

Working Together

Safe Voyage[®]



SMS BASICS

Good Metrics

HEALTHY MARINER

Food Storage

ART OF TOWING

Objective Performance

SAFETY DECK

Safety Promise

LEGAL BITTS

Act of God?

BRIDGING THE GAPS

Achieving Success

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If Anything Else, Safety Should Be Personal

One of the great lines in the movie, *You've Got Mail* is when Meg Ryan's character is losing her small bookstore to the mega bookstore chain owned by Tom Hanks' character and she says: "...it was personal to me. It's personal to a lot of people. And what's so wrong with being personal anyway? Whatever else anything is, it ought to begin by being personal."



"To guarantee success, act as if it were impossible to fail."

~ Dorothea Brande

A few months ago a colleague of ours, Rich Berkowitz, was honored at an event hosted by the Catholic Seamen's Club, a non-denominational haven for mariners. For those of you who haven't had the pleasure to experience this treasure, we highly recommend you stop by. It is a gem of personal in an otherwise impersonal big city. The room was packed. We were sitting on fold-up chairs, shoulder to shoulder, up against school-like cafeteria tables. The food was prepared by mariners and served by volunteers and the blessing was given in song by an elderly Catholic priest, Father Tony Haycock.

By the time he was finished, half the room was in tears. His song about coming home safely from the sea touched the audience on a very deep and personal level. It is this personal and heartfelt connection that will help get our mariners home safely from the sea.

Today, as more companies merge and go from smaller family enterprises to much larger corporations, it is critical that we don't lose the "personal". The bigger we grow, the more important it is to incorporate management systems that work to ensure consistency and efficiency; however, it is critical that those management systems when implemented don't depersonalize the organization by failing to engage and involve employees on a personal level.

If anything else, safety should be personal. Every fisherman's wife, every tug boat captain's boy – want their loved ones home safe from the sea. We want you home safe from the sea.

Enjoy and Safe Voyage,

Dean & Dione

Objective Performance Standards Define Competence

by Captain Jeff Slesinger

Director Safety & Training - Western Towboat Company



You're on a rapidly foundering vessel on a winter night in the Bering Sea. The vessel labors and wallows while cold, heavy seas surge over the vessel's bulwarks. Freezing salt spray pelts your face as it is whipped off the tops of waves by gusting gale force winds. You and your fellow crewmembers are standing on the boat deck preparing to abandon ship.

Your heart races and your hands tremble from the combination of cold, adrenaline and anxiety as your mind struggles to find a means to survival. A voice in your head attempts to dismiss the whole situation as a bad, surreal dream until it is silenced by the pain from your half-frozen hands. The pain speaks clearly -- "Wake up, get locked in, this is the real deal." You know your only chance for survival is to get into your survival suit. Your life, the potential suffering of your family, friends, and fellow crewmembers all depend on your ability to get into that survival suit.

But can you get into the survival suit before the vessel goes down? This is the critical moment when book knowledge and understanding must transform into successful applied knowledge. In this situation, it's not enough to recall knowledge about a survival suit, it must be applied. You must know more than the nomenclature of a survival suit, the written procedure for donning it, the principles of how to enter the water—you must be able to put all this into practice.

Intellectual vs. Applied Knowledge

Closing the gap between book, or intellectual knowledge and applied knowledge is at the heart of the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW). A key tool of STCW is the sets of assessments that require a mariner to **demonstrate** competence in critical skill sets such as donning a survival suit. Assessment in this context means placing a value on the performance of an individual based on observations of him performing tasks.

Objective performance standards define competence. In the case of donning a survival suit, one standard is that a mariner must physically demonstrate his ability to do so within a time constraint. This type of benchmarking ensures a high probability of successfully donning that survival suit while on our foundering vessel in the Bering Sea

Addressing the Double Standard

A long tradition of double performance standards surrounds vessel operations. One is what works on shore and the other is what works at sea. One exists on paper and one exists in practice. Many a professional mariner has looked with disdain at the library of written policies and procedures on the bridge of their vessel, feeling they may look good on paper but are impractical to implement. Likewise, many an operation manager has been frustrated by cleaning up the consequences of an incident at sea; one that could have been prevented if the crew had just followed company procedure.

Assessments are a means of splicing these two separate standards into an effective, common line that works both in the hands of the seaman and within a management structure ashore.

