

# Q88 introduces HazMat and medical services

**Developer of vessel management software systems for the tanker and drybulk sectors, Q88 has unveiled a global support programme to co-ordinate quick response and expert consultation for chemical spills/incidents and medical emergencies on board ship.**

**K**nown as the Q88 Response Center, the new initiative taps into the resources of the Spill Center, a provider of emergency response communications and incident management services, including environmental, technical and legal expertise.

At the Q88 center, trained personnel monitor telephone calls, dedicated email and web site requests for assistance on a 24/7 basis to gather details, determine the issues and dispatch the right resources.

In cases of major or minor spills or other chemical incidents, the center is able to provide expert advice, resources and contractors to assist with mitigation of the incident and the clean up of the spill.



According to Capt Soren C Ibsen, Vice President Milbros Systems, Q88 Response Center is available to handle any issue related to chemical incidents or environmental spills requiring clean up and reporting to subscribers to

**Capt Soren C Ibsen**, Milbros Onboard.

The center also includes services from Future Care, a medical care management service provider to the maritime and related industries worldwide.

As a result, it combines medical assistance and chemical incident and spill assistance under one response number, making it easier for the Master, QI, or office to request assistance.

Future Care offers medical case management and cost containment services to shipowners and their crews 24/7, both on board ship, at sea, and on land. The company's team includes physicians, nurses and medical case managers experienced in managing seafarers' healthcare, as well as access to preferred medical networks, explained Gordon Cooper, a Future Care spokesman.

The service manages the medical response from the time of incident on board the vessel

through shoreside treatment, repatriation and out-patient care, until the seafarer is fit to return to duty or achieves maximum medical improvement, as deemed necessary.

In short, the Q88 center in co-operation with Future Care, will provide Telemedicine services for on board injuries or illnesses at sea or arrange for monitored shoreside care for a patient.

Future Care's medical auditors review and negotiate all major medical and related charges incurred in the US and in many ports worldwide.

Tom Moses, Spill Center President and founder, observed: "This programme gives ships at sea access to a world of resources that they need after chemical and medical emergencies."

Spill Center resources include advanced communication and geo-location technology and up-to-date listings of national and international environmental regulations, as well as spill-reporting contacts and reporting deadlines.

"The Q88 Response Center gives our Milbros Onboard subscribers a single call center to get help with chemical and medical emergencies while at sea. With this partnership, Milbros Onboard customers can now access expert cargo handling and cleaning, emergency response and medical advice all in one programme. We're extremely excited to be able to offer a programme we felt the industry definitely needed," said Capt Ibsen.

## Feedback positive

Positive feedback has been received from subscribers and some P&I Clubs, who have been introduced to the programme, he claimed.

Explaining why such services were deemed necessary, Capt Ibsen said that while he agreed that oil spill response is quite well covered around the world with existing services, however, if there was a spill or release of a hazardous chemical, he did not think the response organisations were really fully equipped or ready to handle a HazMat release

from a tanker.

"While the chemical tanker industry has been relatively safe and there are not many spills or releases, this new resource could prove invaluable if there is a release," he said.

The Spill Center has a worldwide network of HazMat spill contractors that can be called upon to assist with mitigation and clean-up of an incident. Based on the ship/incident location, the system provides a list of contractors and the distance they are from the incident's location worldwide.

"All ships have a number of chemicals on board that they use in the engine room or on deck for the normal ship operations. If small amounts of these products are spilled on board or drums/containers are leaking, the Spill Center can assist with mitigating the incident and/or provide a list of contractors that could come on board to help with the clean up process," he explained.

As for the medical care on offer, Capt Ibsen also conceded that there were other services available to the maritime industry. However, for some incidents, the first course of action may be to have the patient evacuated from the ship, which requires vessel deviation and the resulting significant expenses to the owner. While this may be the best course of action in some cases, it may not be in others.

"Future Care looks at the whole situation with the intention to get the patient back 'fit for duty' with the best care in the right time frame at the overall lowest cost," he said.

