

# Swire Marine training centre



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In November 2006, Swire Pacific Offshore (SPO) established its integrated training centre, Swire Marine Training Centre (SMTTC) in Singapore. The rationale behind this decision was to enhance its ability to recruit, train and retain seafaring staff in a competitive manpower supply market.

## Formation of SMTTC and its rationale

SMTTC was officially opened in March 2007 by then Minister of State for Finance and Transport of Singapore, Mrs Lim Hwee Hua. The proximity of the training centre to SPO's head office in Singapore allows senior management to hold regular dialogue sessions with the seafaring personnel. This communication is vital as SPO continues to expand its fleet and recruit new staff, in particular, seafaring staff. In 2010, SPO purchased the building which houses SMTTC. This strategic move bore testimony to SPO's strong commitment to develop the training ability of SMTTC in Singapore.

Since its inception, consistent efforts have been made to develop and expand its capabilities and infrastructure. Today, SMTTC houses 30-seat auditorium, two conference rooms, five training classrooms, two fully equipped simulator bridges complete with DP 2 systems, one engine control room and associated engine-room space, eight desktop engine room simulators, 10 desktop bridge simulators, nine desktop DP simulators as well as a mess room with internet facilities.

## Focusing on safety and excellence in marine services

SPO believes in operating our business safely, professionally, responsibly and sustainably. SMTTC's primary role is to provide training for internal staff, offering ongoing professional development to SPO personnel. As the focal point for marine training, SMTTC conducts training courses in numerous disciplines from Anchor Handling, Dynamic Positioning to Electrical and Control Engineering and Safety Management amongst others. To facilitate these training programmes, SMTTC is

well-equipped with a world-class, purpose-built simulator facility that is unique to SPO.

SMTTC has become a flagship training hub for SPO. One important success factor of SMTTC lies in the wealth of operational experience of the instructors, many of whom have been with the company for more than 25 years and are highly knowledgeable and well-regarded in the industry. SMTTC also takes a proactive approach to gather feedback from participants, review internal and industry incidents so as to improve the course content. Relevant case studies are also incorporated into the training materials to reinforce safety awareness.

## Training & staff development

The initial training schedule for 2007 was based on 200 internal attendees in the first year. Within five years, in 2012, SMTTC has achieved an exponential growth of over 700%, with 1,400 attendees, of whom almost 600 are external / third parties.

Capacity, throughput and the variety of courses have grown steadily over the years. From June 2007 till December 2012, SMTTC has conducted a total of 367 four and five-day courses and trained 2,982 officers.

The number of courses offered at SMTTC has also increased, from one Safety Management course in 2007 to 14 courses in 2012. In 2013, SMTTC is scheduled to conduct training for 43 weeks, offering 121 courses covering 15 subjects and is expected to have an attendance of 965 officers. In fact, there are as many as five courses that concurrently run, with an average weekly attendance of 22 officers.





Typically, a junior officer will attend a three-week training and induction programme at SMTC upon joining the company. This will be followed by ongoing specialised training/evaluation courses every three to four years throughout his career with SPO. In the long term, we hope to instil a strong sense of belonging and enhance staff retention.

The Standard and Advanced Safety Management courses provide opportunities for participating officers and instructors to network and interact. It also serves as an ideal platform for the senior management of SPO to meet the middle and junior officers and highlight key corporate values, such as the importance of teamwork and safety in the offshore industry. Guest speakers are also invited to share their expertise during these courses.

SPO employs staff from 49 different nationalities, and places great emphasis on inclusion and diversity. SMTC plays a crucial role in ensuring that awareness and benefits of national, cultural and religious differences are actively discussed, understood and embraced by participants. In fact, new seafaring staff from as far as Norway have been sent to Singapore to attend the safety management training course conducted in SMTC as part of their induction into the company.

#### **Serving our key stakeholders and clients**

Beyond internal training, SMTC also serves the maritime community at large, in particular, the valued stakeholders and clients of SPO. A number of courses have been provided to external partners on a request basis. These include DP Awareness courses for dive supervisors and surveyors through local entities such as KB Associates and ABS, as well as Anchor Handling courses for Total Indonesia and Gulfmark SE Asia.

#### **Other notable achievements**

- SMTC has adopted Competence Assurance for all courses in advance of regulatory requirements. This includes simulator-based operational assessments for all officers prior to promotion to Master or Chief Engineer.
- SMTC is the only MCA accredited Marlins English testing facility in Singapore.
- SMTC actively engages in knowledge sharing with our stakeholder communities. Take for instance, SPO has an ongoing partnership with the Regional Maritime University (RMU) in Accra, Ghana, whereby one of the SMTC instructors will go to Ghana to share his expertise and raise awareness on safety issues in the offshore industry. SPO also provides sponsorship for a deck and an engineering instructor from Ghana to spend one month in Singapore to observe the courses conducted in SMTC and explore ways in which SPO can assist the university.
- SMTC has also reviewed and enhanced Back Deck Safety Training Courses for our Junior Officers and Crew. This course is currently a 5-day programme, completed at Consolidated Training Systems Inc. Philippines.

#### **SPO and its continuous efforts to strive for excellence**

Headquartered in Singapore since 1975, Swire Pacific Offshore operates a diverse fleet of more than 80 offshore support vessels, including anchor handling tug supply vessels, platform supply vessels, ice-breaking supply vessels, anchor handling tugs, seismic survey vessels, wind-farm installation vessels, accommodation vessels and multi-purpose offshore vessels.

Though the cost of operating SMTC is by no means meagre, the establishment of the training centre exemplifies SPO's strong focus on safety. With an annual operating budget of SGD10.5 million, SMTC is an important investment that SPO has pledged to strive for excellence in safety, quality and professionalism on board our vessels and in the marine services we offer.