Assessments

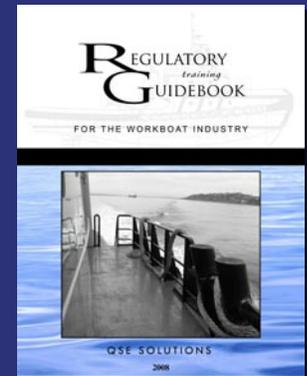
Effective Assessments can only be created through a process that blends the practical expertise of the seaman, a set of collective industry best practices, and the break down of a task into its objective measurable components. In the example of a survival suit, the STCW and USCG regulatory measurement standard is contained in the statement, “rapidly don a survival suit.” Many vessel operators and owners have further defined this standard in terms of an easily measured time increment. In the Pacific Northwest several towing companies have arrived at one minute and thirty seconds as the measurable physical performance standard for donning a survival suit. This is not an arbitrary number. It resulted from a collective answer to three simple questions:

- What was our current industry practice?
- What should be our industry practice?
- Is a seaman physically capable of meeting the practice?

Internal Training and Evaluation Program

Incorporating objective performance standards and assessments into a company’s internal training and evaluation program is a valuable tool. However, a company’s development of these in-house performance standards and assessments must be crafted with care. Some tasks are easy to assess, some are not.

AVAILABLE NOW



“The number of applicable rules, standards and regulations which govern the workboat industry today is staggering. Vessel managers and working mariners rarely have the luxury of the time required to so comprehensively conduct the research which is included in this volume. QSE Solutions’ *Regulatory Training Guidebook* is a ‘must-have’ for anyone who is responsible for training, safety, or compliance in the workboat industry. This book will save you time and money.”

Capt. Jonathan E. Kjaerulff
President
Fremont Maritime Services / India
Tango Marine Fire Training Program

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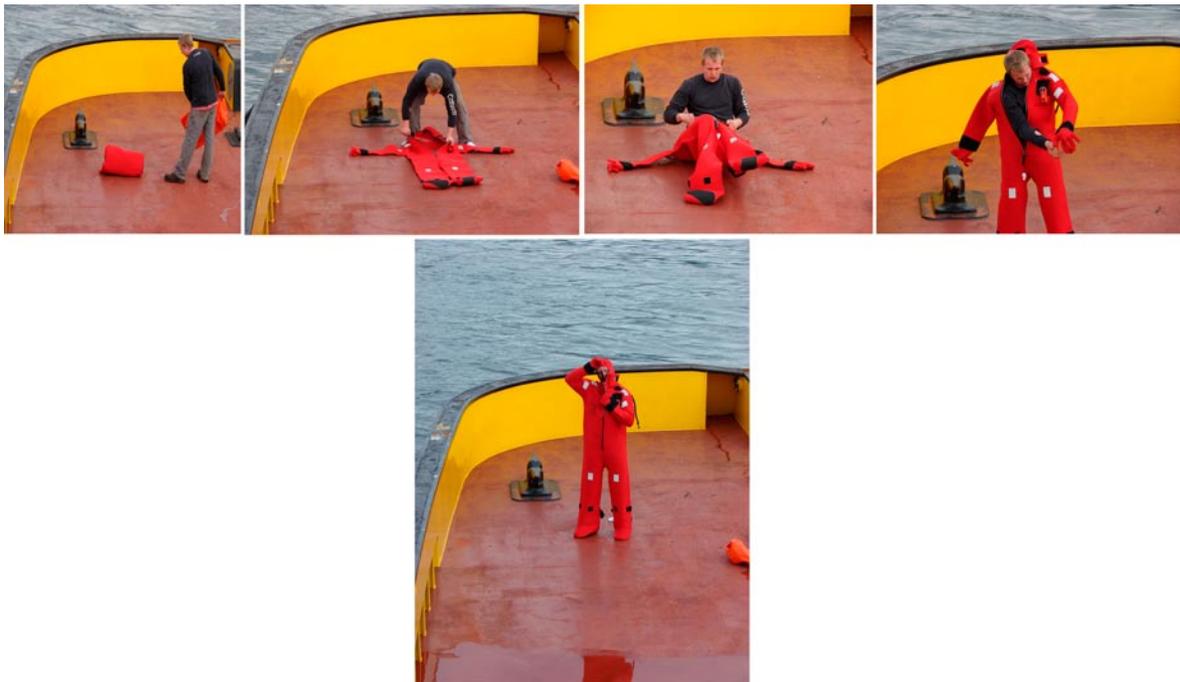
Donning a survival suit is an easy task to measure. It's either on you and zipped up in less than one minute and thirty seconds or it isn't. The performance criterion is objective and easy to both observe and measure. Compare this with the skills required by a master to make the decision to abandon ship and get into those survival suits.

Decision-making tasks are complex and involve multiple factors. The effectiveness of his decision reflects his ability to assess many things--his vessel's damage, the on-scene weather, the time to possible rescue, the probability of his crews' survival by either staying with the vessel or taking to the water. These tasks are not as easy to measure.

