



What it takes to film the energy transition

Renewables Film Director Luke Harmer shares his experience undertaking the Global Wind Organisation's Basic Safety Training, earning the certification needed for film production on the front lines of the energy transition.



Wind Organisation's Basic Safety Training, a certification needed to produce films of energy infrastructure up close and personal.

Sharing the journey

I've always been drawn to the idea of building in public, documenting the highs and lows of entrepreneurship and business development as they unfold, because in many ways, that's exactly what I'm doing in my day-to-day as a filmmaker, too, showcasing the people, challenges, and ingenuity behind a process. So when I decided to undertake the GWO Basic Safety Training, it felt only natural to share this part of Harmer Visuals' journey with the world, too.

To make that possible, I needed a course provider willing to accommodate a film crew, a team open to the idea of capturing the experience authentically. Belay Rope Access Training Centre in Newhaven, East Sussex, was up for the challenge, and together we set out to document the three-day course through the eyes of a newcomer stepping into the world of offshore wind.

Inside the training

For the technicians among you, the syllabus will be familiar: Working at Height & Manual Handling, Sea Survival, First Aid, and Fire Awareness. Each module teaches critical skills for dealing with hazards around wind energy infrastructure, from preventing ladder accidents and falling objects to performing CPR and descending from height using a controlled-rate descender in the event of fire.

Each module of the course involves learning about rope access and H&S equipment, understanding particular regulations, and practicing critical scenarios with your instructor and fellow participants.

Some people find it easier to learn through reading and theory, while others like to get their hands dirty with practical exercises, and Belay Rope Access Training Centre caters very nicely to both groups through their split between online learning and in-person curriculum.

Admittedly, while most cohorts undertaking the course have one instructor per group, Belay went the extra mile to help produce a more focused and contained experience for me and my crew, providing rope access veteran Tej Ajimal to teach me the ropes on a mostly one-to-one basis. With 31 years in the fire brigade and two decades in rope access, I knew I was in safe hands under the instruction of Tej. So while I was figuring out which way was up, he had a cool head! A massive thank you to Belay for going the extra mile to make the video fulfill its potential.

A new perspective

When you're suspended several stories up on a rope, or floating in cold seawater waiting to board a life raft, the reality of offshore work hits home. It's demanding, physical and

There's a common misconception that the biggest barriers to a successful global energy transition are purely engineering ones. As a filmmaker working in renewable energy, I've come to realise that many of the real challenges are about communication.

From researchers translating their findings for policymakers to companies explaining how their solutions meet evolving energy needs, and from media helping the public understand how our grid systems are changing, progress depends on a shared narrative. The energy transition moves fastest when the entire ecosystem sees the same picture of where it's heading.

That realisation has shaped how I approach filmmaking as the owner of a production agency supporting renewable energy organisations. My crew isn't just pointing cameras at turbines; we're helping bridge communication gaps across the sector, connecting the human stories behind the infrastructure with the audiences whose understanding and support make the energy transition possible.

But to tell those stories credibly, I needed to experience the world I was documenting, not from the safety of a studio, but from within the same environments as the technicians and engineers who keep the industry moving. That's what led me to undertake the Global

mentally sharp, and it gives you immense respect for the technicians who do it daily.

I remember standing on the descent platform, looking down through the hatch. 'I can hold this rope and control your descent,' said Tej, my instructor. 'Or you can just drop.'

'Let's do a drop!' I replied.

Moments like that capture the trust and composure that define this industry. In isolation, these tasks, including casualty rescues, CPR drills and raft entries, are manageable. But in the real world, 20 miles offshore with limited support and unpredictable conditions, the stakes are far higher. The training gives you a visceral appreciation of that responsibility.

Health and safety can feel procedural on paper, but living it brings an entirely new perspective. While I hope I'll never need many of the skills I learned, I came away with deep respect for the people who do, and a stronger understanding of the environments Harmer Visuals is preparing to film.

While the sector stands at an exciting crossroads, with robotics and AI revealing glimpses of what the future of innovation may hold in the heavy industries, the true engine of progress remains the skilled people who climb, weld, repair, and operate in conditions machines still can't match. Their precision and judgment are what keep the energy transition moving.

That dichotomy between tech hype and the vitality of less headline-worthy manual labour



isn't unique to energy; it's a perspective I recognise from my own field. Generative AI has transformed the way many video content formats are produced, but creativity still begins and depends on human intent.

Technology can extend our reach, but it's people who give the work its meaning. At least for now.

The bigger picture

Health and safety rarely make the headlines. It's less glamorous than breakthrough technologies or sweeping policy shifts, yet it's the quiet foundation that makes both possible. Every advance in offshore engineering, every milestone in the energy transition, depends on people trained to work safely in increasingly complex environments.

After completing my GWO training, I sat down with Iain Tindall, Owner of Belay Rope Access Training Centre, who put this into perspective:

'Fields of floating turbines are going to be coming into operation and they're further and further into deep waters, not on the continental shelf. What this means for the workforce is, if you're not 10 minutes from land, you need to up your game in terms of medical response. The GWO always has to keep up with changes within the industry.'

The foundational role that health and safety play in the wind sector cannot be overstated, though it can sometimes be underestimated. What really struck me during the first aid module, for instance, was how truly isolated you could be in an emergency situation.

As Iain expanded with tongue in cheek: 'If you call an ambulance, nobody is going to come! Even if you're onshore, you're going to be in the middle of a field, 80 m up. Any paramedic is just going to turn up and say, 'I'm not sure about that!'

This is why having the mental models and the muscle memory to apply H&S and first aid in challenging environments is so vital for wind sector personnel. You never know if you're



The public sees turbines on the horizon, but rarely the expertise, training and grit that make them possible.

going to need to attempt to save a life and there's no guarantee it'll unfold like it does in the textbooks, either. As Iain put it, 'It's about dynamic risk assessment... giving people the tools to make [health and safety] decisions for themselves.'

Both the culture of health and safety in wind and the filmmaking process depend on communication, trust and clarity under pressure. The ability to stay calm, adapt, and problem-solve in real time is what keeps both people and projects on track. Whether you're coordinating a complex scene with multiple cast members or setting up a drone shot in high winds, success hinges on how effectively a team shares information.

In both industries, the margin for error is narrow, and the difference between smooth execution and a costly mistake often comes down to whether everyone understands the plan.

Wrapping up

Supporting developers and their supply chains with media that shows how their projects advance national climate goals is something I'm deeply motivated by. This certification represents another step toward positioning Harmer Visuals as a reputable creative partner for utilities, developers, and technology providers, one that understands not just the message, but the environment it's told within.

As the renewable sector scales up, so too must the way we tell its story. The public sees turbines on the horizon, but rarely the expertise, training and grit that make them possible. That's where authentic visual storytelling can shift perceptions; showing not only the technology, but the people behind it. The more audiences can connect emotionally with the energy transition, the more they'll understand its urgency.

I'm excited to start creating more films in and around energy infrastructure and this experience has offered a firsthand understanding of the culture that powers the wind industry, one built on teamwork, discipline, and respect for risk.

Watch the full story for a behind the scenes look at what it really takes to work in offshore wind.

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