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Operator, contractor cooperation is key to the success of WellCAP

IADC’s Well Control Accreditation Program (WellCAP) has entered an important new phase – the program is now well poised to fill the void to be created when the US Minerals Management Service (MMS) steps out of its traditional role of approving well control schools in the United States.

MMS published new Subpart O training rules in October 2000 that began a two-year transition period to a new era of “performance based” regulations. Under this new system, to be fully effective on 15 October 2002, MMS will leave its prescriptive role. It will pass the bulk of the responsibility for providing training and evaluating employee competency to oil company lessees and their contractors.

As the result of concerted efforts throughout this year on the part of operators, drilling contractors, and IADC, WellCAP has emerged as the benchmark standard for contractors and operators alike.

First implemented in 1995, WellCAP is the only industry-developed training standard for well control, and already had an established infrastructure in place to serve the industry at the time MMS’s first proposed the changes to its regulations. MMS regulations have the largest effect on the industry in the intensely active Gulf of Mexico, where many operators and contractors have ventured into increasing deeper water off the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). There, a key industry group is the Offshore Operators Committee (OOC), a group of both major and independent producers that drill in the Gulf.

IADC has a long tradition of cooperation with OOC, including joint development of the IADC Deepwater Well Control Guidelines in 1998 and a study on preventing unplanned riser disconnects last year.

At separate OOC meetings last year, members of the group discussed possible strategies for complying with the upcoming regulations in a manner that would be most efficient and productive for the industry.

The meetings were organized by Will Pecue, Well Engineering Operations Manager for ChevronTexaco’s Eastern Gulf Of Mexico Shelf and Chairman of the OOC’s Drilling Technical Subcommittee. Both meetings featured presentations focusing on the development and operation of WellCAP, given by Steve Kropla, IADC’s Director of Accreditation & Certification Programs. Kropla acknowledged that WellCAP had been originally designed to address training needs in non-regulated areas of the world. Though modeled in part on the structure used by MMS, at the time of its development it was not anticipated that it would receive widespread use in the US. MMS decided to discontinue approving well

(Please see WellCAP emerges, p 2)
WellICAP Bulletins are issued

IADC has issued two bulletins so far in 2002 regarding WellICAP curriculum and certificate issuance procedures. The most recent, Bulletin 02-02, was issued in May in order to implement the revised curriculum for the Supervisory Level Drilling Curriculum. The subsea component of this instruction was modified to include deepwater well control topics, as noted elsewhere in this issue.

The bulletin advises schools that provide subsea instruction that they must include the revised or added deepwater topics by 1 December 2002. The revised curriculum document can be found in the list of online WellICAP documents at the IADC web site. A companion document identified the revised and added topics has been included to assist existing schools in revising their programs. A cross-reference document is also available for schools in the process of applying for new accreditation or renewal. Bulletin 02-01, issued in April, deals with certificate issuance procedures and the use of IADC trademarks such as the term “WellICAP” and the IADC and WellICAP logos.

For more information, please contact Steve Kropla, ext 211 or steve.kropla@iadc.org.

WellICAP Review Panel is approved

The IADC Executive Committee and the Board of Directors approved the WellICAP Review Panel members at the IADC’s Directors and General Membership Conference in Dallas. The Contractor members include: Bob Burnett, GlobalSantaFe (Chairman of the panel and IADC’s Well Control Committee); Ted Triche, Diamond Offshore; and Thom Keeton, Transocean Inc.

The Operator members are Benny Mason with Unocal; Olurotimi Ashley-Dejo, ChevronTexaco; and Jeff Campbell, Shell E&P Training. The university faculty representative is Jerome Schubert of Texas A&M. For more information, please contact Steve Kropla, ext 211 (steve.kropla@iadc.org).

WellICAP emerges as the benchmark standard for contractors and operators

control schools, that provided an opportunity for WellICAP to fulfill that role, and for IADC to promote a truly global well control training standard.