As an evaluation tool, assessment programs can be an integral part of a company's personnel development program. However, any assessment program must respect the limits of the tool.

Closing the Gap

Employing the principles of objective performance standards and assessments closes the gap between a mariner holding a tool and being able to use the tool. Such a program can enhance the likelihood that not only can you get in your survival suit on our foundering vessel in the Bering Sea, but that all your fellow crewmembers can do so as well. It may be the difference between a mariner being frozen on deck with survival suit in hand or plunging into the sea with his best chance of survival.



Good Metrics

by Dione Lee
President - QSE Solutions



One of my favorite American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) auditors, Chuck Shull, always tells me: “I want to see good metrics, Dione”. “Good metrics” is the only objective, quantifiable, absolute way to ensure your management system is working and making a difference.

One of the best standards, if implemented correctly, is ISO 14001:2004. I like this standard for a couple of reasons. First, for sustainability of this planet, it makes good sense. Second, the standard itself has embedded requirements that guide an organization to discover their “good metrics” when implementing this standard.

ISO 14001:2004 requires you to identify “environmental aspects and impacts” within your different operating areas. Then you are required to perform a rating task to come up with those aspects and impacts that are “significant” to the environment. Once you have identified the significant aspects and impacts from the non-significant ones, you are required to establish “objectives and targets” to make them less significant.

“good metrics” is the only objective, quantifiable, absolute way to ensure your management system is working...

Objectives (performance goals) and Targets (performance requirements) can be further defined into measurable work instructions or “sub-targets”. For example, your target is to have zero spills on the water every year. Your work instructions may consist of reviewing all training records in the past year to ensure 100% compliance and/or 50% reduction of all spills to deck. Whatever measurable work instructions you set in order to achieve your objective, be sure to assign a responsible person(s) and due date for accountability.

With this quantifiable data you can objectively measure your performance from year to year. The beauty of this standard is that you can apply the same concept to your other management systems, whether it is safety, quality or personnel development.

QSE Solutions has partnered with individuals and organizations to implement customized quality, safety and environmental management and learning systems for 20 years. They have developed and fine tuned an integrated, innovative, and dynamic teamwork approach for bringing positive and sustainable change within organizational operating environments. To learn more visit us at www.qsesolutions.com.

Act of God? Probably Not

by Thomas G. Waller

A summer storm brings high winds. Spring lines part, a boat surges. A pier is damaged. An adjacent barge is struck. Claims are made and the owners of the barge and dock blame any would-be offender. The boat's owner and operator raise the "Act of God" defense, claiming the winds were extraordinary and damages inevitable. Litigation ensues. The judge or jury is left to decide whether the damages arose from an unrecoverable Act of God or whether they are attributable to a negligent act of a mariner. The result? God is predictably acquitted. The operator, who failed to plan and prepare for the storm, is found liable. Often raised and usually defeated, the Act of God defense rarely exonerates. Vigilance, preparation and skillful execution, in turn, rarely suffer defeat.

For legal and insurance purposes, an Act of God is fundamentally an event beyond human control. The term is at least three hundred years old and is believed to have first been used in this country as an exception to liability of common carriers. In the marine setting, heavy weather is the most common circumstance giving rise to Act of God claims. It is an exceedingly rare case where the defense prevails.

The "Act of God" defense is often misunderstood as any unfortunate act of nature causing damage. The defense is considerably more limited. At a bare minimum, the defense is grounded on the unforeseeable violence of nature, not merely unfortunate results. An Act of God has been defined by the courts as "any accident, due directly and exclusively to natural causes without human intervention, which by no amount of foresight, pains, or care, reasonably to have been expected could have been prevented." The U.S. Supreme Court is more succinct: an Act of God is a loss that

occurs "in spite of all human effort and sagacity."

Courts largely disfavor the Act of God defense and will scrutinize the factors giving rise to any such claim. The factors considered include the severity of the natural occurrence, the reasonable predictability of the event, the lack of human involvement in the damage, and the reasonableness of any precautions. In most cases, an event of nature must be so extraordinary that the history of climatic variations and other conditions in the particular locality affords no reasonable warning. The unstated rule seems to be if the violent weather occurred in the past -- anytime in the past -- it may be assumed to occur again. Not surprisingly, if severe weather is predicted, an Act of God will not usually be found.



A mariner relying on the Act of God defense must prove he or she did everything that reasonable care required. Every reasonable possibility of avoidance or mitigation must be exhausted. Anything less will likely sacrifice the defense.

