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You should look out for the new publication in March 2014. This issue will explain in greater detail the responsibilities of the newly formed WEST and will be officially launched at the first WEST event which is to be held in the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre on 11th March 2014.

This event hopes to bring together 300 members of the workforce to build a community of informed, committed and engaged individuals working together to continuously improve workforce engagement with regards to safety.

For further details of the event and to reserve your place, please go to link.

http://www.stepchangeinsafety.net/newsevents/events/event.cfm/

Farewell to the old Tea-shack News

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Where to go for more information

General HSE enquiries/Web-based information

Please go to HSE’s offshore safety home page at:

www.hse.gov.uk/offshore

Useful offshore leaflets can be downloaded free from the HSE website.
In the last edition of Tea Shack News I advised that I had recently taken up post as the newly appointed Head of HSE Energy Division – Offshore. I want to take a further opportunity to update you on some aspects of safety in which we can all work on to help us improve safety performance offshore.

It is certainly encouraging to note that the offshore industry risk of minor injury is similar to the risk in a retail job. However given the extreme environment you all work in, we do need to raise the challenge greater for those risks which can have a much higher potential for loss of life. Let me give you an example, is it OK that an offshore worker will consider it an all right practice to walk past holes in their temporary refuge and consider it adequate that leaking pipes is acceptable to the point of having a bucket underneath and allocate someone with the job of emptying the bucket!

The graph displays the number of hydrocarbon releases reported during 2012/13 and 2013/14 for the period 1 April – 31 October. The 2013/14 figures include those incidents which are held on the HCR database but not all have been fully checked and so the figures should be regarded as provisional. Forecasting the year end is difficult, however if the current trend continues, we would expect this year's total to exceed the 2012/13 total.

More recently of great concern is the reporting of a significant increase in hydrocarbon releases (HCRs) to HSE in the past months. This increase is a serious challenge to industry. We all accept that reducing HCRs is essential in reducing the likelihood of a catastrophic fire and explosion. I think back to the messages we gave at the Piper 25 Event. We all agreed that we have made significant strides to help reduce the risks offshore but we must not forget that those basic hazards faced for the guys offshore at the time of the terrible Piper Alpha incident are still the same today.

What are HSE doing:-

- I am taking a strong line with Industry Leaders on this increase in HCR and I expect to see evidence that the plans for reduction in HCR will be effective. These plans are accessible to Elective Safety Representatives - just ask your supervisor.
- We are making changes to how we undertake planned inspections. The focus will be on identifying and prioritising the major hazard inspections planned. I also expect a higher percentage of our resource time to be allocated to dealing with Incident Investigation. These plans will be shared with duty holders and safety representatives by the end of March 2014.

What you can do as the Workforce:-

I passionately believe in the benefits of workforce engagement and it really has been encouraging to meet so many of your worker representatives who, for my part, are certainly some of the most able representatives that I have met in my 23 years as a regulator across a wide range of industries. I hope you are fully aware of the ‘powers’ given to your Safety Representatives and that you take every opportunity to use your rights!

Merger of WEG and WIG

The Step Change Workforce Engagement Group (WEG) and the Oil Industry Advisory Committee - Workforce Involvement Group (WIG) have agreed that there is greater benefit in these two worker representative groups joining forces and have become Workforce Engagement Support Team (WEST). It is co-chaired by Ian Sharpe and Jake Molloy. HSE will, as was previously, have representation within WEST which is made up of three working groups:-

- Elective Safety Reps
- Events and
- Toolkit.

Rise in Hydrocarbon Releases

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