

SAFETY. BY DESIGN?

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Editorial

Sadly, this edition of FEEDBACK contains several reports involving loss of life. They remind us that we cannot relax our vigilance, even for a moment, because the consequences can be fatal. Every death or serious injury at sea has repercussions far beyond the ship itself, not least for the family and friends whose lives are also irrevocably affected. So, please, remain alert and do your best to ensure you get home safely to your family.

There are a number of themes running through this edition, and many of them will be depressingly familiar to our regular readers. The dangers of working at height are well known, yet accidents and fatalities still occur frequently, as we highlight in the following pages. Similarly, the importance of ensuring watertight integrity during towing may seem obvious, yet we have received two reports where the danger was overlooked, and evidence from a regulatory body that the problem is quite widespread.

Tugs are becoming more powerful and sophisticated but there is ample evidence that training in the towage sector is not keeping up with the advances in technology. Is it time for national maritime authorities to take a closer look at tug training and associated topics, including the requirements for shipmasters with pilotage exemptions to be familiar with modern tug capabilities and limitations?

Poor design is another feature which appears in several of our reports, but all too often we accept what we are given and try to make the best of it, rather than pointing out the deficiencies and demanding that something be done about them.

Good companies will always welcome feedback from the fleet, although some of our reports suggest there are still companies which are reluctant to listen to their crews or spend any money on safety. This is disappointing because many other industries recognise that safety and efficiency go hand-in-hand. A safe company is a more efficient and profitable company, and it is high time more shipping operators realised this.

Finally, we have some reports where the officer who should probably have been supervising a job was doing the work personally. Removing the oversight in this way leaves an obvious gap. Do you have sufficient manpower to provide adequate supervision on your ship?

Until next time, be careful out there!



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