

## NEWS

### **Intertanko media awareness**

In November 26th, tanker owners organisation Intertanko organised a 5 hour "Media Awareness Course" in Athens, trained by MTI, in the offices of shipping company Chandris Hellas.

The purpose was to train participants how to respond to the media pressure which can arise in the event of a tanker incident and introduce approaches to dealing with that pressure tanker owners to respond effectively to that pressure.

Participants were from all aspects of tanker operations - commercial and technical. The bottom line message of the course is that protecting the reputation of the company is vital.

Yet, all too often when there is an incident the shipowner or manager is invisible - time and again questions of responsibility and transparency arise.

'Who is in charge?', the press ask. They ask who is to blame and in the absence of an effective media response from the owner, the tanker industry's side of the story is never heard.

The consequences have been all too obvious - a poor image for the industry.

There is rarely ever an owner or manager standing up and saying, 'We manage this ship, let me tell you what has happened and what we are doing now...'

Because who knows more about an incident than the owner or manager involved? Who better to explain what really happened and what is being done to clean up the oil or re-float the ship than those who were carrying the oil and operating the ship? No-one knows more.

Moreover, under OPA 90 it is a legal requirement to provide 'public information' in the event of an incident and now, following any sort of incident, the local authorities in many jurisdictions, may expect a media response capability wherever you are and whether or not there is any pollution.

Additionally, now that charterers have been thrust into the limelight by ports states, governments and NGOs, they are now looking to shipowners to be able to handle the media effectively.

Any tanker owner with ambitions to secure good oil transport business and who intends to stay in business needs to be able to reassure Big Oil that it can handle the media.

So, the course started by looking at the role of the media today, how the press operate and what they are looking for.

Tanker stories are good news value and the opportunity for the owner / manager involved in a casualty to gain a share of the media coverage is short-lived.

The course leader looked at recent examples of both tank and non-tank incidents - Erika, Prestige and Tampa - to how the media responded.

In addition archive and contemporary video sources were used to demonstrate the evolution of media response and how the corporate communications environment has changed during the last decade.

Participants had the opportunity to watch a senior oil company officer defending his company's vetting policy, a shipmanager speaking to the press after a major pollution event in British waters and a logging industry manager defending his company's actions.

The next stage was to introduce the approaches that a company, finding itself in the full glare of the media spotlight, could take to ensure that it was seen as responsible, accountable and transparent in its actions.

Various strategies were discussed and then these were put to the test as the phones began to ring and 'journalists' started asking about an incident.

The scenario incident was a grounding on the Atlantic coast of France and towards the end the pressure was building considerably.

The final stage required the participants to face a camera outside their office - again, how could interviewee ensure that his or her company was seen as responsible, accountable and transparent?

The course was not intended to turn the participants into polished performers. It was intended to alert them to the realities of a world in which the media are very powerful but also to expose the truth that even tanker companies can gain a share of the media spotlight and tell their side of the story.

"In an operating environment where governments expect and charterers require such a response, the media cannot be ignored or handled incompetently," says Nick Brown of MTI.

"Loss of reputation means loss of business and for some companies today that might signal the end of the line."

"People accept, by and large, that accidents happen. What they will not accept is that not enough has been done to prevent accidents.

"Can you persuade public, governments and the media that you have done enough?"

### **New shipbuilding material looks for tanker customer**

[www.ie-sps.com/index\\_ie.htm](http://www.ie-sps.com/index_ie.htm)

Canadian brothers Stephen and Michael Kennedy, who invented "Sandwich Plating System (SPS)," a new shipbuilding material, are now looking for a client in the tanker industry willing to build an entire vessel with the new material.

SPS is formed from a combination of steel and plastic. It is cheaper, stronger and more durable than conventional steel.

It took years of research to come up with the plastic with the right combination of strength, density and ductility, which can stretch without breaking. The product weighs 20 per cent less than reinforced steel and is just as strong, the brothers claim.

It has already been used to repair car ferries in Europe operated by P&O and building a "new build" barge for the Rhine river. The material has been endorsed by Lloyds Register which produced a special "marine bulletin" about the material in September 2000.

"The revolutionary Sandwich Plate System (SPS) is superior in every practical way to conventional, stiffened steel plate," LR said. "SPS is a new-generation building material bringing the shipbuilding and civil engineering industries to the threshold of a new era."

LR has awarded SPS its "approved in principle status" and is prepared to approve the application of SPS in individual building projects.

Dr John Parker, chairman of the Technical Committee of Lloyds Register, says SPS is an "exciting new development in materials which is very suitable for shipbuilding applications."

P&O's LR-classed ferry, *Pride of Cherbourg*, had a 42 m SPS deck retrofitted at A&P's Falmouth yard. After almost a year back in service, Three Quays Marine, P&O's naval architects on this project, reported that the deck - specifically selected because it was subject to regular heavy usage - has shown no sign of deflection and met with the approval of the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency inspectors.

### **MOL double fuel tanks in VLCC newbuild**

Mitsui OSK Lines has announced plans to fit its next generation of VLCCs with double hull fuel tanks to reduce the risk of fuel leakage, starting with four VLCCs to be launched in May-December 2005.