Court cases involving unsuccessful Act of God defenses are legion. A federal court in Seattle decided in the early 1990's that a vessel operator failed to establish an Act of God defense when winds in the Aleutian Islands approached one hundred knots. The court faulted the defendant operator for failing to adequately guard against the storm. Governmental publications, cited by the court, warned that "the weather of the Aleutians is characterized by persistently overcast skies, strong winds, and violent storms [.]" Federal courts in New York and Florida have reached similar results. In New York, a court found that Beaufort Scale winds of 10-11 and wave heights of nearly forty feet were not enough to establish an Act of God. The conditions were ostensibly "typical weather conditions" for winter in the North Atlantic. The Florida court decided that winds of one hundred knots were not "of such force that no reasonable preparations would have prevented [the ship] from breaking free from her moorings."

As a point of clarification, it is not unusual for a court to agree that an Act of God occurred (such as a hurricane), but that the vessel operator or mariner was nevertheless responsible for the loss. Mariners have been faulted, in the face of extraordinary weather, for myriad errors that forfeited the Act of God defense. The errors have included: failing to maneuver to lessen the effects of weather; foregoing additional ballast; failing to let out more anchor chain; failing to identify a more favorable anchorage; and, heading to sea -- or running toward port -- as a storm approached. Even hurricanes, which have been called "precisely the sort of natural disaster for which the Act of God exception is afforded," are insufficient to establish a successful defense if the predicted track, time of landfall and severity of the hurricane are accurately predicted. Environmental statutes in the United States have, in fact, been drafted with the understanding that exceptional

"...an Act of God is a loss that occurs "in spite of all human effort and sagacity."

weather must be anticipated. ("[A] major hurricane may be an Act of God, but in an area (and at a time) where a hurricane should not be unexpected, it would not qualify as a 'phenomenon of exceptional character'.") In the Northwest, a former Admiralty judge once stated there is no such thing as a heavy-weather defense in the North Pacific in winter.

The Act of God defense has, on occasion, been successfully asserted. In the mid-1980's, a 117' three-masted sailing ship and nineteen (of twenty-eight) persons on board, were lost near Bermuda in a tall ships race. The weather and seas had been fair during the early June voyage. The wind suddenly picked up in the early hours of June 3. The rain became fierce, almost torrential. The wind intensified. The ship was caught in an unforecasted squall. Without warning, the ship was hit broadside by a wind gust of hurricane or near hurricane force. The ship was slammed over on her starboard side, began taking on water and sank in less than two minutes. An investigation found the loss to have been caused by

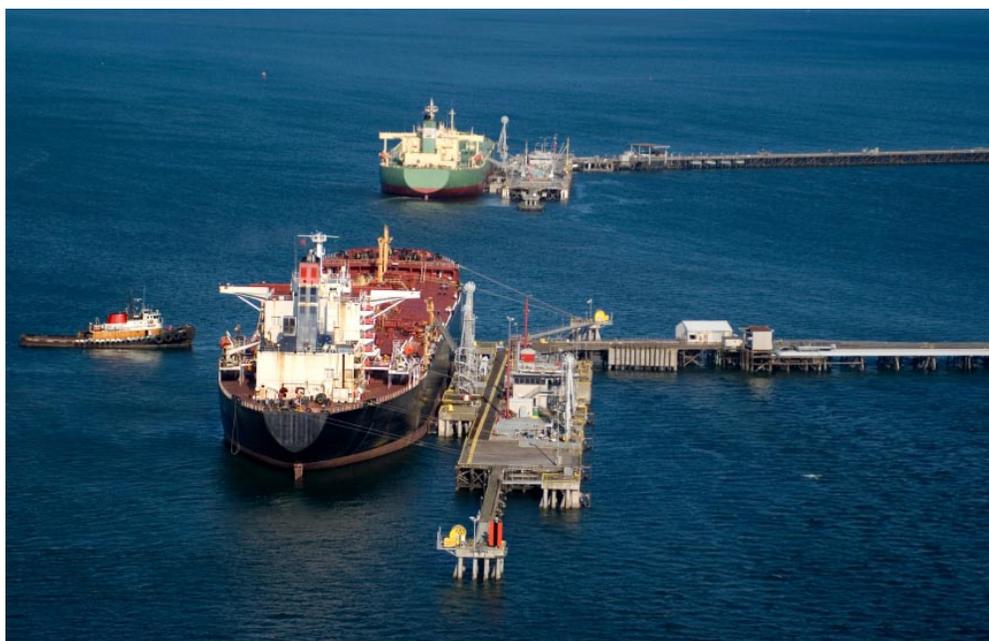
an "unexpected and violent squall, probably in the nature of a down draught superimposed on a line squall." At trial in Rhode Island, the Court concluded that the strength of the squall was a Force 11 or 12 and that the cause of the sinking was an Act of God ("clearly an unfortunate and unpredictable encounter with hurricane force winds"). In another lawsuit, involving cargo inbound to Houston, goods were water damaged in a pierside warehouse. Thirteen inches of rain fell in a period of three hours. The weather bureau had predicted only a 15% chance of rain that day. The trial court found, and the appeals court agreed, that the damage could not have been prevented by reasonable care and foresight. The amount of sudden rainfall and flooding sufficiently surpassed what might normally have been expected by way of summer thunderstorms. The damage was attributable to an Act of God.

