

PAJ Expert Training at EARL.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

By kind invitation from PAJ, I am here to present a short paper on “PAJ Expert Training at EARL”. I shall firstly outline the necessity for training. Next I shall discuss the PAJ training in Singapore. Finally, I shall describe what we at EARL are doing to upgrade our training modules and expand our training programme for the year 2000 and beyond.

The Necessity for Training.

We are in the business of oil spill response and we must have the following prerequisites:

- i) adequate equipment,
- ii) sufficient manpower, and
- iii) necessary skills

If any of the above prerequisites is missing, then our response will be ineffective. As important as each one of them is, you can still achieve a good measure of response if you only have a small amount of equipment and a limited number of personnel, provided they are knowledgeable, skilful, highly trained and fully committed to the task. Unfortunately this does not apply the other way around, i.e. the response will be ineffective if you have a lot of equipment and a great number of men if they have little or no training at all. When all is said and done, it is the highly trained crew that will win the day. This is true of an army at war as it is for those managing a crisis or an oil spill.

The International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation 1990 (OPRC '90) of which Japan is a party to, has as its goal, oil spill preparedness in all coastal states and countries at risks. Part of that preparedness is the development of national contingency plans for countries that are party to the Convention. As you know, the ultimate test of any contingency plan is when it works for real. In order for it to work successfully, players in the contingency plan must know their role and be trained in their responsibilities. The contingency plan will need to be exercised and amended where necessary, then exercised and amended yet

again in its cycle towards being a good contingency plan which can be used with confidence in a crisis.

OPRC '90 also calls for a minimum level of pre-positioned oil spill equipment, commensurate with the risk involved, and training of personnel. Such training goes beyond the practical know-how in operating the various oil spill combating equipment from the stockpile of the response Centres, oil terminals, E&P installations or tankers. It goes beyond knowing how to maintain the equipment and having a programme for maintenance. The training must be comprehensive. Responders will need to know not only how to work the equipment but how the equipment works and its limitations. They will need to know the effects of their chosen strategies. If they chose to do nothing they will need to know the effects of making that choice as well. In short, they will need to be knowledgeable in all aspects of oil spill response. To this end, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) in promulgating OPRC '90 developed a global training programme to assist governments in its implementation of the Convention to provide them with standard training modules. Three courses have been designed for specific levels of users. The 3 courses are:

Level 1 for First Responder. The course is designed with the aim of improving the skills of operator personnel responsible for undertaking on-site clean up operations and to provide them with a complete overview of the various techniques available for recovering oil spilled at sea and cleaning of polluted shorelines. Course duration : 5 days.

Level 2 for Supervisors and On-Scene Commanders. The course is designed to provide the basic knowledge and skills required of an On-Scene Commander to carry out his role and responsibilities, to coordinate and manage the response to an oil spill.

Course duration : 5 days.

Level 3 for Administrators and Senior Managers. The course is designed to make senior officials aware of the responsibilities of the members of an oil spill response organization to effectively respond to an oil spill through the deployment of equipment and resources at the national level.

Course duration : 3 days.

When trained, the staff will form the cornerstone for the effective management of oil spill response in their country.

PAJ Training in Singapore.

PAJ has a programme consisting of 3 main areas:

- i) Preparedness and Response,
- ii) Research and Development, and
- iii) International Conferences.

It is the first activity which is now being discussed. In its programme of preparedness and response, it is evident that PAJ places great emphasis in training because 1) they have varied oil spill equipment in their stockpile bases both in Japan and overseas 2) some of their equipment are of foreign manufacture for which familiarization is needed 3) they have an active participatory programme in conducting emergency drills for their members and government bodies 4) they believe in the need to become proficient in clean-up operations in order to achieve a prompt and effective response. The training given to their staff members is not restricted to their local bases in Japan but in their search for self-improvement staff members are also sent abroad for specialized training.

Since 1996 EARL has been privileged in working with PAJ in their training programmes. Each year PAJ sends a small group of between 10 to 14 staff members from their 6 Japanese bases to Singapore for a few days' training in oil spill response. The first group began with a 3-day Oil Spill Familiarisation course which was modelled along industry standards. The course provides a comprehensive introduction to oil spill response and covers pre-spill planning, response strategies and spill operations. Case histories are discussed to emphasize the lessons learned from those incidents. The course is mainly classroom based and covers all the theoretical elements of the 5-day Clearance Course. Topics include Cause, Fate and Effects of spilled oil, Environmental Issues, Surveillance and Tracking, Contingency Planning, Dispersants, Containment and Recover, Protection, Shoreline Clean-up, Burning & Bioremediation, Practical Management, Handling the Media, Inland Spills and Safety Issues.

In 1997 and 1998 the course was expanded to 4 days to include both theory and practical work. The course was based on the 5-day Clearance Course

developed by Oil Spill Response Ltd (OSRL) some years ago. The course modules selected were compressed into 4 days as requested by PAJ. The course provides a complete overview of all aspects of oil spill response. The objective was to equip participants with knowledge and skills to become an effective member of an oil spill response team and an awareness of the secondary issues that arise as a result of a spill.

In 1999 EARL introduced the 3 IMO courses developed as part of the OPRC '90 implementation. The introduction of these IMO courses was made in anticipation of implementation of OPRC '90 which came into force in Singapore in June of '99. The PAJ group which came to Singapore last year was offered the IMO Level 3 course for Administrators and Senior Managers. The focus of the course was on the operational management and policies involved in responding to oil spills.

All the courses that we carry out for PAJ are run in English with Japanese translation. The course material was also translated into Japanese with the objective of making it as easy as possible for course participants to follow the lectures.

