

CA-EBS in BOSIET FAQ

Introduction

The Civil Aviation Authority 'CAP 1145' review of helicopter safety following the 2013 Sumburgh helicopter crash made a series of recommendations, some relating to post-crash survivability. Among them was a requirement for use of Category 'A' Emergency Breathing Systems (CA-EBS) by passengers and aircrew.

The CA-EBS system was approved for offshore passenger travel in July 2014 and all passengers travelling offshore have undergone dry training using this system. An industry work group has amended the OPITO training standards for BOSIET / HUET / FOET to include in-water CA-EBS training exercises.

The CA-EBS will be included in the BOSIET / HUET / FOET module from 26th March 2018 onwards alongside an additional 'fit to train' certificate.

The below FAQ will hopefully address any concerns you may have. If you would like a question added to this document, please email hssg@stepchangeinsafety.net

When can we train with this in the water?

You will be able to train with this in the BOSIET / HUET / FOET from 26th March 2018 onwards. Work is ongoing to introduce it into the helicopter escape element.

Why has this taken so long?

There have been significant delays in this process arising from concerns related to barotrauma risk. A barotrauma may occur when a body is exposed to pressure changes, such as during diving. Lung pressure damage may occur when breath holding using compressed air EBS equipment during ascent.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) stated position is that in-water HUET training using compressed air EBS equipment falls within the provisions of The Diving at Work Regulations 1997, which requires those undertaking this type of training to undertake a full diving medical.

After extensive work undertaken by the OPITO BOSIET / HUET / FOET Industry Work Group - comprising of industry stakeholders, including diving medical and industry experts – a conclusion was reached that the medical health risks could be controlled to as low as is reasonably practicable (ALARP) provided appropriate risk controls were put in place. As a result, the HSE issued an Exemption against certain requirements of a diving medical, together with other requirements.

What will we be doing?

To use the CA-EBS in the water as part of your training, the training provider needs to ensure candidates do not go deeper than 0.7m underwater to reduce the risk of barotrauma to an ALARP level. This means shallow-water exercises will allow delegates to experience breathing from the CA-EBS underwater, including deploying and breathing from the unit. It will not be used as part of the HUET inversion training (as this could exceed the 0.7m limit), which will continue to be on breath-hold.

Will the medical be changed?

No - the Oil & Gas UK offshore medical examination will not change. However, candidates will need to get a 'fitness to train' certificate signed by a registered Oil & Gas UK medical examiner which will need to be presented to the training provider on the day of your training. It is expected that the cost of a stand-alone certificate will not be high and that it would cost significantly less if completed at the same time as the Oil & Gas UK medical. On the day of your training, you will be asked to complete a self-declaration which states you are fit and able to undertake the training, i.e. no heavy cold, chesty coughs, etc.

How will I get this fitness to train certificate; As an offshore worker?

All Oil & Gas UK approved medical examiners for the medical have been briefed about this change. Therefore, candidates need to ask for a 'fitness to train' certificate to be added into your medical which should be undertaken every 2 years. It is expected that there will be little or no increase in cost if delivered in this manner. If your refresher is due before your current medical expires, you can request a stand-alone fitness to train assessment. Alternatively, you could ask your training provider whether they can provide this prior to your training. Make sure you have contacted your employer about this fitness to train certificate to understand how they want you to get it.

As an employing company?

There are a number of ways an employing company can get this certificate for staff. For example, you could arrange for an Oil & Gas UK approved doctor to go offshore and issue these certificates at site, or in-house at your offices. If you don't have an in-house medical team, you should ensure that your medical provider is aware that you want this certificate on top of the basic offshore medical.

What do I need to do now?

You should check when your BOSIET/FOET (with CA-EBS) is due to expire, as well as the date of your offshore medical expiry.

If your medical expires before your BOSIET/FOET (with CA-EBS), then no action needs to be taken. Your medical will be taken prior to your refresher training which will include the fitness to train certificate.

If your medical expires after your BOSIET/FOET (with CA-EBS) then you need to make an appointment with your Oil & Gas UK doctor before you do any refresher training, as the fitness to train certificate will be required. It is advised that if a fitness to train certificate is required it should be obtained well in advance of a BOSIET/FOET course

What if I am declared unfit to train?

If you are medically unfit to train, you can still participate in your BOSIET/FOET but not the in-water CA-EBS exercises. You will still get your certificate as normal. You will be required to undertake dry CA-EBS training.

What's next?

From 26th March 2018 the CA-EBS will be used in the water for BOSIET/FOET training courses. Delegate feedback will be monitored by the EBS work group and any equipment issues will go directly to the manufacturer.

Once the CA-EBS has been used in-water for a period of time, the training will be reviewed to identify what can be done to improve the fidelity of the training, as per normal OPITO-standard processes, with an objective of conducting in-water EBS training as part of the HUET inversion exercises at some time in the future.

Where can I get more information?

Your employing company should be the first point of call for information relating to the training requirements for your employment. The Step Change in Safety website will be kept up to date with industry news and any changes to the CA-EBS training will be communicated to all Step Change Focal Points. If you have any questions or concerns you can email info@oilandgasuk.co.uk.