

2017 Marine Firefighting Symposium

Final Report

Report prepared by Jeff Johnson

On behalf of

Resolve Marine Group

May, 2017

PWSRCAC Contract #8050.17.01

The opinions expressed in this PWSRCAC-commissioned report are not necessarily those of PWSRCAC.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	Page 3
Acknowledgements	Page 5
Considerations for Future Symposiums	Page 7
Recommendations to Participants	Page 8
Evaluation comments	Page 9
Conclusion	Page 12
Photographs	Page 14

Executive Summary

Two years have passed since the last MFF symposium held in Valdez. It was there that the idea of moving the symposium to Homer was first suggested and the idea had merit to the instructors. We floated this idea with members of the PWSRCAC and when Resolve Maritime Academy submitted our proposal for the 2017 MFF symposium we suggested it be held in Homer. Our proposal was accepted and we began work. Having the symposium outside of Valdez is not a new concept as we held the 2013 MFF symposium in Seward. The different locations were met with appreciation from many of the attendees. We also received a suggestion through the evaluation forms from 2015 that we consider holding the symposium over a weekend so that more volunteer firefighters could attend as they have other jobs that usually keep them busy during the week. As a trial we did hold the symposium on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Most of the attendees were volunteers and appreciated the move. We decided on another change that we felt addressed some comments from 2015. We designed a two track training agenda where we had an Operations track and a Command track. This too is not a new concept as we've done this in previous symposia. We provided the Operations track training commensurate with those who would be performing tasks at a marine incident and a Command track for those who would be determining strategies. The majority attended the Operations track and only a handful attended the Command track which is exactly as it should be.

Throughout the planning process we received nothing but cooperation from everyone involved. We were able to use Homer's harbor for whatever we needed and we were able to secure more vessels than we were able to utilize. The hotel and catering staff were agreeable to our needs and went out of their way to see that we were happy.

We received about 60 initial registrations but the actual attendee count was around 40 with some folks not able to attend all three days. We had a mix of firefighters and industry attending and we were able to give everyone something of value. Our planned agenda was followed without having to make any major adjustments. The agenda can be found in **Appendix A**.

This training symposium has always been difficult to plan for due to a number of reasons and this year's symposium was no different. We never know how many attendees we will actually have until the first day of training. There is no real solution for this so we plan for many contingencies. We expected 60+ attendees but had approximately 40 in attendance. It's been our experience that if 60 registered we had to plan for more as no one would be turned away. It's also difficult to plan our agenda as we have attendees from Anchorage to Elim and Unalaska, from attendees with a lot a marine background to others with none at all. We found a balance that offers something for everyone attending. To do this we make slight adjustments to the curriculum once we get a feel for the level of attendee's abilities.

By moving the symposium to Homer we knew we would likely not have a ship to train with. Even though we made efforts to secure different ships those efforts didn't pay off so we continued to plan for using the biggest vessels we could find in the harbor. We were successful in securing a number of vessels including the USCG vessel "Hickory". We were able to design exercises around the vessels we could use

and it turned out well. The first day and half was classroom training and the second day and half was filled with field exercises. Although the students always prefer the exercises, the training is a necessary prerequisite.

All of the planning paid off once again as we had very few adjustments or last minute changes. Personnel, equipment and refreshments were where they were supposed to be when they were supposed to be there. Transportation, catering, hotels and equipment posed no real issues for us, even the weather was outstanding. You can count the 2017 Marine Firefighting Symposium as another success.

Once again, the symposium concluded with the administration of the state exam for “Dockside Marine Awareness”. We started including this at the symposium in Seward in 2013 and continued to offer this opportunity in Valdez in 2015 and now Homer in 2017.

Acknowledgements

As always, this symposium would not be what it is without the support of many. Some provided financial support while others provided in kind services. Regardless, all support is crucial to the success of this event and is very much appreciated.