PAJ's programme of sending staff members abroad every year for training in oil spill response is to be encouraged, even applauded, as it is an indication of their strong commitment to achieve a prompt, effective and efficient response to oil spills. It is a worthy programme which should be given full support by its members.

Upgrading EARL Training Programme.

EARL was formed in 1993 and modelled along OSRL (then known as Oil Spill Service Centre or OSSC). Two senior management staff and one senior technician from OSSC came to Singapore and helped to set up EARL. It became operational very quickly.

The prime objective in establishing the EARL Centre is to have an organisation with sufficient resource to respond promptly and effectively to an oil spill by its members. This means that a lot of time and effort are put in daily to ensure that staff are well trained and the equipment well maintained.

Being prepared is what matters. However, training others in the techniques of oil spill response is another important objective of ours. Training serves the following purposes:

1. It keeps the trainers updated in oil spill response techniques.
2. It keeps knowledge and skills of operational staff current as they attend the various courses regularly and are themselves involved in the equipment demonstrations including nearshore and offshore exercises that form part of the course programme.
3. It allows trainers to share their knowledge and experience with others.
4. It generates income, and
5. It enhances EARL's reputation as a centre of expertise and learning in the Asia-Pacific region.

EARL held its first training courses in November - December '93. These were conducted by OSSC training staff who flew in from Southampton. Subsequent training courses were conducted jointly between OSRL/EARL. The training courses offered at that time were a 1-day Senior Executive Acquaintance Course, a 2-day Refresher Course, a 2-day Familiarisation Course, a 2-day Contingency Planning Course, a 5-day Clearance Course and a 5-day Management Course.

Initially the training courses were conducted with 3 OSRL and 1 EARL training staff. As EARL grew in knowledge and experience in oil spill response business, EARL's involvement in the joint training courses similarly grew in significance to the point where the roles were reversed i.e. 3 EARL and 1 OSRL personnel conducted the training. The courses were held twice yearly at EARL Centre in Singapore i.e. in February and in November/December.

Also since the fourth quarter of '94, EARL had begun conducting its own in-house training courses and oil spill exercises with its members. These tailor-made courses were not publicized and were ad hoc in nature in that they were usually requested by the member-company 2 or 3 months before the required date. As EARL has 5 founding members who are oil majors each needing its own training and exercise each year, the heavy demand in training and oil spill exercises meant that our training skills grew rapidly. Apart from running the joint courses with OSRL and in-house courses for

members, EARL also conducted external training for third parties, notably IMO/UNDP, Petronas, Pertamina and PAJ.

In 1999 EARL made two significant changes to its training strategy. The first change was in moving away from the industry-type courses and introducing the 3 IMO courses mentioned earlier. The change was made to support Singapore's implementation of OPRC '90 but it was also made because many enquiries were received asking for the 3 IMO courses to be conducted.

The second change was to move away from ad hoc customised courses for EARL members to on-going public-run courses. EARL members will still be able to request for specific in-house training but they will now have to work their training requirement around the public-run courses.

The changes made are significant in that running standard courses and standard modules by the adoption of the IMO courses saves a lot of time when compared to the previous method of planning for individual customized courses. In addition this system offers versatility through the wide selection of modules available. The end result is an increase in efficiency and productivity. Of course it should be recognized that the transition period saw a huge amount of work put in before the system became operational.

What next? Like PAJ, EARL will always strive for improvement, to be the best it can be. EARL's Consultancy and Training Department's plans for year 2000 are :

1. Improvement through OSRL/EARL alliance.

As you may be aware the Alliance Agreement took effect on 1 January 2000. This alliance between the two International Tier 3 Centres brings together a wealth of practical experience which can be used to improve the two Centres' operations including training and consultancy. A simple exchange of ideas and incorporation of constructive feedback will bring about new and improved training modules which will better serve both members and third parties alike. These modules should be seen as separate and an addition to the IMO courses which will still be the mainstay of the training courses offered.

2. Improvement through the selective translation of course material.
The lack of mastery of the English language has more often than not been the root cause for the poor understanding of the lectures delivered. This is understandable because the English language is not the mother tongue nor the official language in many of the Asia-Pacific countries where the training is conducted. Hence selective translation of the course material into the host country's national language where needed will make the course presentation easier to understand.
3. Improvement through the use of Information Technology.
EARL is in the process of upgrading its training room at its Centre in Singapore. When completed, the use of new equipment will improve the quality of the audio and visual display of the lectures delivered.
4. Improvement through the use of local coordinators/interpreters.
This is usually in addition to the translated course material offered and the use of their local knowledge and native language will greatly assist in the quality of training offered.
5. Improvement through participation of relevant government agencies in the host countries.
Their presence will lend realism to the course. They have the capacity to present an authoritative viewpoint where it matters.

In concluding, let me say once again that it is essential that you must have the right skills for the job, and the only way to acquire the necessary skills in the shortest time possible is to get the right training for it. Also, training should not be looked at as a one-off affair. Attending a 3-day or a 5-day course does not make one an instant expert. All too often a participant will be sent to a course and upon his return be expected to be the company expert on oil spill response business. It doesn't work that way. Lessons learned will have to be practiced till they become second-nature. A refresher course may be necessary if the lessons learned some years ago have been forgotten. An advanced course may be necessary to build on the basic lessons learned. Other courses are available for learning other skills. Whichever course is right for the participant, he or she should be given the training over and over again if necessary until he or she is capable of doing the work confidently and efficiently. That is the essence of training itself – to be able to do the job right.