a Special Interest Group for Marine Salvage and Counter Pollution matters. This document aims to update the OPRC-HNS Technical Group on the IMarEST's Special Interest Group's work.

Strategic direction: 7.1

High-level action: 7.1.2

Planned output: No related provisions

Action to be taken: Paragraph 10

Related documents: None

Introduction

1 This document provides information on the work of the IMarEST Special Interest Group, established as a forum to discuss issues related to Marine Salvage and Counter Pollution, and from this, to put forward to the IMarEST, topics and issues that could be considered for further development by the Institute.

Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST)

2 The IMarEST is an international learned society of marine professionals in existence for over 121 years, formed in 1889 as the Institute of Marine Engineers. In 2002, recognizing that members were becoming involved in other fields of marine operations, the Institute reorganized itself as the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology to accommodate these other marine professionals.

3 The IMarEST as part of its learned society activities has several committees including:

- .1 the Professional Affairs and Education Committee (PAEC), overseeing professional standards;
- .2 the Proceedings Supervisory Board (PSB), overseeing the quality of the IMarEST publications and published papers; and
- .3 the Technical Leadership Board (TLB), identifying and establishing technical views on current and emerging marine engineering, science and technology matters.

4 The TLB in turn has various Special Interest Groups (SIGs) that deal with various matters, such as ballast water, small ships, offshore renewables and marine salvage and counter pollution.

5 The Marine Salvage and Counter Pollution (MSCP) SIG held its inaugural meeting on 25 February 2011 in London, with the intention to hold two meetings annually and senior representatives from the following organizations were invited to attend this meeting:

- .1 International Maritime Organization (IMO);
- .2 ISO Marine Environment Standards working group (apologies given);
- .3 International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA) (apologies given);
- .4 International Tankers Owners Pollution Federation Limited (ITOPF);
- .5 International Salvage Union (ISU);
- .6 International Spill Control Organization (ISCO);
- .7 IMarEST;
- .8 Marine salvage companies;
- .9 Marine pollution equipment manufacturer (apologies given); and
- .10 Marine spill response contractor.

6 The meeting was chaired by Mr. Simon Rickaby, Managing Director of Braemar Howells and past President of the IMarEST (from 2002 to 2003), and its purpose was, for the attendees through engaging in an open general discussion, to debate matters that came up in conversation and the group felt that there was benefit in debating.

7 The debating was non-political and non-commercial in its structure and expansion on the various topics discussed, being a general discussion of senior executives who were able to debate marine environmental matters of a common interest, which could benefit the IMO and other maritime organizations.

8 The following items were discussed and outputs reported back to the IMarEST TLB for their further consideration:

- .1 UK Emergency Towing Vessels (ETVs) being at risk from UK Government funding cuts
Output: Their need was seen as universally beneficial and self-funding was a potential solution; this would mean a need to remove any political blocks to alternative uses of the ETVs when not responding to distress calls (e.g., fishery protection, customs and navigational aid maintenance). The ability of a Norwegian system of a helicopter dropped net to then be utilized as a towing bridle to help drifting distressed vessels needed more publicity, especially if the ETVs were reduced or withdrawn.
- .2 Piracy
Output: The increasing risk of environmental damage from pirates, by accidentally blowing up a loaded tanker or deliberate sinking or dumping of cargo, together with salvage companies reluctant to intervene due to safety concerns for their salvage crews and security of the salvage vessels was seen as a major risk. It was unlikely that IMarEST or NGOs could comment or intervene at this time, however a watching brief should be kept.
- .3 Environmental damage avoidance/mitigation in salvage operations
Output: The cost of environmental damage avoidance/mitigation borne by salvors is felt by them not to appropriately compensate them under the current International Convention on Salvage (1989). Relevant articles and related implementation practices appear to be out of date, with anti-environmental consequences. A solution could be to amend the Salvage Convention, but this needs salvage industry and stakeholder consensus on the best way forward, proposals for redrafting of the Convention, and finding IMO Member States to introduce the proposals at IMO to begin amendment process.
- .4 Arctic pollution incident response
Output: The perception is that the region is unprepared for pollution response and many options used in the Gulf of Mexico cannot be used in the Arctic, e.g., stopping oil at source. This needs to be addressed urgently.
- .5 Criminalization of salvors
Output: Salvors are increasingly becoming subject to criminal charges when local authorities consider that environmental consequences of a pollution incident are being inadequately addressed by salvors. As criminal charges cannot be insured against, the US "responder immunity" option is attractive. This needs to be addressed, potentially alongside with item 8.3 above.

.6 Next generation

Output: Salvage and pollution response are not seen as attractive career possibilities.

Approach: Industry and others need to address this urgently. Hands-on at sea apprenticeships and internships could be particularly valuable. It could be very useful if vocational qualifications, under recognized professional guidance, could be gained by those already in the industry and also to encourage those looking to come into it. The International Spill Control Organization (ISCO) is currently looking to introduce a professional recognition scheme to address this deficiency. IMarEST could assist, as a learned professional society.

9 Members of the SIG presented at the meeting were requested to consider whether there was any other body that could contribute to the discussions. After some debate, it was agreed that a representative from the International Group of P&I Clubs or someone with significant experience in P&I matters, which could be fair to all P&I Clubs, would be useful.

Action requested of the Technical Group

10 The Technical Group is invited to consider the information presented in this document and provide any thoughts and comments that the IMarEST SIG can take on board.
