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12 Project Support Operations

12.1 Operations Included

Offshore operations require vessels to support a wide range of activities, including:

1. Logistics support and supply.
2. MOU moving, including anchor handling and towing.
4. Lifting operations, both above and below sea surface.
5. Other operations, including:
   a. Well servicing and maintenance.
   b. Diving and ROV support.
   c. IRM support.
   d. Survey support.
   e. Dredging and rock dumping.
7. Guarding and monitoring support.

In general these Guidelines relate to the management and operation of all vessels approaching or operating in the vicinity of any offshore facility, regardless of whether a formal safety zone has been established.

Chapters 9, 10 and 11 relate particularly to operations included in Items 1 and 2 in the above list. Other operations, including the use of smaller craft in supporting offshore operations, are considered in the remainder of this Chapter.

12.2 Marine Transportations

12.2.1 Operations Included

Marine transportations to which this section of the Guidelines relates may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Transportation of unusual items on the deck of own vessel, particularly where the item involved is large, heavy or, if damaged, would result in significant actual or consequential loss.
2. Towage of a cargo barge onto which such items have been loaded and secured.
3. Towage of any other vessel or floating object.
12.2.2 Excluded Operations

It is not anticipated that this section of the Guidelines will relate to the following operations:

1. Logistics operations associated with the normal delivery or return of containers or similar cargo items to or from an offshore facility.
2. Operations associated with moving a MOU from one offshore location to another, or to or from port facilities.

12.2.3 Towing Operations

12.2.3.1. Passage Planning and Navigation

The Master of the towing vessel is responsible for the preparation of a detailed passage plan and the subsequent safe navigation of the tow. Where appropriate, navigation warnings shall be broadcast by the tug at regular intervals.

Where more than one vessel is utilised to tow the unit a lead tug will be nominated by the person in charge of the operation, which may be a Tow Master if present. The Master of this vessel will assume the responsibilities described above and shall also ensure that the other vessel(s) involved comply with the plans.

This does not, however, relieve the Master of any vessel from the responsibility of safeguarding the safety of personnel and equipment on board own ship.

The passage plan must be carefully developed with regard to water depth, other offshore and subsea facilities, and emergency locations or refuges which may be utilised if required.

Close attention should be paid to the length and catenaries of the tow wire and its relation to environmental conditions, water depth and vertical clearance over any sub-sea assets in the vicinity of any location or whilst on passage.

Route must keep safe distance from any other facilities. Pass on the side that best assures tow will drift away from the facility in case of power loss or loss of tow.

The passage plan shall not use facilities as way points.

Regular weather forecasts should be provided. Normally two forecasts, twice per day, each prepared independently, are required.

Communication lines as agreed during any pre-operational meetings should be observed.

12.2.3.2. Contingency/Emergency Towing Arrangements

Retrieval arrangements for the recovery of the towed object's main towing gear in the event of its failure should be fully operational.
The towed object’s emergency towing system should be rigged and ready for immediate use. Arrangements for this system to be recovered by a towing vessel in all weather conditions without the necessity of boarding the tow should be deployed.

Where the mobilisation of any additional equipment to facilitate this is required, all such equipment should be readily available on board and checked to ensure it is fully operational.

12.2.3.3. **Record of Towing Operations**

Vessels engaged in any towing operations should maintain complete records of such activities. These records should normally consist of two parts, as follows:

1. **Daily Log**

   Information should be recorded at regular intervals whilst actually engaged in the towing operation, as follows:
   
   1. Date and time of log entry.
   2. Name of towed object.
   3. Position, actual or estimated.
   4. Power setting(s) on main propellers or thrusters.
   5. Length of tow-line deployed.
   6. Relevant weather conditions, for example particulars of wind, sea and swell.
   7. Any changes to towing configuration in foregoing period.

   This information should be recorded more frequently in periods of severe weather.

