

## Expert thinking on critical issues

SAFETY4SEA, in association with the North of England P&I Club, discusses topical industry issues.

### Q: "Is the maritime industry measuring its safety performance effectively?"



**Alvin Forster**  
Deputy Director  
(Loss Prevention),  
The North of England  
P&I Club

**No** The most common methods of measuring safety tend to focus on 'lagging indicators', which is basically looking into past performance. Typically, this measures how many fatalities, injuries or near misses have been reported (which is not necessarily the same as how many have actually occurred) and ultimately producing a statement of how many days have been "LTI-free". In an open and just culture, these measures remain very valuable. But if a culture exists where reporting is feared (either through fear of retribution or not wanting to be the one that breaks their proud "LTI-free" record), then these measures don't paint the real picture of what actually happens on-board. It's time to complement this with measuring 'leading indicators'.



**Capt. Mark Bull FNI**  
Marine Consultant,  
Trafalgar Navigation

**No** this answer is simple. Did we not establish the ISM Code more than 20 years ago now as a leading indicator for marine safety? So where are the numbers? Where are the annual totals of nonconformities issued and under what category? Is there any benchmarking of nonconformities under ship type? Are the same nonconformities being repeated? Is anybody noticing the connection between specific accidents and specific elements of the Code? Every accident or incident since the introduction of the Code is a failure of the Code itself. How can we report on the effectiveness of the Code if we have no numbers? Welcome big data!



**Erwin Derlagen**  
COO,  
Enesel Limited

**No** In respect of crew incidents, we use as a basis of investigation statistics of injuries or fatal accidents, whereas the focus of any inquiry should be the root cause of every incident. In respect of machinery breakdowns, it is virtually impossible to get information on what caused the problem, especially on modern vessels. Equipment today is designed to meet the "highest Class requirements". This admittedly sounds nice, however, in practice it means "minimum requirements", using modern design CAD software, calculating and meeting "spot-on" those requirements. The safety margin was once empirically agreed upon and comes from another non-computerized era. We need to have a fresh look and design robust equipment, with proper safety margins.



**Capt. Atul Vatsa**  
Vice President, Head  
of Compliance, Head  
of Marine & Safety,  
Thome Group  
(Singapore)

**Yes** Safety performance is effectively measured using the standard maritime codes (ISO, ISM, IMO). These codes are recognized as an efficient process to measure safety performance and have helped improve it over the past decades. Above all, the most important asset of any maritime organization is well-trained & competent seafarers. However, even competent seafarers can unintentionally make mistakes, so to combat this, training and seminars can be developed based on leadership excellence, risk management & behavior-based safety to adjust behavior. Safety should not just be a checklist exercise but taken seriously. Regular monitoring and effective training can enrich the fleets' own performance and provide effective benchmarking.



**Capt. Joel Ian Ayos**  
Manning Manager,  
Döhle Seafront  
Crewing Manila, Inc.

**Yes** Safety performance is being measured effectively. The big question is not the measurement but the accuracy of the data. The issue is more about the compliance with safety. The industry has implemented various rules and regulations which has been studied and reviewed overtime. Safety checklists and permits are in place, monitored, and measured properly. However, are these reports true and accurate or these are just numbers to impress prospective clients? We need: Transparency to expose the truth of what is really happening on-board and ashore; Support from all offices to fill in this gap; Motivate everybody to make a difference and; Teamwork where everybody is working together to achieve a common goal; the safety of the people, environment, and ship.



**Stavros Meidanis**  
DPA/CSO,  
S&Q Manager,  
Capital Ship  
Management Corp.

**No** Shipping companies set strategies in order to reach objectives measuring its safety performance. In return, they develop & follow processes in order to realize strategies through the achievement of objectives – this is a never-ending cycle. Shipping industry is changing rapidly. New technologies and innovation are adopted and implemented onboard vessels. Without the use of modern tools & technologies, it will not be possible to cope with new requirements & challenges for shipping sector. AI, Big Data, Business Analytics & Digitalization, should be the key factors to measure safety performance effectively and at the same time to comply with new rules and regulations. We have to keep in mind that all the above are necessary tools for decision-makers.



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**North**