

EMERGENCY TOWING - GUIDELINES FOR CONTRACTING PARTIES

28.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out operating guidelines and general procedures which could be considered by those Contracting Parties which have implemented or are considering the implementation of state-funded Emergency Towing Vessels (ETVs).

These guidelines do not supersede, contradict or in any way interfere with individual Contracting Parties' own operating instructions and procedures.

The primary task of an ETV is to remove the threat of significant pollution.

28.2 Suggested Secondary Roles

Secondary roles of an ETV may be defined and delegated by individual Contracting Parties and may include all or some of the following responsibilities.

- a) Counter Pollution
- b) Search and Rescue
- c) Guardship / Detection and warning of drifting objects (e.g. Containers)
- d) Surveillance and TSS Identification
- e) Customs/Police/Fishing/Law Enforcement/Military
- f) Assistance to other Governmental maritime authorities
- g) Hydrographic surveying
- h) Fire fighting

Examples of the above categories are given in paragraphs 11 - 19

28.3 Availability

The Contracting Parties' individual needs and policies will define ETV availability. For various reasons Contracting Parties should consider the possibility of using ETVs on alternative tasks. When doing so, the ETV managers should ensure that this does not compromise the primary task.

For chartered ETVs, Contracting Parties should consider ensuring the availability of replacement vessels in case of hire.

28.4 Positioning of ETVs

Risk assessments are recommended to support decisions on geographical positioning, operating area and capabilities of ETVs. Risk assessments should as a minimum include:

- traffic density
- navigational dangers
- prevailing meteorological conditions
- possible joint arrangements
- off-shore installations/platforms
- environmentally sensitive areas
- vessel type

28.5 Capability and Design

Contracting Parties should give high consideration to their requirements for capability and design of ETVs. The following factors should as a minimum be considered:

- on-board equipment
- arrangements to include salvage expertise
- manoeuvrability under bad weather conditions
- bollard pull
- draft restrictions
- configuration
- protective arrangements
- navigation, positioning and communication equipment
- regular training, exercises (offshore, simulator)
- expertise and number of crew (sufficient for boarding operations)

An ETV should be capable of fulfilling the task of an OSC Vessel during emergency towing, counter-pollution in addition to Search and Rescue operations. Other considerations may include whether the vessel should be time-chartered, leased or owned /operated by Contracting Parties. The training of the crew is also an important factor for the vessels' capability for successful ETV operations.

28.6 Command and Control

Contracting Parties, where necessary, will make their own administrative and operational arrangements for management of ETVs. Consideration for these tasks should include:

- a) Ensuring agreements/contractual arrangements are met including any operational and financial arrangements with regard to contracted ETV tasks
- b) Ensuring arrangements for training/exercises/operations are undertaken
- c) Ensuring close liaison between owners/charterers/operators is maintained
- d) Ensuring operational instructions are followed by the ETV and the designated controlling station/authority.

28.7 Operational Control

One national centre (e.g. MRCC) or competent authority should have operational control particularly where direct communications are available. If an ETV moves into the area of responsibility of an adjacent control centre, a formal handover of operational control should be considered.

28.8 ETV Utilisation

Contracting Parties considering to adopt and use ETVs may consider appropriate operating parameters and procedures. Consideration should be given to situations where:

- a) The Master of a vessel in need of assistance requests assistance or
- b) The competent authority of the Contracting Parties considers a vessel to be in a state of need of assistance poses a threat of significant pollution or risk of life.

The decision to despatch an ETV is dependent, inter alia, upon distance, weather, urgency and availability of other vessels (tugs).

The legal basis for rendering assistance or imposing ETV service on the disabled vessel should be clearly described and in most Contracting Parties this will be based on the International Intervention Convention (Brussels 1969).

28.9 Commercial or Salvage Considerations

It is the prerogative of Contracting Parties to decide whether any chartered ETV should be allowed to undertake commercial or salvage work. Any agreement to undertake such work should be stated explicitly to all participants. On each occasion an appropriate risk assessment should be carried out.

28.10 Secondary Roles

Normally, the possible secondary roles of ETVs will be subject to its prime requirement and qualification of crew as laid down by the competent authority. The status of the ETV should be stated explicitly to all participants at all times.

Consideration should be given to the additional tasks or roles listed below.

28.11 Counter Pollution

Contracting Parties' contingency arrangements may include instruction on the use of ETVs in pollution or potential pollution incidents where appropriate.

