RVL GROUP COUNTER-POLLUTION SPRAY SYSTEM GAINS MCA APPROVAL

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Specialist aviation services provider RVL Group has been granted Full Operating Capability (FOC) by the UK's Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) to put into action its innovative aerial spray system for the protection of marine environments from oil-spill pollution. This represents the achievement of a significant milestone under the MCA's Aerial Spray Contract.

Working with the MCA, East Midlands Airport-based RVL has carried out the advanced design, engineering, testing and production of a cost-effective and timely oil-spill response system. The detailed and extensive planning, testing and development by RVL and its partners has been accepted and recognised by the MCA with the grant of FOC. The system is on call around the clock, to protect Britain's coastlines from oil spill pollution.

The RVL Oil Dispersant Spray Kit (ODSK) breaks new ground by offering a modular air cargo palletised spray system which can be installed into current and future generation jet aircraft to make it mission capable within three hours.

RVL Group Managing Director Dave Connor said: "This is the culmination of exceptional levels of hard work from RVL's dedicated staff and its partners. I am delighted to see it being granted Full Operational Capability status by the MCA. This is a leading-edge system which we are confident will be adopted around the world as governments and marine agencies see its effectiveness and realise its cost benefits."

How the system works
The RVL ODSK is custom designed and engineered to mate with pre-modified Boeing 737-400 cargo aircraft. The system could be used in Boeing 737-800 cargo aircraft, as well as other aircraft types with minimal design/hardware changes.

The spray hardware consists of 10 roll-on/roll-off pallets. At the front is a utility/control module, followed by seven tank pallets, then a powerful pump module which connects to a distribution pallet that directs the output to the outlet nozzles at the rear of the aircraft.

The RVL system has the flexibility to use various currently available dispersants. In addition, RVL can re-fill the ODSK anywhere because the loading equipment can be carried onboard to increase time-on-spray.

The ODSK-equipped aircraft can fly in known icing conditions to and from the spray site.
The key benefit of the ODSK is the flexibility and versatility it enables. Prior to its development, most aircraft used in oil spill missions were dedicated to the purpose, custom-fitted with fixed and immovable spraying equipment.

The ODSK is a roll-on/roll-off system that can be fitted in around three hours, permitting the host aircraft to be used in other roles – carrying cargo, for example – when not required on oil-spill duties. Major oil spills that would require the ODSK statistically occur rarely, though countries with coastlines are required by IMO agreements to have the capability to deal with these effectively.
The kit is certified by the Federal Aviation Authority in the USA and by the European aviation governing body EASA.

Testing and approval
RVL's system has gone through extensive testing, featuring both ground, sea and air trials, with positive results. Every test is unique with consideration to weather and sea conditions. Tests were carried out in two locations, off the south coast of Cornwall and the Firth of Clyde. Tests showed success over a variety of dosage levels allowing a range of oil types to be treated quickly, accurately and cost-effectively.

Speaking for RVL, MD Dave Connor said: "Working closely with our own engineering department, our project partners and our customer we have spent many hundreds of hours ensuring that this solution is airworthy and fully signed off by all relevant authorities. RVL is very proud of the outcome – the first 'ro-ro' system suitable for the Boeing 737 cargo aircraft - and one which is a perfect solution to the need for rapid response to a sea pollution issue."

A British success story
It is planned that RVL's technology will not only be used to protect UK waters but also have a worldwide role. In partnership with British company Agile Spray Response Ltd, which has a global

sales and marketing licence, the system, called CONVERT400 for export markets, is available to maritime agencies and governments seeking a cost-effective oil spill response system.

“We are delighted to work with RVL on this project, and help to export this important technology to all overseas markets in the future,” commented Phil Cole, CEO of Agile Spray Response Ltd.

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About RVL Group

RVL Group is a specialist aviation services provider based at East Midlands Airport. Formed after a management buyout in 2007, the company began relocating its core business from Coventry Airport to East Midlands Airport in autumn 2010 following completion of its state-of-the-art purpose-built hangar and maintenance facility.

Operating and maintaining its own fleet of 16 aircraft, RVL Group provides services to a range of private and public sector clients and offers expertise in areas as diverse as aerial surveillance and survey, passenger and cargo ad hoc and long-term charter, temporary and permanent aircraft modifications for project work and aerial spraying of pollution dispersants. RVL Group and its wholly-owned operating subsidiaries are the holders of various UK, European and US regulatory approvals to conduct almost all types of aerial activity and full maintenance on a wide range of aircraft and components. These include EASA AOC and CAA Type A Operating licence, Part 145, Part M, Approved Training Organisation and Dangerous Goods approvals.

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