What’s happening with WIG

OIAC’s Workforce Involvement Group (WIG) has recently updated and revamped their website. Members of the offshore workforce who attended recent WIG events flagged up that the WIG website was a significant means of information exchange for the workforce. The website can be viewed at: www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/meetings/iacs/oiac/wig.htm.

A further WIG event is planned for November 2010. Details to be found on the OIAC WIG website and the HSE offshore division website.

Other things happening with the WIG include working on the development of an additional training matrix for safety representatives to include examples of good practice.

Further information

GENERAL HSE ENQUIRIES
HSE Infoline:
Tel: 0845 345 0055 Fax: 0845 408 9566
e-mail: hse.infoline@connaught.plc.uk

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

Human factors - taking the first steps ...

Steve Walker, the head of HSE’s Offshore Division, attended the launch of Step Change In Safety’s new human factors publication, Human Factors: How to take the first steps....

The publication provides 12 real case studies, each one presenting an incident or near miss. Each case study is an opportunity for you and your colleagues to recognise how human factors impact on your work. It will also help you identify some simple first steps that will help you manage human factors. YOU can make a difference:

http://stepchangeinsafety.net/stepchange/News/StreamContentPart.aspx?ID=4627
Hydrocarbon releases rise

Major and significant hydrocarbon releases (HCRs) are up by more than a third on last year's releases. Steve Walker, head of the offshore division, has advised: 'This year's overall health and safety picture is simply not good enough…'. HCRs are seen as an important indicator of effective management of health and safety offshore.

Maintaining a downward trend in HCRs requires constant attention in all areas by those working offshore. The human interface remains a significant contributor to leaks, but can also offer an effective weapon for attacking the problem of HCRs. Your company must help you to maintain high levels of competency and hazard awareness by providing appropriate procedures and training.

You, as a member of the offshore workforce, can provide an invaluable source of support to your organisation through maintaining the right skills, applying good practice and observation and by continuing to report deficiencies as soon as you see them. Small bore tubing systems were involved in a quarter of reported leaks last year and half of reported leaks involved, piping, valves and flanges.

Details on the number of offshore hydrocarbon releases can be found at: https://www.hse.gov.uk/hcr3/report/public_tables_display.asp


Remember: Your installation needs you!

Ladders for escape to sea

Offshore installations are required to have evacuation arrangements, and also a means of escape in case the evacuation arrangements fail. Ladders which reach almost to sea level are usually part of the means of escape (see photo). However, these ladders are subject to corrosion and wave impact, and there is expense and risk involved in maintaining them. Some dutyholders may consider not maintaining the ladders, instead relying on alternative means of descent to sea. However, it is important that the alternative means does not increase the risks to the workforce.

HSE has issued an information sheet which identifies matters that have to be taken into account before the ladders are allowed to fall into disrepair. For example, the safety case normally has to be revised and re-submitted to HSE.

You should be aware that if personal descent devices become the only means of descending to sea level, it is expected that the workforce will be given practical training in use of the devices. Practical training involves actual use of the device, but with safe working arrangements to ensure that a mistake does not lead to injury.


Occupational health summit

Security was tight as delegates arrived for the first offshore occupational health summit for North Sea regulators. The event was hosted by HSE’s offshore occupational health team and included representatives from Norway’s Petroleum Safety Authority and SodM (Staatstoezicht op de Mijnen) in the Netherlands.

Delegates naturally found time to exchange a few jokes, with the Norwegians reflecting on past glories of their Viking ancestors, before getting down to the serious business of discussing how best to reduce the incidence of ill health offshore.

Each regulatory authority gave an overview of their health priorities, and current initiatives ranged from managing noise and vibration risks, environmental health and welfare, controlling exposure to chemicals and musculoskeletal disorders. Collectively it was agreed that there is a need to develop more effective approaches for noise and vibration, chemicals and manual handling, and we are committed to closer co-operation and sharing of good practice to enhance such development.

If you have a particular interest in any of the issues, further information relating to these health priorities is available at: www.hse.gov.uk/offshore/occupationalhealth.htm