“When you look at what Subpart O requires and the implications on the contractor community if the operators’ training programs are not aligned,” Pecue said, “the results could be unmanageable. Fortunately, the drilling subpart O well control requirements fit perfectly with the IADC WellICAP initiative. “Within the OOC specifically, most of the member operators recognize IADC’s efforts in producing and operating a true worldwide standard for training. By having the OOC members agree in principle to use WellICAP as the benchmark standard for the qualification of contractors, there is now a unified and worldwide training option available that will suffice for the majority of Gulf of Mexico and OCS operators.” Pecue added: “The OOC also recognizes that the deepwater well component will also be a valuable edition to the WellICAP program.”

Many OOC members have discussed drafts of their Subpart O compliance plans. All have referenced WellICAP as a minimum standard for the contractor employees. And while some operators intend to develop internal programs to take advantage of the flexibility offered by the new regulations, all stated WellICAP will be used as a starting point for their own engineers and consultants.

“One key thing WellICAP provides is a standard for the industry,” said Ed Scott, Drilling Consultant for BP. Scott is in charge of coordinating BP’s compliance efforts with Subpart O. “IADC is providing a beneficial service in developing a standard for the industry. “Operator support of WellICAP will include providing support for the program’s administration by assisting IADC with site visits to audit and measure compliance of accredited schools.”

The American Petroleum Institute has also acknowledged the value of IADC’s accreditation programs by referencing both WellICAP and its companion program, RIG PASS, in some of its Recommended Practices (RPs). This includes the recently revised RP 64, “Recommended Practice for Diverter Systems, Equipment and Operations,” and RP 59 “Recommended Practice for Well Control.” RP 59 also references the IADC Deepwater Well Control Guidelines.

Operators are currently facing a dilemma because there is no WellICAP counterpart for the other key part of their business, production operations. Kropla said operators and contractors alike still have several issues to sort out prior to October 2002.

“Certain questions remain regarding exactly what type of documentation MMS will require for training and competency testing,” Kropla said. MMS has strongly supported IADC’s efforts. When the new Subpart O rules were published, the following appeared in the Federal Register: “MMS commends IADC for the WellICAP program and acknowledges the value WellICAP could bring in providing well control training requirements to lessees and contractors worldwide.” “Then there are also questions about how the new regulations will be applied by field inspectors. “Once we know more about these, we’ll be able to focus our efforts to make sure everything in place when the new rules take effect.” More information on IADC’s, WellICAP program and the companion RIG PASS program for safety orientation can be found at IADC’s web site at http://iadc.org. For more information, contact Steve Kropla, ext 211 (steve.kropla@iadc.org).
Qualified WellCAP site visitors are now needed

IADC is seeking qualified individuals to perform site visits on new and accredited schools as part of its Well Control Accreditation Program (WellCAP).

Site visitors are used to verify information submitted on a school’s application, observing instruction and testing when possible, and reporting their findings to the WellCAP Review Panel. Site visitors may also be used to investigate complaints or for other reasons.

“The increasing number of WellCAP schools around the world has intensified our need for qualified site visitors,” said Steve Kropla, Director of Accreditation & Certification.

“Since a site visit is required before the WellCAP Review Panel can grant full accreditation, it is a very important part of the accreditation process,” Mr. Kropla added.

“Once accreditation is awarded, it remains a key component of the WellCAP system, in order to ensure continued compliance with our criteria and administrative requirements,” Mr. Kropla said. Drilling industry experience is a must,” with prior well control, training or rig management experience a plus.

“We have a special need for persons in or who travel through Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Latin America, China and Russia,” Kropla said, “and especially for those who speak either French, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese or Russian.”

He pointed out, however, that English-speaking visitors will also be required in the US as a result of an anticipated increase in activity as existing MMS rules are phased out through October 2002. “With WellCAP assuming a major role in the Gulf of Mexico as the result of operators utilizing it to comply with new regulations, that will also increase our need for site visitors,” he added. “We expect many MMS schools that have not yet applied for WellCAP accreditation to do so in order to meet the increased demand from the industry.”

