

Diving Division

IMCA is the international trade association representing offshore, marine and underwater engineering companies.

It seeks to:

- ◆ strive for the highest possible standards with a balance of risk and cost in: health and safety; technology; quality and efficiency; environmental awareness and protection;
- ◆ achieve and sustain self-regulation in the industry;
- ◆ ease the free movement of equipment and personnel globally;
- ◆ achieve equitable contracting regimes;
- ◆ provide the framework for training, certification, competence and recruitment to support and sustain the industry globally;
- ◆ resolve industry issues; and
- ◆ promote co-operation across the industry.

Members include pipelay, heavy lift, diving, remotely operated vehicle, survey and offshore construction contractors, plus various contractors operating specialist marine equipment.

IMCA has two core activities in which all members participate:

- ◆ Safety, Environment & Legislation (SEL) includes monitoring national and international regulatory bodies, circulation of relevant information to members and advancement of industry positions where necessary
- ◆ Training, Certification & Personnel Competence (TCPC) includes a comprehensive framework devoted to promoting safety by defining and encouraging competence in key safety-related positions.

Members join in one or more of IMCA's four technical divisions relevant to their own area(s) of work:

- ◆ Diving
- ◆ Marine
- ◆ Offshore Survey
- ◆ Remote Systems & ROV

IMCA works with a global focus, but also includes regional sections covering the key offshore regions: Americas, Asia-Pacific, Europe & Africa and Middle East & India.

IMCA has published substantial and comprehensive guidance based on its members' experience in a range of related areas. More details on specific activities are contained on this and other information sheets.

IMCA Diving Division promotes safe practice in the offshore diving industry, addressing all aspects of equipment, operations and personnel related to offshore diving operations.

IMCA (and its predecessor AODC) has published a wide range of guidance covering key issues relating to diving safety and good working practice. These documents are based on IMCA members' cumulative experience of carrying out offshore diving operations world-wide. With an extensive peer review and committee approval process, IMCA believes it can be justifiably proud of the quality of its publications and can point to improved safety and working practices in the industry as proof of their effectiveness.

IMCA International Code of Practice for Offshore Diving (IMCA D 014)

The offshore commercial diving industry, while providing services to the oil and gas industry, can be the subject of various regulations and standards imposed by national governments, clients, insurers and other outside bodies. In some areas of the world, however, there is little or no outside control of diving activities.

The IMCA International Code of Practice for Offshore Diving provides advice on ways in which diving operations can be carried out safely and efficiently. As such, it is a key document for contractors and clients working in unregulated areas of the world and has been instrumental in improving diving safety.

While national regulations naturally take precedence, the code may be used in a court of law to define what good international practice is. Recommendations have also been included that will help clients and contractors to analyse the safety implications of commercial considerations. The minimum standards it outlines also create a safe, level playing field for all diving contractors.

IMCA International Code of Practice for Offshore Diving

Contents:

- Duties, responsibilities and relationships
- Equipment
- Personnel
- Medical
- Work planning
- Emergency and contingency plans
- Documentation

IMCA D 014

Diving Equipment Guidance

IMCA has produced a wealth of documentation on diving equipment, including detailed specifications, relevant operational procedures and audit templates, which helps contractors ensure they have the appropriate equipment, adequately maintained to ensure the safety and efficiency of their operations.

Code of Practice for the Initial and Periodic Examination, Testing and Certification of Diving Plant and Equipment (IMCA D 018)

This code gives examples of good practice and provides advice on ways in which inspection and testing of diving plant and equipment should be carried out. The code was compiled by industry experts sitting on IMCA's diving committees and is aimed at personnel including client staff, client and contractor representatives, vessel and marine crews.

In some cases the code requires a competent person to certify the design, construction and suitability of diving plant and equipment prior to use. A competent person may also be required to issue a certificate demonstrating that plant and equipment have been tested. Four categories of competent person are discussed.

Detail sheets list the various test and examinations that should be carried out for individual items of plant and equipment both when they are new, first installed or moved; and when they are in service.

