

Walk to work

A new concept in offshore transport

In the Southern sector of the North Sea there are many small, normally unattended, installations (NUIs). These units require maintenance just the same as bigger platforms, and more and more of it as they get older. So how do dutyholders get workers to these installations? To date it's been mainly by helicopter shuttling to NUIs with helidecks, and by boat to those without.

Shell and BP have introduced a new travel concept with the emerging title 'walk to work', or W2W. This involves transporting workers to and from the beach to the installations in an adapted supply boat with a specially fitted gangway. It also has



accommodation to offshore standards where the workers can eat and sleep at night. The concept provides flexibility for maintenance operations and avoids risks of frequent helicopter flights.

HSE has been working closely with the companies involved to ensure that the risks, particularly at transfer to and from the installation, are being well managed. Because of the way these vessels are operated they are not legally regarded as offshore installations. However, HSE can still apply the Health and Safety at Work Act and other regulations to ensure the safety of the workforce involved.

Where to go for more information

GENERAL HSE ENQUIRIES

HSE Infoline:
Tel: 0845 345 0055 Fax: 0845 408 9566
e-mail: hse.infoline@natbrit.com

WEB-BASED INFORMATION

HSE's offshore safety home page at:
www.hse.gov.uk/offshore

Some useful offshore leaflets can be downloaded free from the HSE website.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We would like to know what you think of this news sheet – send your comments and ideas for future editions to:
Tea-shack News, Health and Safety Executive,
Lord Cullen House, Fraser Place, Aberdeen AB25 3UB
e-mail: osd.tnews@hse.gsi.gov.uk

Stop press...

HSE prosecutes SHELL and AMEC

HSE recently prosecuted Shell UK Limited and Amec Group Limited following the death of a technician. Each company was fined £150 000 and ordered to pay £41 500 in costs at Norwich Crown Court.

Full details at:
www.hse.gov.uk/press/2008/coie12108.htm

OFFSHORE EUROPE 2009

Come and visit the HSE stand at the Offshore Europe Exhibition, which runs from 8–11 September 2009 at the Exhibition Centre, Aberdeen

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Tea-shack News

HSE's news sheet for offshore workers

Issue 9 Feb 2009

Don't take your eye off the ball! The impact of the current recession



Don't take your eye off the ball!

Ian Whewell, Head of Offshore Division, reflects on the impact of the current recession.



The economic downturn is really beginning to bite and is affecting decision making in the offshore industry. It is vital, for those who are employed offshore and for the industry's long-term future, that health and safety continues to be given the highest priority.

The industry must learn from the experience of previous difficult periods. For example, when the oil price was low in the late 1990s many skilled and experienced staff left the industry.

At that time short-term decision making also resulted in many of the installation integrity problems which the industry is now only just getting to grips with. Now is not the time for the industry to take its eye off the ball if the improvements in performance we have seen in recent years are to be maintained.

HSE will be working with the industry to ensure that the lessons of previous downturns in the industry are not forgotten and that standards do not slip in these uncertain times.

Hydrocarbon releases (HCRs) report

Despite significant improvements in the reduction of HCRs offshore since 2000, they remain a concern. To enable more focused interventions, a recently published HSE report highlights four main causes of HCRs over the last seven years.

The research report, *Offshore hydrocarbon releases 2001-2008* (RR672) has examined data relating to leaks held on the HCR System database to identify the main causes of major and significant releases. In particular, the report has identified that:

- compression systems are the single largest system contributor for HCRs;
- piping is the most common equipment to produce leaks, followed by instruments (small bore tubing) and flanges;
- incorrectly fitted equipment, followed by improper operation, is the most common operational cause;
- non-compliance with procedures is the most common procedural contributor, followed by deficient procedure.

The full report can be viewed at:
www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrpdf/rr672.pdf

Small bore tubing - are your training needs being addressed?

Small bore tubing (SBT) failure is one of the main contributors to the number of major and significant gas hydrocarbon releases (HCRs) offshore, according to a recent review of data (see previous article).



During 2006/07 and 2007/08, the number of SBT failures rose markedly in spite of an earlier period of sharp improvement.

The main cause for this earlier improvement was the considerable effort made by industry to update guidance and training on SBT after HSE's leak reduction campaign (KP1) in 2002 found these were one of the main sources of HCRs.

As a result, HSE is asking operators to review their workers' training needs to assess whether further training on SBT is required for those new to the industry or refresher training is necessary to maintain skill levels.

Some evidence suggests that a quarter of SBT systems that are inspected or surveyed contain faults, the majority being under-tight connections, followed by assembly errors. Many of these faults may be as a result of maintenance intervention and a failure to replace tubing and fittings correctly.

HSE's offshore priorities unchanged for 2009/10

Offshore Division will continue next year to focus on four key priority areas: asset integrity, leadership, safety culture and competence. In support of these priorities, in addition to its planned inspections and investigation of accidents, OSD has a number of additional activities including:

- looking at the effectiveness of close-out and learning from verification findings;
- inspecting audit schemes and the way findings are used to improve health and safety;
- inspection of the management of corrosion;
- work with the Industry Advisory Committee and Step Change to improve workforce involvement;
- monitoring competence and working with OPITO and Step Change on competence issues;
- securing improved management information and cross-industry leadership performance by effective use of key performance indicators.

For more information on OSD's workplan please visit:
www.hse.gov.uk/offshore/workareas.htm

