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**GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION OR APPROVAL OF
OPRC TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS AND EXPERTS**

1 The Marine Environment Protection Committee, at its fifty-third session (18 to 22 July 2005), approved the Guidelines and criteria for accreditation or approval of OPRC training organizations and requested the Secretariat to issue these Guidelines by an MEPC circular (MEPC 53/24, paragraph 7.5.1).

2 The Guidelines, as approved by the Committee, are attached in the annex hereto.

ANNEX

GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION OF OPRC TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS AND EXPERTS

1 Introduction

1.1 These guidelines are intended for national administrations or agencies responsible for the implementation of the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, 1990 (OPRC) and in particular, for co-ordinating oil pollution response at all levels.

1.2 The guidelines have been prepared to assist in the accreditation and/or approval of education institutions and/or providers of the IMO OPRC Model Training Courses. The guidelines provide an overview of issues and key elements necessary to assess training providers in terms of minimum standards of delivery, experience of personnel and facilities necessary to deliver such courses.

2 Background

2.1 The International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation, adopted at IMO on 30 November 1990, provides a global framework for international co-operation in combating incidents or threats of marine pollution involving, in particular, ships, offshore units, sea ports and oil handling facilities. It entered into force on 13 May 1995 and at the time of writing (April 2005), 85 States were Party to the Convention, representing some 64% of the world merchant tonnage.

2.2 Implementation of OPRC training-related issues are referred to in Article 6, where Parties undertake to establish programmes to train relevant personnel in oil spill preparedness and response. In Article 9, the OPRC also calls for the IMO, along with relevant international, regional organizations, oil and shipping industries to develop a comprehensive training program in the field of oil pollution preparedness and response, including the availability of expertise for the development and implementation of training programs. In this regard, IMO's Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme has funded the development and delivery of a suite of OPRC Model Training Courses.

3 The OPRC Model Training Courses

3.1 The IMO has developed four levels of response training. These are:

- OPRC Introductory Level
- OPRC Level 1 - First Responder
- OPRC Level 2 - Supervisors and On-Scene Commanders
- OPRC Level 3 - Administrators and Senior Executives

3.2 The objective of the Introductory course is to provide an overview of the main sources of oil released to the marine environment and their relative importance and the principal causes of marine oil spills. It is aimed at personnel likely to be associated with, or directly involved in a response to an oil spill incident. Levels 1 and 2 are designed for the specific group(s) with increasing responsibility at the scene of the incident. The main characteristics of staff designated as first responders are that they are able to manage and lead a smaller group of responders and those that have basic technical and communication skills. Level 2 staff are equipped to co-ordinate and manage the response including input from other organizations and can make decisions on response strategies and tactics to

be used in the clean-up. Level 3 is designed for high level officers and executives and includes handling media issues.

Responsibilities of Governments with regard to nationally approved or accredited training organizations and experts

3.3 At meetings of the Marine Environment Protection Committee, the Committee has recommended that Member Governments officially approve or accredit providers of OPRC Model Training Courses to ensure that they rely on the content of the Training Courses and have the personnel with appropriate experience to deliver such courses.

3.4 Additionally, Member Governments have been invited to notify the Secretariat of the names and contact details of nationally approved or accredited training organizations and experts and any subsequent changes, in order that the IMO Secretariat may keep an up to date roster of such experts and training organizations which may be used *inter alia* for assisting the Organization in the delivery of training courses in developing countries as part of its Integrated Technical Co-operation Programme.

4 Accreditation/Approval Process and Information

4.1 A Member Government setting out to approve or accredit a particular provider of IMO OPRC Model Training Courses will need to develop and apply a standard approach or process to ensure that each potential provider is treated equitably.

4.2 It is therefore advisable that Member Governments define and publish:

- .1 how a provider must apply for approval or accreditation;
- .2 who must be contacted;
- .3 the timelines associated with the approval process; and
- .4 how much it will cost.

4.3 It is also advisable to indicate whether the decision on approval will be final or can a provider improve its shortcomings. Additionally, it is important to indicate how long an approval is valid and whether accreditation will need to be reassessed once approved.

4.4 To enable a thorough assessment, the following information should be obtained from the provider:

- .1 promotional material for the course(s);
- .2 content of proposed Level(s), overview of practical work and assessments;
- .3 background and expertise of the presenters/speakers or instructors (some instructors may need to be interviewed); and
- .4 information regarding the venue, facilities, times, duration and costs.

5 Criteria for assessing providers

5.1 This section sets out the criteria against which a provider would be assessed. The content of the IMO OPRC Model Training Course should be studied carefully before comparing the training provider material.

5.2 Criteria for assessing a provider include:

- .1 Extent of and availability of promotional material, advertising and pre-course information or documentation.
- .2 Quality and accuracy of statements on course aims and objectives (including teaching approach).
- .3 Quality of statements on admission procedures (clarity of enrolment forms and other documentation).
- .4 Quality and extent of topics, syllabus content, course structure and procedures.
- .5 Quality of participant assessment procedures to obtain feedback to improve overall level of delivery.
- .6 Quality of course administration, staff and facilities.
- .7 Method of delivery of the training, including the number and quality of educational aids, interactive or real-time exercises and group/individual activities.
- .8 Extent and follow-up of course evaluation by participants, methods of dealing with complaints.
- .9 Extent and quality of sponsorship or support by external sources (e.g. industry or other Governments, organizations or agencies).
- .10 Issuance of course certificates.

6 Accreditation Reports

6.1 Once an approval is granted it is advisable to prepare a report providing accreditation or approval and/or subsequent follow-up procedures which a provider may need to follow to achieve accreditation. Accreditation validity should be limited and renewal procedures set out.

6.2 Each criteria listed in section 5 above should be assessed against a specific level that must be met in order for a provider to be accredited.

6.3 Lower levels of achievement should be accompanied by recommendations for improvement and timelines within which reassessment could take place.

6.4 The period of accreditation and (inter)national recognition should also be set out in the report.