2. **Voyage Summary**

   On completion of each towing operation a voyage summary should be prepared. This summary should include the following information:
   
   1. Particulars of towed object, including name and description.
   2. Date and place of commencement of tow
   3. Date and place of completion of tow
   4. Distance
   5. Average speed throughout tow
   6. Brief description of towing arrangements used
   7. Brief description of weather experienced during tow
   8. Brief description of any relevant incidents occurring during tow
12.3 Lifting Operations, Above and Below Sea Surface

12.3.1 Operations Included

Lifting operations to which this section of the Guidelines relates may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Installation operations, involving use of equipment installed on vessel to lift items of equipment from deck of own or other vessel or barge for installation on an offshore facility.
2. Installation operations, involving use of equipment installed on vessel to lift items of equipment from deck of own or other vessel or barge for installation as part of a sub-surface facility.
3. Removal or de-commissioning operations, involving use of equipment installed on the vessel to lift items of equipment from an offshore facility onto deck of own or other vessel or barge.
4. Removal or de-commissioning operations, involving use of equipment installed on the vessel to lift items of equipment from a sub-surface facility onto deck of own or other vessel or barge.
5. Any other operations involving use of the equipment installed on the vessel to support project related activities on an offshore facility, either above or below the sea surface, or on another vessel.

12.3.2 Excluded Operations

It is not anticipated that this section of the Guidelines will relate to the following operations:

1. Logistics operations associated with the normal delivery or return of containers or similar cargo items to or from an offshore facility.
2. Lifting activities which may be required during MOU operations.
3. “Internal” lifting operations on the deck of own vessel, except where the item to be lifted is unusually large, heavy or, if damaged, would result in significant actual or consequential loss.

12.3.3 Particular Requirements for Sub-Surface Lifting Operations

In some areas of the world requirements relating to lifting operations below the surface of the sea may be different to those involved where the activities are undertaken only in air.

Such differences may include:

2. Competencies of Personnel involved.
3. Operational Planning and Execution.
It is the responsibility of all parties involved to ascertain the requirements for undertaking sub-surface lifting activities in the current area of operations and ensure that these are complied with.

12.4 Specific Operational Procedures

It is likely that the planning and execution of operations to which Sections 12.2 and 12.3 of the Guidelines relate will require the development of specific procedures describing the activities involved.

Where relevant, these procedures will be based on:

1. Engineering design and analysis.
3. Where relevant, combined operations safety cases, including relevant bridging documents.
4. Simultaneous operations assessments and reviews.

Each set of such procedures will be developed by the relevant project team specifically for the operations being contemplated, and will be subject to the relevant quality assurance and approval processes.

Owing to their specific nature such documents are generally developed for the particular project involved. Further detailed consideration of the development of these procedures in therefore beyond the scope of these Guidelines.

12.5 General Guidance

Whilst further consideration of the specific operational procedures are outwith the scope of these Guidelines further information relating to particular aspects of the the planning and execution of project-related on- and offshore operations can be obtained from a variety of sources, some of which are listed in Table 6.

12.5.1 Latest Revisions of Guidance

The documents included in the list above are regularly reviewed and revised by the publishers. The latest revisions, which, with the exception of the document published by DNV, are available on the internet web sites of the relevant organisations should always be referred to when planning or executing any of the operations to which they relate.
Table 1: Further General Guidance

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12.6 Marine Warranty Surveyor Involvement

In many instances the planning and execution of operations to which these sections of the Guidelines relate will require the approval of an accredited marine warranty survey practitioner (MWS). The MWS will review the proposed procedures and revert with relevant comments and recommendations. Approval will often be subject to the attendance on site of the MWS’s representative, who may communicate further recommendations as thought fit to the representative of the insured party on whose behalf he is acting.

Compliance with the MWS’s recommendations, or agreed alternatives, is strongly recommended since failure to do so may compromise the insured party’s commitments to its insurance underwriters and in the event of an incident resulting in loss may expose it to significant commercial risk.

Where the services of a marine warranty surveyor have been retained by any insured party the role and expectations should be advised to all other parties involved in the relevant operations.

12.7 Support for Other Operations
12.7.1 General Requirements

The planning and execution of any operations referred to in 12.1(5) above which supported by offshore vessels will involve the development of task-specific procedures for the work to be undertaken. The contents of such procedures are outwith the scope of this document.

However, when any vessel supporting such operations is approaching or operating in the vicinity of any offshore facility, irrespective of whether a formal safety zone around it has been established, all relevant recommendations included in these Guidelines should be observed.

A note to this effect should be included in the procedures referred to above.

12.8 Response and Rescue Support

12.8.1 Primary Functions

At many offshore facilities elements of the arrangements for emergencies which the Operator must establish to ensure the safety of the workforce on board in the event of an incident is supported by vessels mobilised to provide response and rescue services.