The instructor cadre would like to thank the **Prince William Regional Citizens Advisory Council (PWRCAC)** for their continued sponsorship of the Marine Firefighting Symposium for over 20 years. This is valuable training for the fire service in Alaska. We’d also like to thank the project manager **Alan Sorum** and his team for their diligent planning of all logistical issues. We’d also like to thanks the **Cook Inlet**

Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC). They worked with the PWRCAC as a co-sponsor of the event. 805.431.170501.MFFS.FinalRpt

The **City of Homer** was supportive and the Mayor provided opening remarks. A special acknowledgment needs to go to the **Homer Fire Department** who was willing to support this event. And provided needed equipment and staff. The FD's support is critical and we would like to say thanks. Also, our thanks go to the **Port of Homer** and the harbor masters office and staff. They have been supportive throughout the planning process as well as during the event.

Once again the **Southwest Alaska Pilots Association (SWAPA)** played a big role by providing us access to their pilot boat and captain in the Homer harbor.

Resolve Marine Group/Resolve Maritime Academy and TT Salvage both sent representatives to participate in a number of ways. Aside from sending these representatives Resolve Maritime Academy was the primary contractor for this event and TT Salvage was a financial sponsor. They were also involved in providing the salvors perspective in a marine response and participated in exercises and a special meeting in order to instill the role of the private responder in the minds of the fire department attendees.

Support Vessels of Alaska and specifically Capt. Mastolier for allowing us to use the vessels "Qualifier 105" and "Woldstad". These vessels were used on both Saturday and Sunday including our final exercise involving all participants.

Harley Marine Services for agreeing to allow us the use of the tug “Bob Franco”. Although we didn’t use the vessel during the event it was available if we needed to.

United States Coast Guard who sent a representative from MSU Valdez to speak about the salvage and marine firefighting regulation and to the crew of the “Hickory” who stepped up and assisted with one of the field exercises.

Kachemak Emergency Services who provided support by offering the use of their ladder truck and cache of radios.

In addition to those already mentioned above we want to also acknowledge the following companies for their support as sponsors: **Cook Inlet Tug & Barge, ConocoPhillips Polar Tankers, Eagle Enterprises Safety Solutions and Edison Chouest Offshore.**

Considerations for Future Symposiums

As the State of Alaska moves towards certification to the National Fire Protection Association’s (NFPA) standard for “Marine Firefighting for Land-Based Firefighters”, referred to as NFPA 1005, the PWSRCAC should consider offering this certification at a future symposium. Typically, this training requires 40 hours to complete which would require the symposium to be extended to 5 days. The process for certifying to NFPA 1005 is up to the State of Alaska and, until the state comes out with the requirements, we can only make assumptions. Of course, a three day symposium has always provided valuable training and a state certification for “Dockside Awareness”. It has been suggested, and has merit, to have more focused training on fewer topics but more in depth. The goal has always been to

provide the most relevant training to all Alaska firefighters. It might be time to look at other options to deliver more advanced training to firefighters who already have a basic understanding of marine response.

Recommendations to Participants

We continue to urge all agencies to seek out partnerships both public and private that will enhance their ability to respond to an incident should one occur in their jurisdiction. As discussed at the symposium, the best way to succeed in the mitigation of a large scale marine incident is to leverage all available resources and that includes all private resources.

It has been our goal to provide relevant training and to show what can and cannot be done with limited resources. Even if you don't have the manpower or other resources to initiate a fire attack, there are things that can be done that can set up the incident for success. If all you can do is assess the situation then you have made progress. You must balance risk with benefit and act accordingly.

As always, each instructor has committed to any follow up questions you may have. Please contact one of us should you find yourself in a situation where you need additional information or have a question that we may be able to answer for you. Our contact information is below. Finally, I want to thank each of you for giving your time to attend the 2017 MFF Symposium. Your participation and feedback helps to validate the need for this type of training.