The Act of God defense also arises in areas other than tort claims involving allegations of negligence. In private contracts, for instance, force majeure clauses often excuse nonperformance for an Act of God or other circumstance beyond the control of the parties. The excuse generally requires the party claiming relief under the contract to show: 1) that the unforeseen event made performance impracticable, 2) that the parties to the contract assumed the event would not occur, 3) that the event was not the fault of either party, and 4) the party seeking relief did not assume the risk of the alleged Act of God.

Under U.S. statutes, the occurrence of an Act of God may also be a defense to liability. The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA) states that a responsible party is not liable for removal costs or damages if it proves the discharge, damages or removal costs were caused solely by an act of God. OPA specifically requires that the Act of God be the sole cause of the incident, with no contributory action by the responsible party. In shipping, the Carriage of Goods by Sea Act provides an exception to carrier liability for loss or damage arising or resulting from an Act of God.

Ultimately, an operator or vessel owner is charged at all times with the duty to exercise prudent seamanship, reasonable care and to follow recognized customs in the marine industry. The standard applies while operating offshore, inshore, at anchor, alongside and everywhere in between. In the context of storm preparation, reasonable care amounts to whether the mariner used all reasonable means available and took proper action to guard against, prevent or mitigate the dangers posed by the incoming tempest. Only if the operator reasonably prepares for and responds to a storm -- even if the storm ultimately does cause damage or loss -- will the operator stand a reasonable chance of exoneration. To the extent a operator fails to exercise the applicable standard of care, the likelihood of a successful Act of God defense is effectively nil.

Tom Waller practices maritime law in Seattle with Bauer Moynihan & Johnson, LLP.



The Reward is Never Worth the Risk

Interview with Captain Wade Bassi

In 33 years Captain Wade Bassi has never had an incident on his fishing vessel the Polaris. This is a very impressive record for a vessel and crew who fish in Northern Alaska every year for halibut and sablefish, commonly referred to as black cod. Following the course chartered by his father, who also fished the same waters his entire career, Captain Bassi has gained invaluable wisdom and the secret for staying safe at sea: **“The reward is never worth the risk”**. “You only get one chance [at life]”, Wade adds, and safety should always come before profit.

After talking with Captain Bassi, there were other words of wisdom gleaned from how he has been able to maintain a zero incident safety record for over 3 decades.

Boat maintenance is a top priority. Being prepared by ensuring the boat is in good operating order is essential before he goes out to sea. Wade does not compromise when it comes to his equipment, especially the critical systems, which have more than one, sometimes three or four back-ups for critical components and safety equipment. “When you are out in the middle of the ocean, you want to make sure you are prepared.”

Keeping the crew engaged and alert is a priority for Captain Bassi, especially on watch. To ensure his crew is “awake” they participate in safety and emergency drills; manually setting course changes; and, setting watch alarms to go off every 15 minutes. He wants them challenged, always thinking, and never dependent on just one method of accomplishing something; such as, confirming location information from two different sources of electronic navigation equipment, like radar and GPS.

Another safety assurance that he adheres to - **follow all the regulations**. “As much as I don’t like them, they are there for a good reason”, states Wade. Some of these regulations include regular safety checks by the US Coast Guard and insurance companies.

Captain Bassi is forthright in crediting additional regulatory factors that have contributed to his spotless record, and an excellent safety record shared by all longline fishing vessels in the North Pacific. One factor is the highly controversial regulation that instituted individual fishing quotas (IFQs) in 1995, replacing the traditional “race for the fish” derby fishing. Wade asserts that this type of management has been healthy for the fish and the fisherman alike, resulting in less pressure to fish in high risk conditions. The IFQs have also assured that the “value of the fishing is with the fishermen”. In addition, Wade feels that “there isn’t a better



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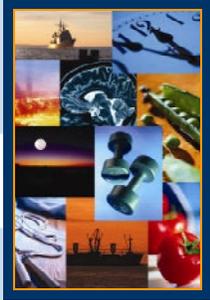
managed fishery in the world than the halibut fishery”, which is managed by the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC).

