

Information Pack: **Competence Assurance & Assessment** *Introduction for Experienced Freelance Personnel*

Introduction

I have been asked to write this to assist in introducing this subject to you. I am pleased to do so and hope that we can work together for your benefit and the benefit of our industry.

The requirement for demonstration of competence is becoming more common every day. Some clients demand it, QA systems and various regulations require it, legal considerations make it more and more necessary and you tell us that you want to know that your colleagues, who work alongside you, are competent too. In due course it will become impossible to work offshore without demonstrating competence, e.g. by holding a record of competence/logbook, in the same way as medicals, offshore safety and survival certificates are pre-requisites today.

IMCA is the international trade association for offshore, marine and underwater engineering companies. With a membership of about 250 companies in over 35 countries we have a significant voice around the world in the offshore scene, especially regarding safety and efficiency – in other words, good practice. This is achieved through good communication and sharing ideas, ambitions and practice amongst our members. IMCA is pleased to count many agencies amongst our membership.

IMCA's competence assurance and assessment guidance was launched in 1999 to provide a framework for our contractor members to demonstrate the competence of their personnel to clients and regulators. Our objectives include 'self regulation' as this is much better than trying to respond to lots of different requirements developed by each oil company. The competence framework was developed by IMCA's Training, Certification & Personnel Competence (TCPC) Core Committee.

It has been well received by clients and contractors and continues to develop to serve our industry. The roll-out amongst contractors is well underway and it is now time to include **you** – the freelance personnel that form a vital part of our industry.

The onus is on the personnel agencies to develop a system and to implement it with you. IMCA and its contractor members have offered their framework for experienced freelance personnel as a guide. But please note any schemes are the property of the companies, not IMCA itself, and it remains the case that IMCA will not be issuing IMCA competence certificates.

Your agent is now providing you with a pack of information with this letter and will explain to you the actions which you need to take. These will run in parallel with actions for you at the agency and the contractor's worksites. Together this should provide you with initial and on-going competence records. The IMCA members have agreed to recognise the competence of agency personnel who have followed this route. This includes recognising individuals assessed by other contractors and also recognising the experience gained along the way which may have been witnessed by other employers. At the same time, the IMCA members have agreed to protect your privacy rights, as they must, according to data protection legislation.

So, I believe this will provide a robust system which will benefit you, your colleagues, your agents, their employers and the oil company clients – in fact benefit us all.

Thank you for your co-operation in this matter. You can see more about IMCA at www.imca-int.com, where there is also a series of FAQs on competence. If there is anything I can help with, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hugh Williams".

Hugh Williams
Chief Executive

Evidence

Freelance personnel need to assemble a portfolio of evidence of experience and assessments. This section defines the documents referred to and provides an overview of the types of documentation you require and how to obtain them.

Included with this pack are pages relating to the different safety-critical positions covered by the IMCA guidance on competence assurance and assessment, which provide the detailed information on how this evidence can be provided.

All evidence produced should be only that which the site supervisor would allow to be used without breach of confidentiality of the company or project. This is particularly important, for example, in respect of confidential survey reports.

Competence Appraisal Forms

This form is an appraisal of the person's competence and may be completed by one appraiser, or several different appraisers may be used to comment on each section.

Assessors may be any supervisor or manager with the necessary knowledge and experience to apply the criteria in a fair and consistent manner. As part of its scheme, every IMCA company should identify its own assessors and train them where required. Further guidance on training of assessors is available in publication IMCA C 007 – *Guidance on Assessor Training*.

The appraiser must print his name, sign and date the relevant box on the right hand side of the form.

For the task "Lead by example and coach other personnel in general safety awareness", the following paragraph is a typically good appraisal comment:

"Bill consistently demonstrates good working practices by ensuring that <company> standards are maintained at all times. He is a good role model and finds it easy to coach other personnel in general safety awareness"

The following is a too short and does not specifically address the task concerned

"Safety is paramount as far as Bill is concerned"

Work Records

Work records are copies of forms, documents, logs or other paperwork generated during the course of the candidates work.

The copying of any work records for inclusion in a candidate's portfolio must be approved by the relevant company site supervisor or onshore project manager.

All work records must clearly show the involvement of the candidate, for example, the candidate's name must appear in the team member's list on a dive log that is being presented.

All work records presented as evidence must be dated, signed by the candidate and countersigned by a responsible witness to authenticate the record as being the work of the candidate. The witness should state his name, job title and company.

All work records presented must have been created within the last three years.

Witness Testimonies

Witness testimonies are used to record a specific event(s) which have been observed by a work colleague and relate to the candidate's competence. Witnesses may be any supervisor or manager with the necessary knowledge and experience to comment on the task being performed.

The witness statement must address:

WHO (names) was involved

WHAT (equipment , processes) were being used

WHERE (location) the task was being conducted

WHEN (date) the task was conducted

Candidate's Name:	Joe Bloggs	Witness's Name:	John Smith
Witness's Company:	Other Offshore	Witness's Job:	Supervisor
Date(s) of Observation:	1/1/2000		

Give a full description of the observations made and state your Company and position:

<p>Description: PT Grade I: maintaining a safe working environment for self and others.</p> <p>A good example, which describes the event and the specific action of the candidate: During a re-termination of Hercules 5 main lift umbilical Joe demonstrated his general safety awareness by ensuring that a barrier was erected around the work area during lifting and grinding operations. Joe wore the correct PPE during the work, as described in the TRA. Joe maintained effective communication with his colleagues during the work and followed his supervisor's instructions.</p> <p>A poor example which does not relate to a specific action of the candidate Joe always maintains a safe working environment</p>

Witness's Signature:		Date:	
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Essential Knowledge

Answers to each of the essential knowledge questions must be provided, either hand written or typed answers will be acceptable.

The question and answer sheets provided should be used, additional sheets may be added for answers requiring more space.

All sheets must be signed and dated by the candidate.

Assessment

Once the candidate has gathered all of the evidence required they should present to their agent who will in turn pass the evidence to the most relevant contracting company for assessment.

The contracting company will appoint a trained assessor to review all of the evidence gathered and make an assessment decision of either competent or not yet competent. IMCA companies should identify their own assessors and train them where required. Further guidance on training is available in publication IMCA C 007 – *Guidance on Assessor Training*.

The assessment decision will be recorded on the Candidate Achievement Record which will be returned, along with the evidence, to the agent. The contracting company will not retain any of the evidence presented

If the candidate is deemed to be not yet competent in certain areas then the assessor will provide feedback to the candidate with advice to address the problem with their evidence. Once the candidate has addressed any problems with the portfolio they should re-submit the portfolio to their agent.

All candidates have the right to appeal against an assessor's decision. This appeal should be sent, in writing, to the candidates agent who will liaise with the relevant contracting company.

A panel reporting to the IMCA Training, Certification & Personnel Competence (TCPC) Core Committee could provide a review service to assist where necessary.