IADC pays site visitors a nominal fee and reimbursement for travel expenses is negotiable. Interested persons are asked to contact Steve Kropla at ext 211, (steve.kropla@iadc.org)

Underbalanced RIGPASS unveiled

The IADC Underbalanced Operations Committee has finalized an orientation program for underbalanced operations that is modeled after the existing RIGPASS HSE orientation. The program will function with a separate review panel, to be named by the Underbalanced Operations Committee. Special UB RIGPASS cards will be issued to students completing the instruction.

A RIGPASS HSE orientation will be required as a prerequisite for anyone going through the US RIGPASS instruction. As with RIGPASS, the program is designed to offer a high degree of flexibility in delivery methods and can be utilized by oil companies, drilling contractors, service companies, and commercial schools and universities. More details and program documents can be found in the Underbalanced Operations Committee section of the IADC website.

WellCAP site visits done worldwide

WellCAP site visits have been conducted thus far in 2002 at 11 schools in Brazil, China, Trinidad, Scotland, Louisiana and Texas.

WellCAP is IADC’s Well Control Training Program, which reviews and accredits providers of well control training worldwide. Site visits are required for WellCAP schools to achieve full accreditation, and follow-up site visits are routinely conducted to ensure compliance with IADC procedures. Steve Kropla, Director of Accreditation & Certification Programs, conducted a follow-up site visit at Odebrecht Perfuracões Ltda. - MAPLO, located in Campos, Brazil. Findings have been referred to the WellCAP Review Panel.

Mr. Kropla also performed three other visits in Brazil: at E Consultoria LTDA and Transocean Macaé Training Center, both in Macaé, and at Petrobras University, Salvador, Brazil.

All were follow-up visits except for Transocean Inc. and Wellcon Treinamento, which was an initial site visit in conjunction with a pending application for accreditation. Mr. Kropla also performed an initial site visit at the Shell Training Center, Robert, LA.

Bob Burnett of GlobalSantaFe, chairman of the IADC Well Control Committee, performed a follow-up site visit at a school operated by Well Services Petroleum Company Ltd., in South Oropouche, Trinidad.

A follow-up visit was made to Petroleum College International in Victoria, Texas to observe a new instructor prior to granting full approval. The visit was done by Paul Sonnemann, consultant to IADC, who recommended the instructor be approved.

Olurotimi Ashley-Dejo of Chevron Texaco conducted follow-up visits at three schools in Aberdeen, Scotland: Aberdeen Drilling Schools, Caledonia Training & Consultancy, and GlobalSantaFe.

Ken Fischer, IADC Vice President of Operations, also conducted an initial site visit at Dagang Drilling Well Control Training Center in Tianjin, China.

IADC regularly requires the services of qualified site visitors worldwide to help monitor the operation of the 52 schools accredited or awaiting accreditation.

Instruction has been provided in a variety of languages from more than 150 locations in 40 countries. For more information, contact Steve Kropla, ext. 211 (steve.kropla@iadc.org).

WellCAP instructor certificates issued

Individual certificates are currently being distributed to the more than 200 instructors approved under IADC’s Well Control Accreditation Program. IADC is conducting a census of instructors at all schools to update its records.

As instructor information for each school is verified, all instructors approved to teach will receive an “Approved Instructor” certificate. The certificate will list the instructor’s name, types of courses and the name of the school.” In the past, schools received written notice of instructor approval, said Steve Kropla, IADC Director of Accreditation and Certification Programs. “However, we felt it would be appropriate to provide a more formal means of recognizing individual instructors approved to teach WellCAP courses.”
Final version of subsea WellCAP is approved

The IADC Well Control Committee has approved revisions to include deepwater drilling topics as part of the WellCAP curriculum guidelines. The committee approved a final revision of the proposed curriculum, which was released for industry comment in 2001.

