

News story: Maritime & Coastguard Agency appoints new SOSRep

The Maritime & Coastguard Agency has made a new appointment to the vital role of Secretary of State's Representative (SOSRep) Maritime Salvage & Intervention, which oversees the response to accidents at sea. Les Chapman has been appointed to the role and will join the Agency on Monday 21 August. He will work alongside the existing SOSRep Hugh Shaw OBE for several months, to allow a substantial transition period in this important role, and will not assume the role and responsibilities of the SOSRep until an agreed time later on in the year.

The SOSRep is responsible for reducing the risk to safety and the environment arising from accidents at sea. Recent incidents which were overseen by the current SOSRep Hugh Shaw include the Transocean Winner rig grounding off the Isle of Lewis in 2016 and the Hoegh Osaka car carrier incident in the Solent in 2015. Mr Chapman is no stranger to the maritime world, having graduated from the Royal Military College of Canada and served in both the UK's Royal Navy and the Royal Canadian Navy – as part of the former, he qualified for nuclear submarine command and held four command appointments. Over the course of a career spanning the maritime, security and transportation industries, Les has also worked with a number of commercial maritime organisations including Associated British Ports Ltd, DNV and The Maritime Group. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology, the Institute of Civil Protection and Emergency Management and the Nautical Institute, a Liveryman of the Honourable Company of Master Mariners, The Worshipful Company of Arbitrators, The Worshipful Company of Shipwrights and a Younger Brother of Trinity House. Les Chapman said: "The SOSRep role can be a difficult but very rewarding one as it's all about providing protection and safety in the maritime world. I'm looking forward to working alongside Hugh Shaw as I familiarise myself with all aspects of the job."

Sir Alan Massey, Chief Executive of the Maritime & Coastguard Agency, commented: "We are committed to safety of life and the environment at sea through safer lives, safer ships, cleaner seas. As we have seen from many serious incidents in UK waters over recent years, the SOSRep has a unique and critical role in rapidly and effectively marshalling the resources of all parties to achieve the best possible outcomes. I am delighted we have appointed Les Chapman as our new SOSRep. Les brings highly relevant skills and experience with him and I am sure he will be an excellent successor to Hugh Shaw OBE, who has done a superb job over the years in growing the effectiveness and influence of the SOSRep role."