The primary functions of vessels mobilised for this purpose include the following:

1. Rescuing personnel who have inadvertently entered the water in the vicinity of an offshore facility and providing suitable facilities for their subsequent care.

2. Monitoring the movements of other marine traffic in the vicinity of the facility and taking appropriate action where risk of collision with it is thought to exist.

3. Acting as contingency command and control station should an incident on the facility result in its own arrangements being disabled.

Except otherwise advised these functions are to be supported on a continuous basis and no other activities should be undertaken by or on board the vessel which would compromise its ability to do so.

In the event of any incident on the vessel which may result in it not being able to fulfil any of the functions above the management of the facility which it is supporting must be immediately be advised of this fact in order that appropriate alternative arrangements can be made.

12.8.2 General Requirements

Vessels mobilised to provide emergency response and rescue services should comply with the requirements relating to such support which exist in the jurisdiction in which they are operating.

It is the responsibility of all parties involved to ascertain the requirements for vessels providing support of this nature in the current area of operations and ensure that these are complied with.
Where no such requirements exist, the documents listed in Table 7 may provide useful guidance in ensuring that adequate standards for response and rescue support are established and maintained.

### 12.8.3 Response Criteria

The jurisdiction under whose regime the facility is operating may establish criteria relating to time taken to rescue personnel from the water and transfer them to a place of safety in a variety of incident scenarios. Alternatively, it may require the Operator of the facility to establish such criteria. It is in the interests of both the Charterer and Owner of the vessel to ensure that such criteria can be complied with.

Facilities and equipment should therefore be provided for the on-going training of the personnel involved. Exercises to ensure that personnel remain familiar with the equipment and procedures involved should be arranged at frequent intervals. Where possible such exercises should be undertaken in typical environmental conditions which may be experienced at the location, always on the understanding that personnel or equipment should not be subject to unnecessary risk.

Full records of any exercises undertaken should be retained for subsequent inspection by interested parties. From time to time there may also be a requirement for such exercises to be observed and recorded by an independent witness.

### 12.8.4 Adverse Weather Criteria

Facility operations which can be supported by a typical emergency response and rescue vessel will be dependent on the prevailing environmental conditions. The criteria under which the various levels of support can be provided will normally be agreed on an industry-wide basis for the area in which the facility is located.

Where this is not the case, such criteria should be agreed between the Charterer and the Owner, in consultation with experienced Masters, at the time of taking the vessel on hire.

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**Table 2: Response and Rescue Support Guidance**

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Typical adverse weather criteria for a conventional SBV, equipped with FRC’s and or Daughter Craft for rescuing personnel from the water in lower sea states and a mechanical means or recovery in the more severe conditions when rescue craft cannot safely be deployed or recovered are included in Appendix 12 - A.

It should be noted, however, that in a long period, regular swell rescue craft may be safely deployed and recovered in higher sea states than indicated. On the other hand it may be that such craft cannot be safely used where waves are of short period and / or confused at lesser heights than those indicated. In such circumstances other means of recovery should be considered.

Furthermore, familiarity with the equipment and techniques involved in the rescue of personnel from the sea gained from suitable training together with frequent exercises in more challenging conditions may well enable the criteria set out in the Appendix to be extended. In addition, other technologies are available which may not be subject to the same environmental limitations.

The Master of the SBV will decide which equipment and techniques are most appropriate for use, based on circumstances associated with the emergency itself and the prevailing environmental conditions.

**12.8.5  SBV Operational Capability**

Section 7.2 of these Guidelines relates to the factors to be taken into account when assessing the operational capability of any vessel, including those providing response and rescue support.

However, with particular regard to vessels providing such support it should also be borne in mind that the vessel is effectively an integral part of the facility’s emergency response arrangements. A reduction in its operational capability, particularly where this involves loss of manoeuvrability or ability to deploy and recover its rescue equipment, may therefore compromise any commitments to the relevant authorities or the workforce made by the facility Operator to maintain an acceptable standard of emergency response arrangements.

Any reduction in the operational capability of a vessel providing response and rescue support at an offshore facility should therefore be notified to the Manager at the earliest opportunity in order that suitable alternative arrangements can be established without delay.

**12.8.6  Weather Side Working**

Sections 7.3.1 and 8.11 of these Guidelines relates to the factors to be taken into account when assessing setting up and working on the weather side of an offshore facility and relates also to vessels providing response and rescue support.

