Highlight some of IMCA’s work since we last met in Bergen

1. IMCA Diving Supervisor CPD App
2. IMCA Certificate Verification Portal
3. IMO Diving Code
4. IMCA Accredited Diving System Inspector Scheme
5. COVID-19 Work undertaken with DMAC to protect the industry and its workers
IMCA / DMAC and the industry’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic
COVID-19 and Diving – IMCA Information Notes

- IMCA D 05/20 Renewal of diver medic certification during the COVID-19 pandemic
- IMCA D 06/20 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) – guidance for diving contractors
- IMCA D 13/20 Release of KMDSI bulletin on cleaning and sanitising Kirby Morgan Helmets, BandMasks and Full Face Masks
- IMCA D 14/20 Norwegian Oil and Gas Association Document COVID-19 and Offshore Diving (Norway)
- IMCA D 15/20 Extension of the renewal period for annual DESIGN audits during the COVID-19 pandemic
- IMCA D 16/20 COVID-19 – An example of a risk assessment undertaken by an IMCA Diving Contractor
- IMCA D 18/20 Publication of UK HSE guidance for divers and AMEDS on medical fitness and medical examination of divers during the COVID-19 outbreak
- IMCA D 19/20 IMCA Policy for the Validity of Diver Medicals During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- IMCA D 20/20 Norwegian directorate of health statement normalising the validity of offshore health certificates and divers’ health certificates
- IMCA D 21/20 IMCA Diver Medic Training During COVID-19
- IMCA D 22/20 IMCA Diving Supervisor and ALST Training During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- IMCA D 24/20 COVID-19 swab-test testing for diver medics
Key Docs: IN 06/20 + DMAC 33 & 34

The Diving Medical Advisory Committee

The Diving Medical Advisory Committee (DMAC) is an advisory group established to provide guidance on medical aspects of diving activities. This document, published by IMCA (International Marine Contractors Association), aims to update and reinforce the guidance on diving medical issues, particularly in the context of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19).

1. **Introduction and Scope**
   - This guidance covers the risks to commercial diving personnel involved in diving. It is intended to assist diving operators, employers, and medical practitioners in managing the health and safety of diving personnel.
   - It is based on the latest scientific evidence and risk assessments, taking into account the evolving nature of COVID-19 and its potential impact on diving operations.

2. **Short-term and Long-term Health Effects of COVID-19**
   - The short-term health effects of COVID-19 include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, and fatigue. Long-term effects, such as persistent cough, fatigue, and muscle weakness, can persist even after recovery from acute infection.

3. **Guidelines for Divers Conducting Face-to-Face Medical Examinations During the COVID-19 Pandemic**
   - Divers and medical practitioners should follow strict infection control measures, including the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and regular hand hygiene.
   - Diving operators should ensure that medical examinations are conducted in a manner that minimizes the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

4. **Conclusion**
   - This document is a living document, and ongoing research and changes in understanding of COVID-19 will be reflected in subsequent updates. Diving operators and medical practitioners are encouraged to stay informed and adapt their practices as new information becomes available.
DMAC Statement on COVID-19 Vaccination and the Offshore Energy Diving Community

October 2021

COVID-19 is a viral infection caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus and may result in severe and potentially fatal disease. There is no specific treatment for COVID-19 since a vaccine is not yet available. The effects of COVID-19 are of special concern for several reasons:

- Social distancing is an important measure to slow the spread of the virus. It is difficult to maintain on an offshore reel, and in practice impossible in a hyperbaric chamber and at a dive site (i.e., where all divers and personnel are in close contact). After diving and after a surface-decompression dive, if one person is infected, other persons on the same team will be exposed to the virus.

- Handling a severe case of COVID-19 is a strain on hyperbaric care units and may cause excessive stress and potential stress disorders.

- COVID-19 is primarily a disease of the lungs with pre-existing disease in some more severe complications.

- Lung injury is a common complication that may turn into a chronic fibrotic process.

- COVID-19 has been shown to affect the endothelial function and may increase susceptibility to thrombosis.