And finally, he advises - just **use your common sense**. Fishing in the North Pacific is “miserable and hard work”. To get the job done safely, pay attention to what you are doing, how you are doing it, and have the foresight to know the consequence of your action. After 33 years and zero incidents, Wade and his crew have a good track record for using common sense.

Zero Incidents – it’s simple:

- ✓ Adopt a safe attitude – “The reward is never worth the risk”.
- ✓ Maintain your vessel – your life and livelihood depend on it.
- ✓ Keep the crew engaged – you want them alert.
- ✓ Follow all the regulations – they are there for a good reason.
- ✓ Use common sense – it is your best safety guide.

If you have something you would like to share with other crewmembers or questions you would like answered to ensure safe voyages, this is the forum. Please submit your thoughts or questions to office@qsepublishing.com. In the subject header type: Mariner’s Forum. Thank you.



The following excerpts are from the book: "The Galley Chef – A Healthy Guide For Hearty Eats Onboard The Vessel".

Food Storage

Storing food properly is the first step in handling food safely. Once provisions are brought aboard the boat, items that need to be frozen or refrigerated should immediately be put away.

Packaging and Expiration Dates

Check packages and expiration dates to make sure that the food is properly wrapped, sealed, and fresh. Any damaged items, broken seals, or unlabelled cans indicate that the food should be disposed of. Once a dry good is opened, read the label to see if the item needs to be refrigerated after opening. Most condiments and salad dressings should be stowed in the refrigerator after the seal is broken.



Rotate Food Stock

Remember to rotate your stock. Stow by date - place oldest items in front to be used first. Spend some time each day looking over your stores and produce for moldy, rotten, or past due food items. "When in doubt, throw it out."



Oatmeal Blueberry Muffins

Courtesy of Sara Craig, Crowley Maritime Corporation

Serves: 4-5

1	egg
1	cup buttermilk or yogurt as substitute
1/3	cup softened butter
1/2	cup brown sugar
1	cup rolled oats
1/2	cup whole wheat flour
1/2	cup white flour
1	teaspoon baking powder
1	teaspoon salt
1/2	teaspoon baking soda
1	cup blueberries or other fruit

1. Preheat oven at 400°F.
2. Spray or wipe muffin tin with oil, butter or non-stick spray.
3. Mix wet ingredients together.
4. In a separate larger bowl, mix dry ingredients together.
5. Fold wet into dry ingredients, be careful not to over mix.
6. Add fresh or frozen blueberries.
7. Pour into muffin tin and bake until golden brown, about 15-20 minutes. Insert toothpick in center to see if they are ready; the toothpick will come out clean.
8. Remove tin from oven, let sit for about 5 minutes to cool and then remove muffins.



If you have a healthy and hearty dish you would like to share, please submit your recipe to office@qsepublishing.com. Thank you.

My Personal Safety Promise

by Captain John Spicher

Safety Manager - K-Sea Transportation LLC, Pacific Division

To make safety “real” to mariners, I have created “My Personal Safety Promise”. This promise is a personal commitment I make to every single employee and their families within our organization. It serves as a reminder to existing employees and is part of our orientation for new hires, which I sign and date.

It is my belief that safety has to be “real” to make sense, not just a list of rules and regulations we must follow. Once people understand that safety is part of what we do, like putting on our pants in the morning, and accept that it is the right thing to do, it becomes a value.

The intent of “My Personal Safety Promise” is to have no one get injured while at work, so we can all go home at the end of our hitch and enjoy our families and hobbies.

My Personal Safety Promise

- Expect safety performance to be – “Best in the World” (I don’t want to be “World Class” I want to set the standard)
- That safety adds value to the process and overall to the business
- To actively take charge of safety and have safety be visible
- To ensure that everyone has access to safety information and training
- That all jobs can be done safely – people matter, not just the work
- Stretch safety so everyone learns, understands and values safety
- Measure the progress and share the results along the way
- Safety rules are only part of the program, safe behaviors make the work safe
- Recognize safety done right and acknowledge those involved...be proactive
- Ensure all employees fully understand their responsibility and authority to stop work for unsafe conditions and unsafe work practices
- Make my actions clear so people understand safety is a personal value

John earned an accredited bachelor of science safety degree from Oregon State University and holds a USCG Masters License. He is a Professional Member of the American Society of Safety Engineers and a member of the National Safety Council, Waterborne Transportation Safety Group.

