

MANAGEMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY

By CLARE J. SNIDER

Marine Services Manager, Ford Motor Company

What is safety?

As a matter of habit, most of us try to define a problem before attempting to solve it. As might be expected, we have not solved all of our safety problems at Ford, but we have found from experience that a clear definition, or, as we generally refer to it, a "problem blueprint" is a valuable aid.

Webster's Dictionary defines "safety" as: a condition of being safe; freedom from danger or hazard; or keeping ones self or others safe. A rather brief definition for a word that is in reality as broad as life itself.

Accepting Mr. Webster's definition, you will note that he clearly indicates safety is a team responsibility and that team work is synonymous with coordination; the type of coordination that can only result from program planning and the participation of all, from the ordinary seaman handling lines on the dock to the master piloting a giant ore carrier through the narrow channels of the St. Marys River.

All? Not quite—since the actual work tasks are performed aboard the ships many miles from their home ports, it is conceivable that many safety programs have neglected to consider shore management's responsibility for safety. A working safety program involves more than a simple distribution of a rule book, the posting of posters and the occasional admonition to be careful. The larger or total program necessarily must include the enthusiastic participation of management.

We of the Marine Services are fortunate that "safety first" has been a way of life at Ford for a long time. We have available to us a well developed safety program. With the aid of representatives of shore management such as division safety engineers, we are continually in the process of adapting our industrial safety programs to fit the needs of our vessels. We recognize that you cannot simply tear a page from a rolling mill safety program and apply it directly to marine personnel, since many of our basic problems are unique to marine operations.

However, we have found that there is much to be gained from taking advantage of the experience of industry, and that we are not as different as it would appear at first glance.

For example, consider our last two disabling injuries. In 1956, an engineer was seriously injured when he tested a 440-volt circuit with a 110-volt test lamp. In March of 1957, another engineer lost a portion of his finger when a fellow-worker struck it with a sledge hammer. Either of these injuries as well as others that preceded them could have for the most part occurred in any type of manufacturing operation.

As an integrated department of the Steel Division, Ford Motor Company, we have taken full advantage of the staff and engineering services available to us for two basic reasons. First, when it pertains to safety, we are in a hurry. We can't afford the time spent on unnecessary trial and error. Today's remedial action is too late to prevent yesterday's injury accidents. Secondly, we recognize that if we are to fulfill our responsibilities as members of management, we must avail ourselves of professional help in planning our safety program activities.

It is our belief that management's principal responsibility is to demonstrate active safety program leadership. We all expect the ship officers to provide consistent, safe, on-the-job leadership. It becomes our responsibility then to provide not only the tools but active program direction. In order to provide you with a better appreciation of that relationship, permit me to review it in a little greater detail. Our medical, statistical, safety meeting, safety promotion, reporting, in effect, our complete safety program is coordinated with that of the Steel Division as would be the case of any other department. Our statistics are maintained in a manner comparable to other marine activities and as members of the Steel Division safety team. Disabling injuries are charged against the company, and the division, as well as against our department.

In order to graphically outline the shore influence on the safety program currently in force on the three vessels making up the Ford fleet, we have prepared the following slides:

Safety Meetings. In order to make shipboard safety more meaningful, responsibility for safety meetings is divided into three basic areas. A mate, an engineer and the steward are designated as safety meeting chairmen for their respective areas. Records are maintained to make sure that each member of the crew attends at least one formal safety meeting per month. Crewmen attend the one-hour meetings on an over-time basis, that is, they are paid for the off-duty time spent at the safety meeting. This payment helps underscore in their minds the fact that we are sincerely interested in their safety.

As is the case with any successful meeting, safety meeting agendas are prepared in advance. An important phase of this preparation is the time allotted for crew participation. Although we are fortunate to have at our disposal a large quantity of "clean" material, we have found from experience that when the crewmen participate in the meetings, everyone profits from it. Particular care is taken in selecting the chairman in order to appoint the person best qualified to conduct the meetings, one who has proven that he can maintain meeting discipline in order to prevent the meetings from becoming monthly gripe sessions.

Safety Meeting Report. A copy of a report submitted by one of our chairmen is forwarded to my office and the industrial safety section. The names of those crewmen having attended the meeting are recorded and checked against a master sheet in order to make sure that every man has been contacted and attended at least one formal safety meeting per month. The safety meeting report is for record purposes only, and the chairman includes only a brief outline of the safety meeting topics reviewed. A monthly report is prepared by the division industrial safety section indicating the safety meeting performance of the 19 operations and staff areas comprising the Steel Division. These reports have a tendency to keep us on our toes since they are reviewed with us by the Division General Manager at his weekly staff meeting. I can

assure you from experience that a poor record of safety meeting performance is considered to be as reprehensible as a bad cost performance.

Safe Job Procedure. In addition to the formal safety meetings, each vessel participates in the Safe Job Procedure Program. The chairman selects a simple task and with the help of the crew, examines every aspect of the selected work task in search of ways that a crewman could be injured and what he must do to avoid injury. In a surprising number of instances, our crewmen have helped us find a safer way to do a job. The chairman outlines the safe job procedure on this specially prepared form which he in turn reviews with other crew members. The Safe Job Procedure Program has proved to be an effective method of creating job safety awareness and teaching crewmen to think a job safely through.

Safety Log. At this point, it might be well to impress upon you that although we have found divisional safety program integration to be both natural and beneficial, management has not failed to recognize that in many respects our departmental problems are different. The Steel Division safety program was purposely designed with provisions for considerable departmental freedom in order to encourage the growth of departmental safety activities tailored to fit the needs of a particular operation. Our close association with the steel manufacturing staff areas has not resulted in our losing our identity. On the contrary, it has served to sharpen the contrast. Each department has its own specific rules. Our Marine Services Safety Log is regularly distributed and reviewed with each crew member.

A few of our more obvious departmental rules are:

No man shall go over the side without a life jacket and attendant.

No man shall work over the side on scaffold without safety belt securely attached.

All personnel working on deck must wear hard hats.

All men must wear goggles when grinding or chipping.

All men must wear gloves and life preservers when handling lines on dock.

No one is permitted to stand on railings.

No one shall enter tanks alone.