Many industry commentators have questioned the inconsistency of requiring double hulls for cargo tanks on tankers of all sizes but not fuel tanks, when the fuel tank of a VLCC can be as large as the cargo tank of a small tanker.

The move is part of MOL's ongoing groupwide effort to protect the marine environment, as set out in the MOL Group Corporate Principles. It follows MOL fitting double hull fuel tanks to 8 container ships and planning it for 12 car carriers for launching 2004.

Two of the vessels are being built at Mitsui Engineering Shipbuilding Co., Ltd., and two at Kawasaki Shipbuilding Corporation. The vessels are 315,000 dwt length 333m.

An empty tank is located outside the fuel tank, which can optionally be used as a ballast water tank.

The new design has the same fuel capacity and cargo tank capacity as conventional vessels, MOL says.

MOL worked together with both Mitsui and Kawasaki on the design.

Under MARPOL 1992, all new tankers built after 1996 must have double hull cargo tanks, but there are no restrictions on the design of fuel tanks.

### **TESMA claims first tanker with ABS security certificate**

[www.tesma.net](http://www.tesma.net)

TESMA, an alliance network of shipmanagement companies including Tschudi Shipping Company, Camillo Eitzen, Supna Holding, Jebsen and Socatra, claims that it has the first ever tanker awarded an international ship security certificate (ISSC) by ABS.

ABS issued the certificate after a successful audit onboard vessel MT SAMCO, finding it to be compliant with the ISPS (International Ship and Port facility Security) code part A and B.

The MT SAMCO is a 284,504 DWT VLCC tanker, classed with ABS, flagged in Bahamas and managed by TESMA Singapore Pte Ltd.

According to ABS' Capt. Hemant Juneja, Division head for Safety, Environment & Security Certification for ABS Pacific, TESMA has repeated its position among proactive operators demonstrating security compliance well in advance of the July 2004 implementation date. "Our message is reaching the industry," he said:

"operators should not wait until weeks before the deadline next year."

Ralph Juhl, director safety and quality, TESMA Holding, notes that there are still serious uncertainties about the ISPS code, in particular who will be accountable and responsible for economic implications.

"Will the discharge port facility increase the security level for a particular vessel due to its past trading?" he asks.

"As example: USA may have Nigeria at level 2, but flag state and Nigeria both has level 1 for Lagos, wherefore no special precautions were taken at Lagos. USCG demands additional security checks and discussions on the subject cause a 48 hour delay. Who pays the bill?"

"Who will respond, and how, to the activation of the onboard SSA (Ship Security Alarm), an alarm that onboard does not show if it has been activated?"

"As example: the SSA signal will go to the vessel's flag state (for Danish flagged vessels the receiver is SOK, the Danish "coastguard", who will route this to PET, the Danish police intelligence service) irrespective of the vessel's worldwide position.

"How the flag state will get in touch with the appropriate resources locally, and what actions will they take? How may this influence the vessel operations?"

"Beware, however, that very few people have concrete answers, if any at all," he warns. "TESMA is encouraging all of its customers to take an active interest in the code and is of course prepared to engage in and support discussions on this subject."

### **Univan has first ABS ISPS audited vessel with security alert system**

[www.univan.com.hk](http://www.univan.com.hk)

Univan has decided to meet its ISPS code requirements well ahead of time by installing Pole Star Space Application's Purplefinder DSAS solution on its "C Dream" VLCC tanker. Most vessel types, including tankers, will be required to have a security alert system in place by 1 July 2004.

The system comprises multiple ship alert activation points, which can be moved around, and a concealed hardened transmitter with no visible antenna that potential hijackers would find hard to identify. The unit is linked to Inmarsat services and the Purplefinder position reporting system, so that authorities will be able to locate the ship upon an alert being received.

ABS has seen a growth in interest in ship safety and security management systems prompted by the upcoming deadline for the ISPS code implementation.

The more proactive shipmanagers are seeing this as an opportunity to update their current systems and to streamline manuals and procedures. Univan takes a serious attitude to safety, with a separate and totally independent department which regularly carries out safety inspections of vessels in its fleet, with staff located in Mumbai and Hong Kong.

The ISPS code and the ISM code are complementary systems and it is therefore sensible to see them as being integrated into a single management system that can address the needs of both, providing a common interface to manuals and checklists and co-ordinating audits and inspections.

The auditing procedure for both codes is the same, so it is advantageous both for the class society and its customers to coordinate the audits for the most efficient and cost effective approach.

ABS was the first class society to launch an information pack designed to help the industry meet the ISPS requirements. The Guide for Ship Security is now available in its second edition as print and CD versions, and can also be downloaded from the ABS web site.

Using Purplefinder can also bring commercial benefits beyond the quick response to a pirate or terrorist attack. Using accurate position data Univan can track its fleet for analysis purposes and provide value added services to its customers. It can also take part in schemes whereby position data is made available to recognized agents such as a port or coastguard.

### **Consilium US acquired by Jowa**

[www.consiliumus.com](http://www.consiliumus.com)

Jowa AB, a Swedish supplier of environment-related equipment for the shipping industry, has acquired 50 per cent of maritime level gauging equipment manufacturer Consilium AB of Sweden, which will continue to retain the other 50 per cent.

The company will be renamed Jowa Consilium; Jowa AB will take over sales and add production facilities. It will also rationalise the product line and change the price structure.