In assessing whether the vessel can provide effective support on the weather side of the facility the Master should bear in mind any potential impact on the deployment of rescue equipment.
In general, any request to take up station directly up-wind or up-current of the facility should be challenged, since in most instances equally effective support can be provided from a position where the vessel has more freedom to manoeuvre and is not in a “drift-on” situation.

12.8.7 Work Parties Outwith Perimeter of Facility

From time to time it may be necessary for work to be undertaken on the facility outwith its normal barred perimeter, which may include any scaffolding assembled and maintained in accordance with the relevant rules. Such work may be referred to by a variety of terms, including “overside”, “outboard”, “overboard”, etc.

Such work generally involves an increased risk of personnel entering the water. Therefore, when in progress a higher state of readiness should be maintained on the vessel providing response and rescue support. This may be referred to as providing “close stand-by” support.

When requested to provide such support the Master should take the following actions:

1. Establish details of personnel at risk, including numbers and locations.
2. Ensure that personnel and equipment on the vessel are at the required state of readiness.
3. Ensure that the vessel is maintained in a position relative to the facility and the environment such that rescue facilities can be deployed in the most expeditious manner.
4. Ensure that the terminology to be used has been agreed and understood by all involved.
5. Ensure that communication have been established and are maintained with the watch-men responsible for monitoring the activities of each work party.

It is not the responsibility of the vessel to maintain a visual watch of the various work-sites.

Any request to maintain such a watch should be challenged, since this could compromise the safe navigation of the vessel and would be impossible where several work-sites are involved.

12.8.8 Sharing of SBV Support Services

Where several offshore facilities are located within close proximity of each other the services of one vessel may be shared between them. This may include situations where several Operators are also involved.

In such circumstances clear procedures and protocols should be developed and agreed between all the parties involved, including the vessel Owner, to ensure that the primary functions referred to above can be supported at all the facilities involved.

For clarity the agreed procedures and protocols should be consolidated into a vessel sharing manual, contents of which should include as a minimum:

1. Details of the parties involved.
2. Details of ownership of manual, control and distribution
3. Details of facilities involved in the vessel sharing
4. Organograms for each facility, showing relationship with vessel
5. Details of where vessel will take up station in various circumstances
6. Activities which can be supported at each location, dependent on vessel’s position, environmental conditions or other circumstances. In particular the following should be clearly described:
   a. Operations which can be supported simultaneously at all facilities supported.
   b. Operations which require the vessel to take up station at a particular location.
   c. In the case of (b) above, operations which then could not be supported at any facility.
7. Co-ordination of vessel operations and decision making process.
8. Arrangements for monitoring movements of other marine traffic and in particular actions to be taken where threat of collision involving any of the facilities support is thought to exist.
9. Arrangements in event of equipment failure on vessel
10. Arrangement for regular vessel reliefs.

Supplementary information may be included in appendices to the manual, including:
1. Contact details for each party involved (if not included in main document).
2. Further information, charts or data sheets relating to each of the facilities supported, general field information.
3. Details of the vessel(s) involved.
4. Further information relating to vessel’s normal patrol zone, including response times at each facility where relevant.
5. Information to assist with planning vessel movements.
6. Response criteria for each party involved.
7. Adverse weather policies for each party involved.

12.8.9 Other Support Functions

In some instances vessels mobilised to provide response and rescue services may be constructed, outfitted, equipped and manned to support other functions.

Such functions may include:
1. Cargo carrying, both deck and bulk goods.
2. Fire fighting capability.
3. Oil recovery and pollution prevention.
Additional activities associated with other such functions may be undertaken simultaneously with providing such services provided that the vessel’s ability to fully support the primary roles referred to above are never compromised.

The planning of and procedures describing any operation requiring the support of a vessel which is simultaneously providing emergency response and rescue support should always recognise this requirement.

Where a vessel is supporting any additional activities whilst simultaneously providing response and rescue support the relevant recommendations in these Guidelines relating to such activities should be observed.

12.9 Guard Chase Vessels

12.9.1 General Requirements

From time to time a requirement may be identified for a vessel to be chartered to maintain watch over an asset or equipment associated with offshore operations. Such a requirement includes warning other vessels in the vicinity should their activities or actions be thought to pose a risk to facilities involved.