- Several cases have been reported and have been proven to prevent COVID-19 effectively. Based on efficacy and safety, the World Health Organization (WHO) has, as of September 2021, advised eight COVID-19 vaccines for emergency use for the WHO Vaccine Emergency Use List. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) has authorized four vaccines and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved one vaccine and given "Emergency Use Authorizations" to two other vaccines.

- The efficacy and safety of vaccines are documented in large trials before approval is granted. In addition, studies have been conducted on clinical use of the vaccines, confirming that they are safe and effective. New studies have also investigated the effect of vaccines on the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which is currently predominant in most countries. A study of 19,000 persons with COVID-19 in the UK showed 47% and 80% seropositivity against asymptomatic infections with the drugs in two different vaccines [1]. In a separate study involving 11,000 patients in Norway, the authors found that 95% of vaccinated patients are protected against asymptomatic infections with the drugs [2]. Vaccines are particularly effective in preventing severe COVID-19 infections, including in the older persons. In an analysis of the UK data, the authors found a 75% reduced risk for hospitalization for vaccinated persons compared to unvaccinated persons [3]. In a recent meta-analysis study from the UK, the vaccination effectiveness against hospitalization was estimated at 89% and 95% for two different vaccines [4]. It has also been shown that vaccines reduce the risk of transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus [5].

COVID-19 vaccines are generally well tolerated. The most common side effects are pain at the injection site, headache, muscle pain, chills, and fever. In most cases, these are mild and short-lasting. More serious side effects have been reported, such as encephalopathy. With all other vaccines, there is a small risk of allergic reactions immediately after vaccination. There have also been reports of blood clots and inflammatory heart conditions, which may be linked to vaccinations. Such possible side effects are extremely rare. In the Norwegian Medicines Agency's report on suspected adverse reactions to COVID-19 vaccines published on September 14, 2021, the frequency of serious potential side effects is 3.7 cases per 1,000 vaccinees [6]. In a report from the Italian Medicines Agency, the frequency of adverse side effects was 1.1% per 100,000 vaccines issued on a total of 70 million doses administered [7]. 86% of these cases were categorized as non-serious.

Although COVID-19 vaccination significantly reduces the risk of infection, it does not eliminate it completely. All divers and diving contractors are therefore urged to continue to monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 disease, which may be less severe in vaccinated individuals.

It is DMAC's position that, although vaccination side effects may occur, the known risks of COVID-19 illness and its related, possibly severe complications, far outweigh the potential risks of having an extremely rare serious reaction to the vaccine. DMAC therefore strongly recommends that all divers and diving personnel follow national recommendations for primary vaccinations and booster doses. Vaccination will reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 infection significantly. In doing so, it will also maximally reduce the risk of divers who contract COVID-19 from suffering severe complications that may cause serious harm, leading to long-term health effects.

Any non-vaccinated person joining a group of vaccinated people in a working environment where preventative measures like social distancing cannot be maintained, represents a significant increase in risk. Diving contractors working in remote settings in which a reasonable practicability should take account of this, within the applicable legislative framework.

References

• “It is DMAC’s position that, although vaccination side effects may occur, the known risks of COVID-19 illness and its related, possibly severe complications, far outweigh the potential risks of having an extremely rare serious adverse reaction to vaccination.

• DMAC therefore strongly recommends that offshore divers and diving personnel follow national recommendations for primary vaccinations and booster doses.

• Vaccination will reduce the risk of severe COVID-19 infection significantly.

• In doing so, it will also markedly reduce the risk of divers who contract COVID-19 from suffering severe complications that may cause career limiting long-term health effects.”
The Value of DMAC

• In the digital age it can be difficult to find objective, well-researched, and reliable information on important subjects. This is why IMCA values the diving medical expertise and input of DMAC so much.

• The committee is made up of doctors intimately involved in the practice of diving medicine and its guidance is always based on the latest medical research and on empirical evidence.

