

Safety Culture

An organization with a "safety culture" is one that gives appropriate priority to safety and realises that safety has to be managed like other areas of the business. For the shipping industry, it is in the *professionalism* of seafarers that the safety culture must take root.

That culture is more than merely avoiding accidents or even reducing the number of accidents, although these are likely to be the most apparent measures of success. In terms of shipboard operations, it is to do the right thing at the right time in response to normal and emergency situations. The quality and effectiveness of that training will play a significant part in determining the attitude and performance - the professionalism - the seafarer will subsequently demonstrate in his, or her, work. And the attitude adopted will, in turn, be shaped to a large degree by the 'culture' of the shipping company.

The key to achieving that safety culture is in:

- recognising that accidents are preventable through following correct procedures and established best practice;
- constantly thinking safety; and
- seeking continuous improvement.

It is relatively unusual for new types of accidents to occur on board and many of those that continue to occur are due to unsafe acts by seafarers. These errors, or more often violations of good practice or established rules, can be readily avoided. Those who make them are often well aware of the errors of their ways. They may have taken short-cuts they should not have taken. Most will have received training aimed at preventing them but, through a culture that is tolerant to the 'calculated risk', they still occur.

The challenge for trainers and training, and managers ashore and afloat, is how to minimise these unsafe acts, how to instil not only the skills but also the attitudes necessary to ensure safety objectives are met. The aim should be to inspire seafarers towards firm and effective self-regulation and to encourage personal ownership of established best practice. Internationally recognised safety principles and the safeguards of best industry practice have to become an integral part of an individuals' own standards.

- ▲ Human Elem
- ▶ Safety cultur
- ▶ Safety cultur viewpoint