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Inland Marine safety training business expands in the Midlands

Birmingham & Midland Marine Services have been providing a wide portfolio of services to the Civil Engineering, Rail, Utilities, Environmental, and Ecology sectors, working in an open water environment since 2013, becoming a Limited Company in 2020 during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Initially a 'sole trader' concern, the company now has an established Board of Directors, a bank of specialist instructors and operators, a fleet of vessels ranging from workboats to fast rescue craft, all-wheel drive vehicles for access and emergency response and a vast range of aquatic PPE and rescue equipment for both training and safety / rescue cover purposes.

As Corporate Partners of the 'Institute of Search and Technical Rescue' and a fully audited and accredited training provider for Outreach Rescue, the Institute of Search and Technical Rescue (InSTR), the Maritime and Coast Guard Agency and the Royal Yachting Association, the company's systems and facilities are very thoroughly inspected annually.

Trainers and Instructors hail predominantly from Military, Lowland Rescue and Fire & Rescue Service backgrounds.

With experience supporting commercial projects for the likes of High Speed Two (HS2) and National Grid, services available include.

- Occupational Water Safety & Rescue Training
- Procurement, Project & Safety Management
- Commercial, Support, Safety & Rescue Vessel Services
- Boat Coxswain & Crew Training – Workboat, Powerboat & Safety /Rescue boat

Companies and organisations working on, beside or above open water are faced with a multitude of logistical complications; in fact, a 'minefield'; ranging from obtaining workboats, floating welfare vessels, pontoons, safety boats, licences, permissions, marine risk assessments, obtaining lifejackets and rescue equipment, plus sourcing the appropriate training specific to the environment in which they will be operating.

Further complications can include being required to provide specialist emergency first aid support, including the potential for drowning or cold-water shock, at locations often-inhospitable due to their waterside locations, which are seldom easily accessible by ambulance

Training requirements can be confusing for Human Resources, Health & Safety and Procurement Managers: The HSE, DEFRA and the CDM Regulations 2015 all have a requirement for training and



the levels of training required also change depending upon the location of the watercourse, the specific environment and the expected level of water contact those personnel are faced with.

Potentially having to contract a specialist safety team to cover the water margins is a further complication; to what level should the rescue teams be trained? with what equipment, licences, and insurances?

Does this sound like a stressful day at the office? **In steps Birmingham & Midland Marine Services Ltd.**

As a small yet niche business servicing the civil engineering, construction, rail, utilities, maintenance environmental & ecology sectors, supporting & training the 'Search & Rescue' sector, clients are assured of a one-stop-shop approach to having the project supported from the initial tendering process to completion.

Registered with Achilles on the National Procurement Framework, the Commercial Boat Operators Association, the Inland Waterways Association and British Marine, approved trainers to the Canal & River Trust and the Environment Agency, the companies' credentials are assured.

Procurement and provision of specialist floating equipment, access solutions, and safety management systems and training all in one package.

Sector specific training can be advised upon, and accredited courses delivered 'in-house' by our specialist training team. Aquatic PPE and safety / rescue / medical equipment can be procured for clients from our framework of suppliers. Workboat and Rescue boat training a speciality.

Recent courses developed by Birmingham & Midland Marine Services include a bespoke 'Small / Inflatable Craft' course for the Canal & River Trust's Craft Licencing Department and an 'Inland Waters – Rescue Boat Operator' course, that will be going live under the auspices of the Institute of Search and Technical Rescue this autumn, '24.

This new rescue boat course bridges the gap in the safety / rescue boat training sector. Basic Powerboat handling and 'sailing club' type 'RYA Safety Boat' qualifications were not designed to satisfy commercial or industrial safety / rescue vessel role requirements -the DEFRA Module 4) Rescue Boat qualification which is utilised by Fire & Rescue specialists in 'swift-water' and flood environments is 'over-kill' for the requirements of a 'standard' safety / rescue boat crew working in many land-locked counties, hence the development of a far more suitable and accessible training course.

This new RBO course is ideally suited to companies wishing to provide an element of in-house support on the water, derived from the higher-level course yet excluding the fast-flowing water, tidal and coastal considerations. The syllabus includes casualty management, recovery, shallow-water operations, capsized drills and search considerations.

For those companies looking to provide their personnel with relevant First Aid Marine Environment training, encompassing elements such as the protocol for drowning within CPR, crushing, amputations, use of tourniquets, cold water shock, hydrostatic squeeze and vasoconstriction; elements not found in a 'standard' First Aid at Work course, Birmingham & Midland Marine Services host 1, 3 and 5-day courses at both training centres. The higher-level award also covers spinal management and oxygen therapy.

Royal Yachting Association VHF radio and First Aid courses also available at Gailey Wharf Training Centre with our partnering trainers and RYA Diesel Engine Maintenance courses are planned for later in 2024 at our Gailey Wharf Training Centre.



Occupational Water Safety & Rescue courses are, in the main delivered via the Outreach Rescue DEFRA training programme, delivery also possible via the Institute of Search and Technical Rescue. Based upon the DEFRA Flood Rescue Concept of Operations documentation, and commercial river-based courses are based around the Annex 'H' syllabus, satisfying the Environment Agency as well as DEFRA. Basic DEFRA Module 1), Module 2) Water Rescue First Responder and Module 3) Water Rescue One Technician courses also available in 'closed course' format by arrangement.

Maritime and Coast Guard 'Personal Survival and Water Safety' training can be delivered alongside 'Fire Safety' to satisfy the Ancillary course training requirements for Boat Master Licences for operators of Workboats (WB), Passenger boats (+12 passengers - PAX) and Towing and Pushing operations. (TP).

Commercial Boat courses include workboat-oriented RYA Inland Waterways Helmsman Certificate training, commercially oriented RYA Powerboat Level 2, training and bespoke courses for Safety / Rescue Boat Operations.

With the company's primary base being canalside at Gailey Wharf on the Staffs & Worcester Canal, Base-Two at a privately owned stately home with sixty-acre lake and licences and permissions in place for various other venues including National Trust property, our training areas are both diverse and dynamic; in fact one of the regular training venues on the river Trent is owned by the descendants of the inventor of the lifejacket!

Further information can be found on the company website: www.midlandmarine.co.uk and the Management team are always happy to invite potential clients to their Gailey Wharf canalside depot or our second training centre and event location at the Chillington Estate in Staffordshire to discuss their requirements.