• DMAC has no other agenda than to provide impartial advice about medical aspects of commercial diving for the benefit of offshore divers.
Revision of the IMO Diving Instruments

• Revision of the IMO *Code of safety for diving systems* and the *Guidelines and specifications for hyperbaric evacuation systems*.
  
  – This has been a long-term objective, but we are making excellent progress.
  
  – IMCA’s Core Diving Industry Workgroup (CDIW) for revision of the IMO Diving Instruments met weekly throughout the summer and autumn period last year and regularly in 2021.
  
  – A huge amount of complex technical and administrative work was undertaken in that time, and a lot of novel thinking was required.
  
  – In all, 9 submissions of draft text were made to the IMO Intersessional Correspondence Group (CG) for comment and then subsequent CDIW response.
  
  – The timetable of works for the remainder of 2021 and the spring of 2022 is shown on the next slide.
Timetable 2021/22

- **05 November 2021** – Text of Draft Code was submitted to the IMO together with the final report of the Correspondence Group.

- **November / December 2021** – Translation of 95 page document into 5 languages.

- **November 2021 to 25 February 2022** – Review any written submissions received by co-ordinator from Member States.

- **28 February to 04 March 2022** – Attend IMO Sub-committee on Ship Systems & Equipment (SSE 8) session and participate in IMO Working Group.

- The earliest date for publication of the new Diving Code will be **2023** – probably later.
Improvements to the Diving Code

If adopted:

• The New Code’s application will be extended to cover all types of diving systems, fixed and temporary, surface and saturation.

• Clear requirements for surface-orientated diving systems will be included.

• In addition to requirements for diving plant and equipment, the New Code will also address:
  — the suitability of ships and floating structures to act as diving platforms;
    and
  — the need to coordinate the ship’s ISM system with a diving safety management system.
If adopted:

- The means of evacuating divers in saturation will be clarified and updated so as to provide an equivalent level of safety to SOLAS.

- The major planning challenges related SAR operations for launched Hyperbaric Survival Craft (HSC) and how to deliver divers to a place of safety will be addressed by introducing requirements for SAR cooperation planning.

- These improvements should help to level the playing field for IMCA diving contractors globally.
Accredited Diving System Inspector
Aims of the ADSI Scheme

• Development of the ADSI scheme is making good progress.
• The ADSI scheme is being set up to:
  – Introduce an industry recognised professional accreditation for this important group of skilled workers
  – Provide assurance that diving system inspectors are competent, and so improve the quality, consistency, professionalism, and credibility of DESIGN inspections
  – Help the offshore energy diving industry ensure “objective auditing” of diving systems by individual inspectors;
  – Give all stakeholders confidence that diving systems subject to DESIGN inspections undertaken by ADSIs are fit for purpose and safe to use;
  – Reduce the frequency of diving system DESIGN inspections by holding records of ADSI DESIGN inspections on the eCMID database that with the appropriate permissions, can be accessed by client companies.
ADSI Certification Process

Accredited Diving System Inspector Certification Scheme

Minimum Requirements for Certification

- Candidate fulfills entry criteria and evidence requirements
- Completes and passes an IMCA-approved Trainee Diving System Inspector (TDSI) preparatory training course
- Trainee Diving System Inspector
- Completes field training and experience requirements at trainee level by conducting DESIGN audits under supervision
- Reports of satisfactory performance and examples of DESIGN audit reports prepared by the candidate submitted to ADSI scheme Panel
- Approved to sit the relevant IMCA Accredited Diving System Inspector examination
- Passes the IMCA Accredited Diving System Inspector examination
- Certified as an IMCA Accredited Diving System Inspector
IMCA Diving Supervisors CPD App

• At the last Conference we discussed the work IMCA were doing on developing a CPD App for Diving Supervisors. The App was launched to industry in April 2019. It is now a requirement that all IMCA supervisors remain “In date”

• Today, over 1350 Supervisors are actively using the APP.

• The APP has also been adopted by both DCBC and ADAS whose qualifications are recognised by IMCA, and discussions have opened with our colleagues from the Netherlands.

• IDIF members are now confident that IMCA Supervisors are being keep up to date with changes to IMCA guidance and practices.