Code of Practice ... Diving Plant & Equipment

Contents:

- Introduction
- Certification and classification
- The competent person
- Responsibilities
- Documentation
- Planned maintenance system
- Explanation of the document
- Detail sheets

IMCA D 018

Diving Equipment Systems Inspection Guidance Notes (DESIGN)

The above code is complemented by four detailed guidance notes which specify the systematic periodic examination and testing requirements for generic items of plant and equipment. They provide the basics of the certification that diving contractors should include in their plant and equipment registers and can form the basis of planned maintenance systems.

Four DESIGN volumes now exist, each addressing a specific offshore diving technique:

- ◆ DESIGN for surface oriented (air) diving systems (IMCA D 023)
- ◆ DESIGN for saturation (bell) diving systems (IMCA D 024)
- ◆ DESIGN for surface supplied mixed gas diving systems (IMCA D 037)
- ◆ DESIGN for mobile/portable surface supplied diving systems (IMCA D 040)

Training and Competence of Diving Personnel

The IMCA International Code of Practice for Offshore Diving sets out details on the training and certification required of members of an offshore diving team, including diving supervisors, divers, life support technicians and their supervisors, equipment technicians and tenders.

In particular, a range of diver training certificates is recognised as providing an appropriate level of initial training for those undertaking offshore diving tasks. This includes a number of government-approved certificates from around the world and diver training establishments working to accepted standards in the USA. IMCA has also put in place arrangements for the competence assessment of experienced indigenous divers working for member companies for areas of the world lacking suitable certification arrangements.

Specific guidance has also been published for dive technicians.

IMCA's wider guidance on competence assurance and assessment covers twelve safety-critical positions, setting out entry level qualifications and acceptance criteria plus competence assessment guidance.

IMCA has published a range of logbooks which enable the recording of offshore experience, both at trainee and fully active levels, including sections covering competence assessments of individuals in accordance with the guidance above.

Offshore Diving Supervisor and Life Support Technician Certification Schemes (IMCA D 013)

IMCA runs certification schemes for the positions of offshore diving supervisor and life support technician (LST), used by diving contractors and their personnel world-wide.

The scheme guidance document sets down minimum requirements for certification. The key elements in each case are basic theoretical training, documented diving experience, recommendation from the employing diving contractor, supervised 'hands on' experience offshore and a multiple choice theory examination.

Candidates are expected to sit compulsory examination modules for air diving supervision, mixed gas (or bell) diving supervisor or life support. Optional legislation modules are also available, relevant to the parts of the world in which candidates expect to work. Modules currently available include Great Britain, the Netherlands and Norway, with others expected to follow.

Hundreds of diving supervisors and LSTs have qualified under the schemes since their establishment in the 1980s, going on to help ensure safe diving operations around the globe.

Other Diving Publications

In addition to the key documents summarised on this factsheet, IMCA (and its predecessor AODC (the *Association of Offshore Diving Contractors*, later the *International Association of Underwater Engineering Contractors*)) has published detailed guidance on aspects of good practice, including equipment specification and maintenance, personnel issues and the various hazards associated with offshore diving and how they can be mitigated and avoided.

IMCA also makes available guidance produced by the Diving Medical Advisory Committee (DMAC), an independent body comprising diving medical specialists which seeks to provide advice on medical and certain safety aspects of commercial diving.

IMCA members have access to the full range of guidance via a secure documentation website, with a CD also available, updated periodically, containing this guidance in a portable form.

Sharing of Safety-Related Information

IMCA Diving Division enables the sharing of information in a variety of ways, helping to improve safety for its contractor members around the world.

A major element in this is the safety flash system (see right), while IMCA committee meetings regularly include an un-minuted discussion to allow free sharing of lessons learned from incidents and near-misses. An online discussion forum is available to members which can facilitate similar dialogue.

Through these methods, members are kept abreast of current safety issues, which the committees can address through their own work programmes, distributing additional information and producing new or updated guidance as required.

IMCA Safety Flashes

A key tool of IMCA is its safety flash system, which enables prompt distribution of safety alerts across the industry.

Through this system, vital information is shared on potentially dangerous items of equipment, methods of use, other aspects of operations and the importance of adhering to well prepared procedures.

By learning from the findings of one contributor, IMCA members can avoid repeat incidents and further improve their safety.