

Title Abstract: Designing simulation exercises for recruitment of future VTS operators

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Juan Carlos Fernández Salinas. Professional seaman. In 1993 he joined the Spanish Safety and Rescue Agency as VTS operator and later supervisor. He has been appointed Head of VTS Area and responsible for VTS training in 2013. That year he started to assist the IALA VTS Committee. Author of the book "Collisions at Sea" and co-author of the book "Vessel Traffic Services". He has written more than seventy articles published in professional and informative magazines, included "Seaways" and for three times "The Journal of Navigation". He also has written a wide number of technical publications: manuals, presentations and proceedings.



Abstract:

During the last three years, the Spanish Maritime Safety and Rescue Agency, in its procedure for recruitment of new VTS operators has been using a VTS simulator in an innovative way. In previous recruitment processes it was detected that some candidates were suitable from a theoretical point of view. However, despite having a good knowledge of the legal framework, high command in English, and even having passed a psychological assessment, when facing real VTS operations some of them were unable to carry out their tasks efficiently. We are making reference to lack of specific skills such as combining auditory and visual information, being proactive or carrying out several tasks simultaneously, among others. For this reason, in our new recruitment procedure it was included an individual assessment where the candidate has to deal with a simulated situation.

The session lasts approximately twenty minutes and has ten different variations. Along the session, two assessors and one psychologist analyse the behaviour of the candidate following a rubric designed for this purpose. VTS Competent authority and unions are quite satisfied with the results, and so far no candidate has risen an official complaint. We can consider this new recruitment procedure as one of the most relevant innovations in Spanish vessel traffic service.