

In summary the following are of equal importance for a well rounded effective safety program:

Education
Promotion
Cooperation

Enforcement
Inspection
Recognition

We have tried to work all these into our safety program in order to accomplish our goal of a perfect safety record each year.

WHO'S SETTING THE COURSE?

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A seaman falls out of a bosun's chair and breaks a leg. To him personal safety has suddenly become a vital matter. He'll make sure that he doesn't fall out of a chair again, at least for a while.

In a larger sense, the marine industry is continually falling out of the chair, being "hurt" year after year by the rising cost of claims and insurance premiums, as well as the bad effects upon morale when injuries occur. What steps can be taken to prevent the recurrence of this undesirable situation? What courses must we sail to avoid inefficient operations and needless costs? And who is going to set these courses?

Before trying to answer these questions, let's look at the extent of the safety problem facing the American Merchant Marine. Statistics compiled annually by the National Safety Council show that marine transportation ranked 38th among 40 American industries rated in 1959. With regard to frequency of disabling injury, only coal mining and lumbering fared worse than we. With regard to severity of disabling injury, we were next to low man on the totem pole, only the coal miners sustaining more severe injuries in 1959.

Looking at the matter in dollars rather than statistics, a close friend high in marine insurance circles has given me his careful estimate that in a recent year, the cost of claims to the underwriters has been in the neighborhood of \$70 million. Eventually, through increased premiums, the shipowners will foot this bill—a sum large enough to build nine or ten coastwise vessels and to provide for as many as 450 additional jobs for American seamen and officers.

The American Merchant Marine simply can't afford to pay the highest wages in the world, build the finest, most comfortable vessels, and continue to pay far and away the highest settlements for illness and injury claims.

The picture is not all black, of course. Many of us here who have attended these meetings year after year and have gone back and influenced our managements to plan and work and spend for increased shipboard safety are convinced that good progress has been made. But the record has been uneven between different companies. Many outfits have set up very effective programs; others haven't done as well. We hope and expect that the companies that are lagging will catch fire and forge ahead.

For to put it frankly, the weak links in the chain may cause us to drop the load. Insurance gets more costly for all of us, companies with good and bad records alike. Seamen untrained in shipboard safety circulate throughout the industry which puts an added burden on the vessels that are conscientious about shipboard safety. Areas of poor safety performance in the industry become the targets of governmental or union action which is not selective but tends to interfere generally with management functions and responsibilities.

Which leads me to answer my earlier question and to develop briefly with you a personal working philosophy I hope you will consider carefully.

You and I, marine management, are the ones who must set the courses toward better shipboard safety. I just don't believe,

for moral reasons as well as good practical business reasons, that you can give away or share responsibility for shipboard safety with any outside person or group. Operating managers who have kept a fleet running over the years know its problems better than any one else can: the condition of the vessels, the nature of the cargoes, the peculiarities of the trades engaged in, and, most important, the composition and characteristics of the crews aboard ship. Solutions to problems are not found by parcelling out responsibility. It is time to stop blaming the unions, the U. S. Public Health and others for our difficulties. We must accept the responsibility for safety and strive to uncover the proper answers. Once we have put our houses in order, we will then be in a position to insist on the cooperation of others.

A labor union, as the certified representative of the employees, may and should play its proper role in challenging management's action in the field of safety to obtain changes they feel advisable. At the same time, the union should cooperate in every way possible to reduce injuries if they are sincerely interested in the welfare of the people they represent. But, and this is a big "but," it was never intended, nor do responsible labor officials propose, that unions relieve management of its proper function of managing. Let's keep this distinction clearly in mind.

I'm not going to challenge you with this idea of full management responsibility without offering some suggestions, based on practical experience, as to how it can be brought about.

The first thing, and this is most critical, is to create a suitable climate in which to work. To do this it is necessary to recognize that the men on your vessels are your employees, and should be treated accordingly. Seamen are changing with the times. They are first-class citizens; many are purchasing homes and cars, are educating children, have continuing responsibilities. They don't quit a ship on whim. These men, who comprise a large and growing segment of American seamen, are the ones who will work with management, if they are given progressive leadership—leadership which is compounded of consideration, recognition and respect.

It is surprising how often the main safety effort is directed toward the conditions of equipment and structural layout aboard ship. And yet well-proven statistics show that less than 4 per cent of all injury is caused by equipment failure. The remaining 96 per cent is caused by "man failure" in the form of haste, inattention, carelessness, and ignorance. How to assume responsibility in these important areas? To provide leadership toward teamwork aboard ship where each individual understands that accident and injury lead to personal loss? That accident and injury affect all by lessening job security? That sustaining an injury is avoidable and unnecessary, and ill becomes a professional seaman who takes pride in his work?

These are ideas, or concepts, that must be understood and agreed upon by officers and men aboard the vessels before they will be acted upon. Management's chief responsibility, you see, becomes one of teaching, or propagandizing, or selling, if you prefer that word.

Let me outline the planks in a safety campaign that Texacomarine has worked out over the years aimed directly at putting the safety idea across, getting it accepted and acted upon. The five planks are good supervision, indoctrination, investigation, inspection and group meetings. Before describing these activities briefly, let me say that none of them has been developed to a point where we are completely satisfied with it. But we are convinced we are heading in the right direction because there is a part to play in each of the activities for the unlicensed man, the ship's officer, and for management.

Good Supervision—Few will argue with the importance of good supervision. It's basic, although not easy to achieve or to evaluate. You will agree that a good supervisor is one who gets his people to do what he wants, when he wants it, the way he wants it, because they want to do it. This is not utopia. You can expect it of a good supervisor.

Go aboard one of your ships, ask around, find out how many department heads know the names of their men. A good supervisor knows not only their names, but something about their backgrounds and experience, what jobs they do well or poorly.