

Monitoring fuel and so saving lives: The RNLI specifies PSM safety level switches for their new jet powered lifeboats

When the Royal National Lifeboat Institute (RNLI) needed accurate and reliable fuel monitoring for its latest lifeboat model, the Shannon class, PSM Marine provided an effective solution to withstand the very tough conditions that these life-saving vessels need to endure.

The RNLI provides a free on-call, 24-hour lifeboat search and rescue service around UK and Irish waters. The charity has saved more than 140,000 lives since it was founded in 1824.

At a cost of £2million to build and with a top speed of 25 knots, the new Shannon model is the first RNLI lifeboat to be propelled by waterjets instead of traditional propellers, making it their most agile and manoeuvrable all-weather vessel to date. Measuring 13m in length and weighing in at 18 tonnes, the Shannon can be launched straight off the beach via a new and improved launch and recovery system.

Sixty-six BLS 9200 level switches have been installed across six of the new Shannon class of in-house developed lifeboats. Each provides a safety critical function to detect levels in the boat's 1200 litre fuel tanks and raise an alarm if supplies are low.

The rugged and durable design of the BLS 9200 is ideally suited to the harsh environment the RNLI is often faced with. Indeed, PSM has supplied the RNLI with tank gauging instruments for many years and so, when in-house engineers were designing the Shannon class, they once again looked to PSM for support with operational safety.

The BLS 9200's all-stainless steel design and resistance to seawater, fuel oil and hydraulic fluid ensures reliable operation with the ability to withstand years of difficult environmental conditions. It is designed, manufactured and approved to meet and exceed the requirements for severe service applications on all classes of marine vessels and offshore installations.

Many ship builders and owners are increasingly seeing lower quality and cheaper level sensors as a false economy, maintenance and replacement charges will inevitably exceed the initial installation cost of an inferior model. With the Shannon expected to have an operational lifetime of around 25 years, the RNLI demanded a 'right first time' approach which PSM was able to deliver.

"Having a lifeboat run out of fuel is simply not an option; it could quite literally be a matter of life or death," said Mark Jones, PSM Sales Director. "The RNLI and PSM share one of the same values - never compromise on safety and quality – so we're pleased to be working in partnership with them once again to aid the smooth running of such a vital service for the UK and Republic of Ireland."

PSM is a specialist in advanced marine instrumentation, software systems and application solutions for marine architects, ship designers, ship builders and fleet owners.

For further information about safety level switches and all other PSM marine instrumentation systems, visit www.psmmarine.com or telephone: +44 (0) 1444 410040.

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For press information email Charmaine Kimpton at ckimpton@sheremarketing.co.uk or telephone 01483 203010/07414 749973.