Jeff Johnson jjohnson@resolvemarine.com

John Taylor vesselfire@outlook.com

John Lewis seafiretrainingltd@gmail.com

805.431.170501.MFFSFinalRpt

Ron Raschio rkiraschio@yahoo.com

Don Ryan don_j_ryan@hotmail.com

Evaluation comments

This year, as in 2015 we chose to utilize a single evaluation form for the entire event rather than an evaluation for each session. We did this because in the past it was burdensome for those attending to fill out a long evaluation multiple times each day. We also felt we could gather appropriate information with a well crafted evaluation form and we did manage to do this. Below is the evaluation we provided to each attendee.

Marine Fire Fighting for Land-based Fire Fighters

Department (optional): _____ Date: _____

Student name (optional): _____

Was the course content relevant to your needs? Yes/No

Comments: _____

The pace of the course was: Too slow

Too fast

About right

805.431.170501.MFFSFinalRpt

The instructor responded to specific needs of students. Yes/No

Comments: _____

The following topics should be added.

Comments: _____

The following topics should be deleted.

Comments: _____

The best part of the course was _____

Suggestions for future courses:

We had over 60 registrations and approximately 30 attendees but only 17 evaluations were returned. Below are a few examples of responses which should provide a sense of how the training was received. You can find all the evaluations in their entirety in a separate attachment.

Was the course content relevant to your needs?

“YES” was marked on 100% of the evaluations with comments like “Learned a lot”, “Enjoyed John Lewis”, “This provided all new information for me”, “Thank you for making this course relevant to our port” and “Very relevant topics”.

The pace of the course was: too slow, too fast or about right.

With 14 response stating “about right” and 2 stating “too slow” and 1 stating “too fast” makes me think the pace was perfect. We had a group of firefighters with varying degrees of training on the subject and it’s difficult to keep everyone engaged but the answers to this question indicate we manage to do it.

The instructor responded to specific needs of the students.

The response to this question was 100% “yes” but with one qualifier and comments like “Good about proactively soliciting questions”, “instructors were very engaging and praised team members”, “Great knowledge” and “Instructors were very adaptable”. The qualifier was with regards to the final exercise where the commenter thought the command portion didn’t offer understandable direction.

The following topics should be added.

We received only a few responses to this question. “More vessel firefighting techniques”, “Be interesting to learn about removing unconscious body from boat” and “An actual ship”.

The following topics should be deleted.

There were no direct comments to this question.

The best part of the course was...

There was a wide range of responses covering most of what was provided. Here are a few examples: “the hands on”, “Multi-agency training”, “case studies”, “Practical full exercise combined with pre-planning vessel tour the day before”, “Classroom”, “Meeting other fire departments”, “Touring the vessels”, “Command track had good info for multi-agency work”, “Interactions with instructors” and “Hearing the instructors experience on the field throughout”.

Suggestions for future courses:

There were few suggestions for future courses and the comments were more towards this event and specific topics. The suggestions we did receive were “More hands on”, “More time”, “Longer course”, “More H2O for hydration”, “Man overboard”, and “Live fire”.

Conclusion

The 2017 Marine Firefighting Symposium, by all measures, was a success. Like with all previous symposia, we faced difficult challenges in planning for this event. We can never know what vessels will be available for us to use until just a day or two before we start and in some cases not until the day of the

training. We hope for the best and plan for the alternative. Although our efforts to secure a ship this year didn't come to fruition, we did have tremendous response from vessels in the harbor and even had to turn down offers as we just had too many. It's best to plan for not having a ship to train with and make adjustments if one becomes available as the availability of a ship is becoming more difficult each year. This was our approach this year and we planned to deliver training and exercises that would be relevant to both ship fires and small vessel fires including marinas and made sure we had vessels available for our use for exercise and walk through.

Aside from training this symposium provides the opportunity for attendees to work with and learn from other firefighters across the state. Those attending voiced their appreciation for this and included this as a highlight of the event.

On behalf of all the instructors, I would like to thank the PWSRCAC for their continued support for this essential training for the fire service in the State of Alaska. While talking with some of the attendees I heard a story told by a firefighter from one of the departments in attendance. He said that when he asked about where he could get shipboard firefighting training he was told about the symposiums provided by the PWSRCAC, which guided him to this year's symposium. I am proud to be associated with this event.