Achieving Success by Keeping Elements of Maritime Personal

By Richard Berkowitz

When I first started working on the waterfront 25+ years ago, most young mariners I met were introduced to their careers in the deep-sea or brown water fleet through some family or neighbor connection. It was not a rare experience to find three generations of family members working together in the same firm. The skills, responsibilities, and safe work methods were shared at the workplace and family table. Years later when I returned to the industry, finding such familial training connections had become an uncommon occurrence. This was particularly so in Alaska where I was seeking to equate the Jones Act to Alaska's long-held conviction to "local hire."



Recruiting and Training Initiative

This objective would be accomplished through training and hiring initiative conceived by the Seafarers International Union (SIU) in partnership with the former Sea-Land Service (now Horizon Lines), Totem Ocean Trailer Express (TOTE), and Alaska Tanker Company (ATC). In partnership with the state of Alaska, it was determined to use state administrative and workforce education funds to hire a placement administrator dedicated to seeking out, recruiting, and preparing young Alaskans for training at the Seafarers and industry-affiliated Paul Hall Center in Piney Point, Maryland. Upon graduation, newly certified mariners would be employed on U.S.-flag vessels.

The union established an office in Anchorage and hired an Alaskan well versed in maritime and a demonstrated commitment to mentoring young people. The state hired a former high school career counselor with experience as a law enforcement officer. Together, they respectively reached out to the south central and south eastern Alaskan communities they lived in to recruit.

The nature of Alaska sometimes called for kids to drive or fly into Anchorage to take the required entry tests and interview. The union agent would often have the prospective mariners, stay with his family, and share meals while undergoing their physical exam, taking the entrance reading and math proficiency tests, and applying for their USCG merchant marine documents in Anchorage. In this manner, he became familiar with their character, strengths, and challenges. He also had his own set of personal performance indicators. If the youth showed up late - even just a few minutes beyond their appointed time - he would simply tell them if they were on a vessel and missed being aboard at the time noted on the sailing board, they would

likely miss their ship, stress their fellow crew members, increase safety risks, and be responsible for paying their own way back from a port-of-call as far off as Madagascar. The agent would then immediately dismiss them with a single invitation for another appointment. Not all came back to see him; however, those that did always arrived early and had learned a critical lesson before they began their formal training.

With this type of engagement, he got to know those he recommended for training. So when he got a call from the training center in Maryland that one of his referrals somehow slipped through the cracks and was discovered to have been on probation (thus ineligible for a Z-card) and would need to be sent back after two weeks in the program, the SIU agent negotiated with the school to continue his training for a week while he attempted to work the issue out. Given his personal connection with the young person he was certain, if given a chance to excel; this apprentice mariner would have the right stuff.

Consequently, he got in touch with the youth's parole officer and the judge who had sentenced him. He made an appeal to both and reminded them that the program offered a nine-month course of study, an adult learning environment, full-time monitoring, discipline training, and guaranteed job placement upon graduation. With the choice of the latter or sending the kid back to the tough neighborhood and rough crowd he was finally able to escape from, the choice was clear. The probation was lifted by court orders. This scenario was a consequence of the personal nature of the recruitment and selection process developed by this dedicated individual. Similar stories continued to abound years later.

“One can measure and analyze everything and understand nothing.”

Anil Mathur

Although turning a life around is admirable, we are in an industry that always has an eye on achieving financial success. Doing good also must lead to the firm doing well. In this case, the time and effort spent on the selection process led to the training center noticing that Alaska apprentices were among the top candidates in the program with the best leadership, ship skills, competencies, and attitude. A decade after the program began; they continue to have higher graduation and industry retention rates. Another benefit from the initiative is the goodwill obtained from Alaska State and federal policymakers who are adamant about local hire and appreciate the notion of there being no one better to protect Alaska's water than those who have encountered its hazards and beauty throughout their lives.

Actively Lead Safety

Another example of achieving success by keeping it personal is the unparalleled safety performance of Alaska Tanker Company (ATC). This crude oil tanker operator in the Valdez-West coast oil trade has a record of transiting in the demanding and unforgiving North Pacific/Gulf of Alaska while maintaining a fleet safety milestone of more than six calendar years without a spill to sea and 12 million man hours without a lost-time injury for its fleet. ATC's top executive, Anil Mathur, sets the tone and expectations of a personal commitment to safety from his line managers and top vessel operating personnel. He expects his managers

“to actively lead safety” and recognize it as a paramount duty for the firm’s shareholders, employees, and communities it serves. This attitude then filters down to all staff and crew.

The techniques used to accomplish this task are numerous. ATC has mastered: job hazard analysis; near miss reporting; intolerance for complacency; advanced safety audits; management by walking around (or in this case riding the ships); collaborative team management; and, rigorous and relentless training among other practices.