Such vessels may include:

1. Guard vessels chartered for the purpose of protecting and monitoring marine traffic in the vicinity of fixed assets of any type.
2. Chase vessels chartered for the purpose of protecting the array of streamers deployed in the course of seismic survey operations.
3. Any other vessels chartered for similar purposes.

Vessels mobilised for this purpose should comply with the requirements relating to such support which exist in the jurisdiction in which they are operating.

It is the responsibility of all parties involved to ascertain the requirements for vessels providing support of this nature in the current area of operations and ensure that these are complied with.

Where no such requirements exist the documents listed in Table 8 may provide useful guidance in ensuring that adequate standards for this support are established and maintained.

12.9.2 Other Requirements

In addition to the requirements relating to the outfitting and equipping of vessels set out in the above documents it is also recommended that, if not required by legislation, where a single watchkeeper is likely to be on duty for extended periods, a watch alarm should also be fitted.

This alarm should be fitted with the following features:

1. Positive response by watchkeeper required at periods not exceeding 15 minutes.
Table 3: Guard and Chase Vessel Guidance

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<td>SFF, NFFO</td>
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<td>Guard Vessel Good Practice</td>
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2. Response arrangements to be located remotely from any seating facilities.
3. In event of non-response from watchkeeper general alarm to be activated throughout accommodation within further 5 minutes.
4. Override or disablement of any of the above facilities only being possible with positive agreement of Master and Chief Engineer.

12.9.3 Further Information to be Provided to Masters & Skippers

Where vessels are taken on hire to support any asset protection, guarding or monitoring requirements the following information should be provided:

1. Full particulars of the assets to be protected, guarded or monitored, including plans of any surface and/or sub-sea architecture.
2. Reporting protocols and relevant contact arrangements.
3. Actions to be taken in the event that an approaching vessel is assessed as posing a threat to the assets being guarded or monitored.

This information should also be provided to any ERRV which may be required to guard or monitor assets in the vicinity of the offshore facility being supported.

12.9.4 Operational Categories

It should be noted that some of the vessels to which this section of the Guidelines relates may be operated under the provisions relating to small water craft referred to below.

12.10 Small Vessels & Water Craft

From time to time operations either off- or near-shore may be supported by smaller vessels or water craft.
12.10.1 Vessels or Craft Included

Vessels or Craft involved may include:

1. Any vessel or craft with load water line length of 24 metres or less.
2. Vessels or craft with displacement hull forms within this length range.
3. Rigid or semi-rigid hull forms within this length range.

Offshore, such craft may be deployed from a larger host vessel, though in certain circumstances they may be capable of autonomous operation. For near-shore operations they are likely to operate independently from convenient port or other safe haven.

12.10.2 Craft Excluded

This section of the Guidelines does not relate to the following craft:

1. Fast rescue boats mobilised on any vessel in compliance with the International Life Saving Appliance Code, as modified from time to time.
2. Fast rescue craft mobilised on any Emergency Response and Rescue Vessel.
3. Daughter craft mobilised on any Emergency Response and Rescue Vessel to provide extended rescue and response support which are operated under the provisions of a Loadline Exemption or similar arrangements.
4. Small work-boats deployed from a larger vessel to support its operations, for example buoy boats associated with the maintenance of seismic cable arrays.

Craft of this type are likely to operate under provisions attached to the vessel from which they are deployed or dispensation from the relevant flag state.

12.10.3 Construction, Operational and Competency Requirements

Small craft mobilised to support either off- or near-shore operations should comply with the requirements relating to such support which exist in the jurisdiction in which they are operating.

It is the responsibility of all parties involved to ascertain the requirements for such craft in the current area of operations and ensure that these are complied with.

Where no such requirements exist the documents listed in Table 9 may provide useful guidance in ensuring that adequate standards are established and maintained.

Other guidance exists, but that prepared by the MCA which is referred to above is unique in that matters relating to construction, operation and competencies are addressed in a single document.

It should also be noted that where small craft are mobilised to provide response and rescue support additional requirements are likely to exist.
Table 4: Small Vessel and Water Craft Guidance

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**Title**
- Small Vessels in Commercial Use Code
- Watercraft Guidelines

### 12.10.4 Further Information to be Provided to Skippers or Coxswains

Where small craft are taken on hire to support any operations the following information should be provided:

1. Full particulars of the nature of operations to be supported.
2. Reporting protocols and arrangements.
3. Actions to be taken in the event of an emergency or other unforeseen events.