Pictures





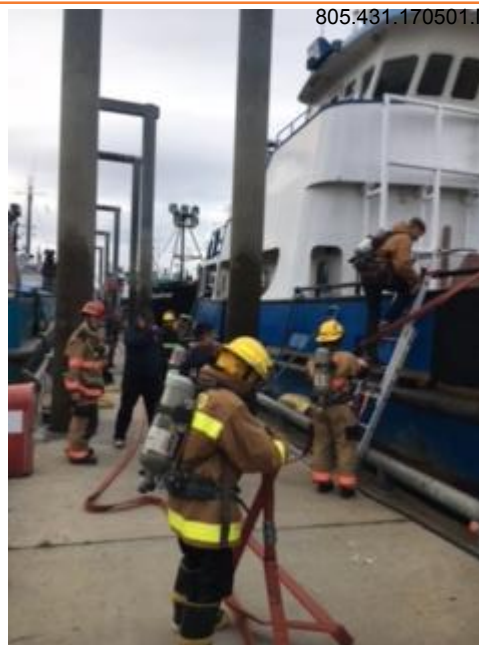
Classroom



805.431.170501.MFFSFinalRpt

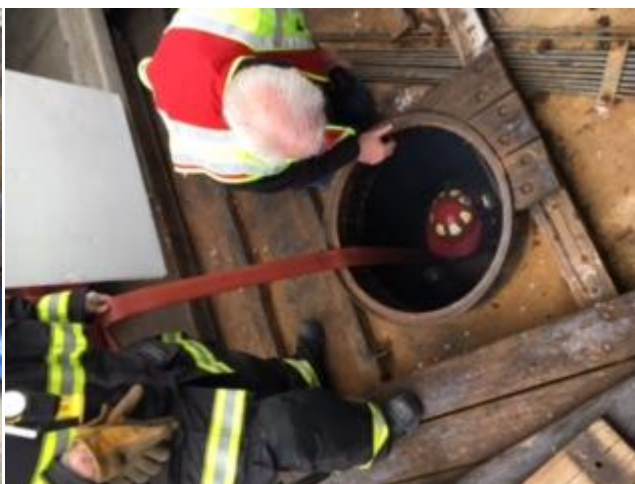


Initial hose lay during final exercise



805.431.170501.MFFSFinalRpt

Firefighters utilizing the secondary means of access and egress as taught in the classroom.



Firefighter going below deck to perform a search and rescue.

Appendix A

Operations

Friday

1300-1330 - Introduction/information - All
1330-1430 - Cruise ship/Ferry
1430-1700 - Tank Farm
1700-1800 - Dinner (TT Salvage Case History)
1800-2100 - Basic MFF (Awareness)

Saturday

0800-1200 - Marina Firefighting (Pilot Boat)
1200-1300 - Lunch
1300-1700 - Field Exercises
1) Access - Ladder Truck (Homer FD Prop)
2) Plans and Familiarization (Hickory)
3) Vessel walk thru (Woldstad/Qualifier)
4) Harbor Tug (Dockside)

Sunday

0800-1100 - Joint Exercise - Marina/Woldstad
1100-1200 - Dockside Awareness test (Classroom)

Command

Friday

1300-1330 - Introduction/information - All
1330-1530 - First in engine company actions
1530-1700 - LNG/LPG
1700-1800 - Dinner (TT Salvage Case History)
1800-2100 - Working with the Master/owner-operator and Interrelationships between the terminal/ship/Fire Service

Saturday

0800-1200 - Politics of a Marine Incident
1200-1300 - Lunch
1300-1330 - USCG brief on OPA Regulations
1330-1500 - Open discussion with SMFF Providers
1500-1700 - Free To Attend Field Exercises

Sunday

0800-1100 - Joint Exercise - Marina/Woldstad
1100-1200 - Dockside Awareness test (Classroom)