Anil Mathur likes to share a story that occurred early in his career at ATC. An incident occurred on a vessel in which a crew member was seriously hurt. Anil asked for the captain of the vessel to immediately fly down from the Cherry Point, Washington oil terminal to ATC headquarters in Gresham, Oregon. Mathur would meet with him personally, but not after having the ship’s chief officer spend several hours waiting in the lobby. When they do meet, the CEO asks the captain if he knows where the injured crew member is from, if he is married, how many children, if any, he has, what his hobbies are, and how he spends his vacation time off the ship. The officer couldn’t provide an answer to any of the questions. The captain is dismissed from the meeting with the requirement that he is to spend the next few hours developing a measurable performance plan for safety improvement which will be reviewed by the CEO and his line management team and distributed throughout the fleet. Just as critical, the intervention and how it was handled by the CEO spreads organically all through the organization.

Taking it personal is certainly one of the points made to the captain. For in Mathur’s mind, knowing your crew - on a personal level - will compel you as a leader to have greater empathy and responsibility for getting the job done safely. In this manner, ATC has transformed its culture. “One can measure and analyze everything and understand nothing,” Mathur has noted. “Safety is personal. It is unacceptable to not care about your employees’ safety, especially for those pushing profit over safety. Safe behaviors bring lower costs and increase quality.”

Final Thought

In conclusion, I wish to leave you with a final thought from Anil Mathur, one he shared with a convention of maritime labor representatives not long ago and reflects both ATC’s corporate culture and deservedly recognizes those who have followed him down a path well worth taking. According to Mathur, “We see safety as deeply personal and not about statistics. Safety is about taking care of ourselves every day, so we can live full lives and earn a good living for our loved ones. Our seafarers have responded with maturity and responsibility to the work environment we have jointly created.”

Rich is the Director, Pacific Coast Operations for the Transportation Institute, a Washington-based, non-profit organization dedicated to maritime research, education, and promotion. His professional priorities include promoting the U.S.-Flag maritime industry, improving training opportunities for young people, and enhancing marine safety.

Alleviating Licensing Stress

By Norleen Schumer

Former Assistant Chief of Licensing for the US Coast Guard and current Owner and Chief Evaluator for MaritimeLicensing.com

By federal law, you must be properly licensed and or documented to operate on a commercial vessel. My job was, and still is, to make sure that you are licensed and/or documented properly in accordance with those laws.

Each mariner must have a specific amount of underway sea service and or formal training (schooling) to meet the requirements in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) specific to the license or document that the mariner is trying to qualify for. The CFR also sets the requirements for safety; training; examinations; STCW qualifications; vessel manning; drug testing; security issues; and, a multitude of other details. This helps the Coast Guard and the industry in ensuring that the mariner is equipped with all of the necessary knowledge, ability and training to hold a US Coast Guard license or Merchant Mariner's Document (MMD).

It is very important that you have all of the required paperwork on hand and in the proper format when you visit your local US Coast Guard Regional Examination Centers (RECs) when applying for an original, renewal, raise in grade or an endorsement.

It can be very frustrating and stressful after traveling 300 miles to be told that you need to come back at a later date because something was missing or incomplete, which I have seen happen over and over again in my career.

To help alleviate this stress, let's go over the basics of what you need when you arrive at the REC:

- √ Proof of Citizenship
- √ Naturalization Certificate
- √ Current State or Federal Picture ID
- √ Physical Examination Report
- √ Character References for Licenses
- √ Acceptable Drug Test
- √ Documented Sea Service
- √ Maritime Course Certificates
- √ Complete Application (Attached Statements for any "Yes" Answers)
- √ 2 Passport Size Photographs (Required for an MMD or STCW)
- √ TWIC (Required for all States in 2009)



The above mentioned items will also need to be originals and satisfy certain criteria of acceptance, which can be found on the US Coast Guard website: http://www.uscg.mil/nmc/st-info-packs/General_Package.pdf.

To magnify the issue of making sure you have everything in order and done correctly is the transfer of the US Coast Guard's licensing services to Martinsburg, West Virginia. There will still be a local REC center; however, it will be even more critical that you have your "ducks in a row" prior to visiting the center for mandatory face-to-face fingerprinting, and verification of all your original documents.

What you want to avoid is having your paperwork submitted to the US Coast Guard National Maritime Center (NMC) by the REC and receiving a letter requiring additional information within 90 days or the application will be null and void.

To alleviate this stress - be prepared and do your homework.

Norleen recently retired as the Assistant Chief of Licensing for the US Coast Guard, where she has spent the last 22 years in the Seattle Regional Exam Center; her signature is found on most mariners US licenses, STCW certificates or Merchant Mariner Documents (MMD/Z-CARD). She is currently providing licensing and mariner document consulting services to help mariners navigate through this process.