• The App has given IMCA the ability to speak directly to the supervisors especially on site through the “Broadcast Function”. This has been extremely helpful, especially during the recent pandemic.
Come from a number of sources for example;

• IDIF expressed concerns about saturation diver upward and downward excursions.

• Learning the lessons quickly from Safety Flashes and diving accidents.

• Supervisors expressed concerns about TUP Discipline, flying after diving.

• DMT schools raised worries about the lack on knowledge on how to deal with pneumothoraxes and the recognition of DCI as we now rarely see it.

• IMCA was worried that new or revised guidance was not getting to the hands of the end user.

• IMCA has in the region of over 70 Diving related guidance documents published or in production.

• All of these concerns and others have now been addressed.
Some Topics Covered So Far

Load cracking in aluminium cylinders
Dropped objects
Underwater air lift bags
Flying after diving
Minimum dive team sizes
Diving Project Roles, Duties, & Responsibilities
Control of Bell Blow-Down
Umbilical handling – trapped umbilical
Underwater air lift bags
HP water jetting
Subsea lifting operations
Use of bell outer doors

Management of change
Hat hygiene
Physics review
Decompression illness
Bell batteries
Diver bail-out
Equivalent Air Depth (EAD)
Gas analysis
TUP safe practices
Permits-to-work
ROV/Diver SIMOPS
Surface supplied mixed gas diving
Minimum quantities of gas required offshore
Industry Reception

• The major IOGP client companies have fully endorsed the CPD scheme and the Diving Supervisor CPD App approach.

• Many IOGP client companies now require diving supervisors who work on their projects to demonstrate that they use the App to keep their CPD status in-date.

• IMCA members have also fully embraced the scheme.

• Crucially, most of the diving supervisors themselves appear to like it.
Feedback from users

Great App!

- User friendly
- Rich in information
- Can test my self without fear
- Thought it was excellent
- Very impressed!
- User friendly

Brilliant idea!

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What next?

The current CPD App is exclusively offered to IMCA Qualified Supervisors only! No one else is allowed access!

However ...

Following encouragement from IDIF, IMCA members and other industry stakeholders, we are exploring the possibility of launching a new App in 2022, the:

“IMCA Diving Development App.”

The format will be the same with each module taking roughly 20 minutes to complete. Knowledge Units will be issued quarterly, and their content will be based on material previously developed for the Diving Supervisor CPD App. Please feel free to speak to any of the IMCA staff here. We would welcome your thoughts.

Keep an eye out on the IMCA website for further information.

Additionally

Following further requests from our members, the Association is also planning to develop a CPD App for IMCA LSTs, probably in 2023.
The Marine Division was quick to recognise the success and the usefulness of the IMCA CPD App approach. In conjunction with the Nautical Institute, the Marine Division has recently launched a DPO CPD App.

Other parts of IMCA may also benefit from adopting this flexible, enjoyable, and effective approach to the delivery of CPD for key personnel:

- Marine Division – eCMID Accredited Vessel Inspectors (AVI)?
- ROV Division – pilots and supervisors?
- Others?
IMCA Certificate Verification Portal

- IMCA has now developed a certificate verification portal for all IMCA diving supervisor and LST certificates issued by the Association. The system was launched in August.

- All IMCA Supervisor and LST Certificates can now be verified through the Certification Verification Portal

- It will also allow you or your clients to verify the status of supervisory personnel
  
  "In Date" or "Out of Date"

- The process is very simple ...
Welcome to IMCA

We are the International Marine Contractors Association.

Our mission is to improve performance in the marine contracting industry.
Welcome to IMCA

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Verification Portal

- Please make all your personnel departments aware of the new feature.

Where next?
IMCA is now looking to expand the Verification Portal to include the following:
- IMCA Diver Medic Certificates
- IMCA Trainee Air Diving Supervisor Certificates (TADS)
- IMCA Trainee Bell Diving supervisor Certificates (TBDS)
- IMCA Assistance Life Support Technician (ALST)
Improving performance in the marine contracting industry