28.12 Search and Rescue

An ETV on occasions can provide an excellent resource for Search and Rescue duties in addition to any formally established facilities, particularly to undertake 'On Scene Commander' responsibilities.

28.13 Guard vessel tasks

Where special operations are being undertaken, i.e. cable laying, survey work, it is normally the responsibility of the contractor undertaking this work to provide appropriate guard vessels. This task should not normally be a nominated function of the chartered ETVs.

However, where an accident has constituted danger to navigation or hazard to shipping, i.e. an unmarked wreck, urgent consideration should be given to using contract ETVs as guard vessels to ensure that a promulgated Danger Zone is given proper attention by shipping.

28.14 Traffic Survey and Surveillance Tasks

The ETVs may occasionally be required to identify and record traffic density levels in appropriate areas, defined by the Contracting Party.

28.15 Law Enforcement (Customs, Police, Military, etc)

Contracting Parties will define their own requirements or agree on joint international requirements.

28.16 Assistance to other Government Departments

Contracting Parties may wish to defray costs of operating an ETV by using the vessel for other tasks that can be conveniently undertaken by an ETV. These duties could include maritime and hydrographic research, environmental studies, navigational training, ice breaking, fishery inspection etc.

28.17 Communications

Where ETV(s) are utilised, the method of communicating with any ETV is a matter for the controlling state. In addition to the appropriate carriage requirement relevant to that vessel, considerations should include Marine VHF and appropriate secure means of transmitting data. Clear unambiguous instructions for operational requirements should be agreed between the controlling station and the vessel, including a clear "tasking" requirement. An example of such a tasking format, also available in hard copy, is attached at Appendix 1. As with any vessel which may operate in hazardous conditions consideration to the establishment of a "reporting" regime should be made. A list of questions at first contact by the ETV with the vessel in distress should be agreed on (a draft list can be supplied).

28.18 Training

The ETVs and crews should be experienced in Emergency Towing procedures, and hold appropriate language competencies.

Simulation training combined with equipment exercises and exchange of experiences at workshops and seminars should be considered to ensure that the navigators and the maritime crew are prepared for ETV operations. The Contracting States should ensure that exercises with neighbouring States, where appropriate, are held on an opportunity basis. Consideration should be given to a range of training activities and requirements that may include helicopter operations, emergency towing procedures with other vessels, deployment of Counter Pollution equipment and SAR operations.

Training at off-shore exercises should include different types of vessels (e.g. tanker, container vessel, passenger/ Ro-Ro- vessel/ferry). Reports on exercises or real operations should be communicated within all partners.

28.19 Fire fighting

Emergency towing capacity could be equipped with fire fighting monitors in order to assist the ship crew or the salvage company in controlling a fire on board a passenger liner or ferryboat. A ship on fire is not only a potential dangerous area for inexperienced crew and passengers, but as a result of the fire there could be threat to the marine environment.

Appendix 1

ETV TASKING FORMAT

Contract Tug Tasking Report No/06/07 (V/L name SITREP No)

Contract Tug (N A M E) is to: Standby*/Proceed*

at: Full*/Economical*speed

1. Reason for tasking (prevention of pollution/SAR/CNIS/other - designate)

2. Vessel details (where available)

Name..... Callsign

POR Flag..... POB.....

Draught Cargo Quantity

Type of vessel GRT

Position Latitude Longitude.....

Bearing/Distance.....

Owners/Agents.....

Contact No.....

Assistance required

WX on Scene

WX FX (sea area)

Communications: VHF Channel MF Channel

Phone Fax.....

Inmarsat

3. Other co-operating units

.....

.....

4. Incident start time Time ETV alerted

Times of:

- a. Tasking
- b. Proceeded
- c. On Scene
- d. Time-off prime contract
- e. Tow Connected
- f. Commenced Tow
- g. Arrival at Destination
- Specify Destination
- h. Off Task
- i. Returned
- j. Time back on prime Contract

5. Summary of Incident/Remarks:

Appendix 2**EMERGENCY TOWING VESSELS**

The following Contracting Parties operate/are considering state funded Emergency Towing Vessels:

Country	ETVs
United Kingdom	Anglian Monarch Anglian Sovereign Anglian Prince Anglian Princess
Netherlands	Mellum, Neuwerk, Oceanic
Germany	Mv. "Waker" ¹
France	
Norway	KV Chieftain, KV Harstad, MV Beta
Sweden	

¹ The Netherlands and Germany have entered into a MOU on ETV that foresees that in the area north of the Wadden Islands there will always be one tug on station.