## Free to subscribers

The response center is available to all of Q88's Milbros Onboard subscribers at no additional charge and all the vessels signed up to the service will be entered.

Capt Ibsen explained that if a shipowner were to register for medical and spill services separately the costs could be as much as \$1,000 per ship per year. "This makes a Milbros Onboard subscription a real value," he stressed.

As mentioned above, access to the center's services is provided as part of the Milbros

Onboard subscription free of charge. However, actual calls to the response center or assistance provided by Future Care will incur additional charges.

In addition to providing the expert advice and assistance, the response center will also alert all parties on a notification list for incidents, such as office staff and authorities and also log date and times of all calls and notifications for future reference.

Q88 Response Center, Q88's latest service, adds a new dimension to the Milbros platform, Capt Ibsen said. Already claiming the industry's leading database of over 12,300 chemical and oil cargoes carried on tankers, including cargo handling, cleaning, regulatory, safety and personal protective equipment (PPE) information for all cargoes, the new service

further enhances on board decision making and safety.

Since its founding in 2001, Q88's goal has been to continue developing solutions to better connect the maritime industry. Q88 subscribers credit the company's 24/7 global support and staff of maritime experts as key components in ensuring the flexibility and reliability needed to remain competitive in this ever-changing market, the company claimed.

Spill Center was formed in 1990 to provide support to vessels involved in marine pollution incidents and spill-related claims wherever they occur around the world, helping to contain costs and limit liability arising from environmental releases.

The resources include advanced communications technology and up-to-date

listings of federal and international environmental reporting requirements, cleanup and disposal resources, as well as spill reporting contacts and deadlines.

Future Care is a provider of global medical care management services to seafarers, shipowners and managers and the respective International Group member P&I Clubs. The company's team of first responders, physician and nurse medical case managers collaborate with the treatment provider to ensure the highest quality medical care, it said.

By effectively managing the quality of the medical response in each case, Future Care reduces both the time and cost required to return the seafarer safely to 'Fit for Duty' status, the company added.

The call center went live on 11th July, 2016.

### Examples of Q88 Response Center calls

#### Chemical/HazMat incidents:

- **Minor spills of chemical cargoes, leaks from various chemical drums stored on board.**

If at sea the response center would provide assistance and advice over the phone regarding mitigating and clean-up of the spill.

If needed, the center can provide a list of contractors in the next planned port that can arrange for disposal of any of the spilled product and cleanup materials.

If the incident happened in port, the call center can provide a list of contractors that can assist with the clean-up.

- **Chemical cargo starting to react unexpectedly, such as gassing off vapours, smoking, unexplained temperature rises.**

The response center would put the caller in contact with experts related to the chemicals involved to provide assistance and advice on how to best mitigate the situation on board.

- **Major spill or cargo release at sea or in port.**

The response center can follow the ship's spill response plan (provided that information is shared with the call center in advance of an incident) and make notifications and contact spill response groups as outlined in the individual ship's spill response plan.

The call center can provide an additional list of response contractors that may be able to assist with the emergency.

#### Medical emergency or request for medical services:

- **Crew member(s) are accidentally exposed to a hazardous chemical, such as exposure to vapours, exposure to skin, splashes in eyes, accidental ingestion or any other exposure.**

The response center would put the caller in contact with Future Care doctors and nurses to provide prompt telemedical diagnosis and treatment options on board ship and/or manage subsequent shoreside medical care, as and when required.

- **Crew member has been injured or has taken ill while at sea.**

The response center would put the caller in contact with Future Care doctors and nurses to provide prompt telemedical diagnosis and treatment options on board ship and/or manage subsequent shoreside medical care, as and when required.

- **Crew member requires a medical appointment at the next port of call.**

The response center would put the caller in contact with Future Care, who will arrange the appointment with an appropriate treatment provider; co-ordinate the crew member's transportation with the Master and port agent; initiate follow-up contact with the provider for details of diagnosis and treatment and report results to the ship's Master and/or shoreside personnel, as instructed.

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