

20 April 2010

Grounded helicopters lead to focus on marine alternatives

Expert in marine personnel transfer Reflex Marine has experienced a significant upturn in activity following the grounding of several helicopter flights to North Sea oil and gas platforms in the wake of the Iceland volcano.

The continuing disruption to aviation services in Europe is having a major impact on offshore operators.

Over the past few days, Reflex Marine has received numerous enquiries from operators trying to plan contingencies to move crews by vessel, in order to keep their operations going.

The company, based in Aberdeen and Truro, Cornwall, supplies the Frog and Toro personnel transfer devices, which are used to move people from offshore installations to supply vessels by means of a crane.

Philip Strong, Reflex Marine CEO said: 'We are doing our level best to try to meet this demand, but our limited stock of devices was sent offshore last week on a first-come-first-served basis.

"We are trying to fast-track production to meet this surge in demand. However we have heard from many of our customers who already have Frogs in the North Sea and Norway who are happily moving people using our system."

"We tend to face these surges in demand from time to time, more commonly due to prolonged periods of fog, but never on such a scale as this."

Mr Strong will highlight the issue of marine personnel transfer as a speaker at the North Sea Offshore Cranes & Lifting Conference, which runs from April 27-29 at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre. In a paper entitled "The Growing Role of Marine Personnel Transfer" he will address emergency preparation and in particular evacuation contingencies.

"The current period of aviation shut downs will no doubt lead to reflection across the oil and gas industry, with people asking the question: 'What options do we have for safe and controlled evacuations when helicopters are unable to fly?'. We are expecting a lively and open discussion at next week's session," said Mr Strong

ENDS

Notes to editors

Reflex Marine is dedicated to the transfer of personnel to and from offshore installations and vessels. It aims to set new standards and expectations for the industry, changing the perspective of crew transfer from being seen as an inherently

high risk activity, to being accepted as a manageable activity that can be performed safely and cost effectively. After a comprehensive risk review with industry operators and rigorous testing and verification, Reflex Marine launched in 1995 a marine transfer capsule, called the Frog. This transfer capsule addresses all the key risks associated with crane based personnel transfer. However, the company sees its role going beyond the technicalities of the product. Its objective is to provide comprehensive solutions to heighten safety awareness and to protect the industry's personnel. To find out more, visit www.reflexmarine.com

Media contact

Jordan Harkins at Fifth Ring Integrated Corporate Communications on +44 (0) 1224 628069 (direct),

+44 (0) 1224 626288 (main office), or jordan@fifthring.com