

“HOLDING ON TO TIGHT” - IS PROCEDURAL COMPLIANCE IS OVERRIDING “GOOD SEAMANSHIP” ?

Lars Axvi

Chalmers University of Technology, Sweden

Abstract

Shipping as a very diverse domain. Seagoing vessels are sociotechnical systems that comprise a large variety of ships tankers, cruise liners, container ships, bulkers, tug boats, military vessels, fishing boats, sailing on the high seas and along coasts and rivers. Most of the vessels in international trade rely on international rules, codes and regulations. The technical, operational and commercial differences are enormous and this is recognized in the preamble to International Safety Management code (ISM) “...no two shipping companies or shipowners are the same, and that ships operate under a wide range of different conditions...”. However, the implementation of the code follows an industry best practice approach striving to be compliant thus resulting in a dangerous conformity. Talking to practitioners, there is a growing frustration and detachment as procedures are not adjusted to their actual everyday working life.

The advancement of technology has brought changes to the design and operation of ships. The need to exercise care when introducing change is recognized by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Trade efficiency and cost cutting have been driving this change leading to an imbalance of the impact on personnel on board. With smaller crews and new technology, the need for training and coordination increases but there is a reluctance from the industry to invest in training that is not mandatory through international rules or guidelines. Further, despite the acknowledgement by IMO of the human element as being the last safeguard in maritime operations, there is a lack of an understanding for the positive contribution of personnel onboard to operational safety.

This presentation will address two different examples on how to create safe and efficient ship operations using the concept of joint activity. The cruise industry has, with recognition from Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), adopted a policy with recurrent training and assessment working with harmonized standing operating procedures, technical systems training and efforts ensuring good teamwork. The tanker industry has, through the Oil Companies International Marine Forum (OCIMF), a Ship Inspection Report Programme (SIRE) that focus the awareness on the importance of meeting satisfactory tanker quality and ship safety standards. Finally, these examples and especially the implementation of the efforts made in relation to the idea of procedural compliance and a resilience perspective, will be discussed.