As approved, the deepwater topics will be integrated into the subsea portion of the existing WellCAP Drilling Curriculum.

“The committee acknowledged the importance of including deepwater topics,” said Steve Kropla, IADC’s Director of Accreditation & Certification.

“However, after careful review it was determined it would be best to include these as an enhancement to the existing curriculum rather than a separate type of instruction.” The majority of WellCAP-accredited schools currently teaching the subsea curriculum already include the deepwater topics, Kropla said.

Under IADC procedures, the revised curriculum will be released with a bulletin to all schools, which will have six months to make the required changes.

The workgroup that developed the new met last year to review comments received from the industry and to finalize the curriculum.

The revised version was presented to the Well Control Committee by Gary Nance of Randy Smith Training Solutions, who headed up the work group.

Those who participated at the meeting in the development process were: Allen Kelly, UNOCAL; Frank Klepper, Petroleum College International; William Zukiski, Pan Canadian Petroleum; Bob Burnett, Global Santa Fe (chairman of the Well Control Committee) Malcolm Lodge, Global Santa Fe, and Janelle Galvan of WCS Well Control School.

Also contributing to the final version were Ottos Santos of Petrobras and Shiniti Ohara of Shell Brazil.

For more information, please contact Steve Kropla, ext 211 (steve.kropla@iadc.org).

First WellCAP renewals are due

The first schools accredited under the IADC Well Control Accreditation Program (WellCAP) will be up for renewal in 2002 as their original seven-year accreditation periods begin to expire.

“We’ve started sending out reminders to schools whose accreditation will be due for renewal in the upcoming months,” said Steve Kropla, Director of Accreditation & Certification for IADC.

“We want to give them some notice so they can be prepared to re-submit their applications. Between renewals, new programs from Latin America, Asia and the Middle East, and changes to existing programs as a result of changing MMS regulations, we expect this to be a busy year for application reviews. “

“For best results, companies should submit applications or program changes as early as possible to allow sufficient time for program review,” Mr. Kropla said. “As we go through this first cycle of renewals, we’ll be putting together processes to help facilitate the timely review of programs that were previously accredited.” For more information, please contact Steve Kropla, ext 211 (steve.kropla@iadc.org)

RIG PASS card changes underway

A redesign of IADC’s RIG PASS cards is now underway as the result of a survey of accredited schools. In addition, procedures are being developed to allow schools to print their own cards using pre-assigned ID numbers registered with IADC.

RIG PASS is IADC’s accreditation program for service contractor safety orientation programs. It is currently utilized by 54 schools located around the world. More than 82,000 RIG PASS cards have been issued to students since the program began.

“Due to some suggestions we’d heard from RIG PASS schools, we conducted the survey to learn their ideas on ways to update the appearance and functionality of cards issued to students completing the program.” said Steve Kropla, IADC Director of Accreditation & Certification.

“The survey asked opinions on whether photos should be included or required, and whether schools should print their own cards in accordance with IADC procedures similar to what is available under our WellCAP program.”

The opinions of the schools were mixed on the subject of using student photos, Mr. Kropla said. “Very few felt we should require photos, though several said they might include them if we provided a space to do so.”

A majority of schools were in favor of using a computer template for printing their own cards using a number obtained from IADC. Procedures are now being developed for this, Mr. Kropla said.

“As the result of the survey, we have contracted with a designer to produce a card that will provide a space for a photo for those schools that wish to use one,” Mr. Kropla added.

“However, the design will be such that the card will be fully functional if a photo is not used. The design will include our new logo, and will lend itself to printing on standard computer equipment used by the schools for those that want to do that.”

The new logo, shown below, is part of a recently completed project to update both the WellCAP and RIG PASS marketing brochures, which are now also available in Spanish. The card redesign is the first since the RIG PASS program started in 1994.

For more information, please contact Steve Kropla at ext. 211 (steve.kropla@iadc.org).

New RIGPASS logo unveiled

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RIGPASS

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