



SAN NEWS

News about work environment and safety in shipping

1/08

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Inspection of load securing in Nynäs.

Inspections lead to better-secured loads

Too few lashing straps. Wrong lashing techniques. Too much free space between cargo and front wall. Hardly any of the trucks coming off the Polish ro-pax ferry pass the inspection without any criticism.

– Terrible, mutters police inspector Börje Laurin as he walks around the badly lashed metal sheets inside the truck.

He pulls on the slack lashing straps and then walks to the front, stating that there is at least 60 to 70 cm between the metal sheet and the front wall. The empty space in front of more than 20 tons of cargo is far too large, and if the metal starts

moving it could have drastic consequences. Björn Laurin climbs down from the trailer and out onto the grey, cloudy and windy quayside in Nynäshamn.

While the sullen-looking driver quickly closes the trailer, the Swedish policemen (who are responsible for checking how loads are lashed on our main roads) explain what needs to be done before he is allowed to continue onto the roads.

– We do not have the right to hand out fines for bad lashing in the harbour area. The punishment, you could say, is that they have to improve the lashing before they can set off, and that takes time, says Börje Laurin.

The column of trucks moves slowly over the ramp of the Bahamas-flagged "Baltivias". Now and then the trucks stop when one of the drivers has his breath checked, or there is a spot check on suspicious loads. Before arrival the shipping companies send out lists of load information to the authorities. The list states what each trailer contains and its weight. A first selection is made of which vehicles will be taken in for a more thorough inspection on the basis of these lists. According to the lists Börje Laurin is holding in his hand, there are 36 trailers on the ferry and he hopes they will have time to inspect as many as half of them.



Police Inspector Börje Laurin goes through the lists of loads with Customs Inspector Lars-Erik Carlsson.

– We are particularly interested in those coming in with building materials or steel and sheet metal weighing over 25 tons. But if we see anything suspicious, such as parts of load sticking out from under the tarpaulin, we take those in too. There are usually two or three of those on every ship.

Major inspections with five authorities

At today's load inspections with joint operations, representatives from the Customs, Coastguard, Swedish Maritime Administration, Work Environment Agency and Police all take part, and the quayside is full of warmly-clothed officials from the different authorities in fluorescent yellow vests. Major joint inspections like this are carried out about five times every six months in harbours in Stockholm County; smaller, spot checks take place about twice a month.

"Baltivia" is in regular traffic between Sweden and Poland and moors in Nynäshamn every other day. Traffic from Poland often has problems with loads, explains Bo Johansson from the Coastguard, which is the authority responsible for inspecting loads onboard ships.

– They often use very poor, worn lashing straps. It is also quite common that they use the wrong type of load carrier, such as a trailer that is not intended for the load being carried, he says.

– For a time we picked out Polish traffic and it gave results. When we started, about 75% of the vehicles were found to be faulty and after a couple of months that figure was down to 25%. But it is still far from satisfactory, and it is not only goods from Poland that are poorly secured.

Bo Johansson explains that Sweden, together with Finland, Germany and the Baltic states, is participating in an EU project to increase safety at sea through better lashing. The project has continued for two years and will be completed at the end of the year.

– Load inspections on the other side of the Baltic are almost non-existent and there is a lot that needs to be improved over there. The project has given us contacts in the authorities in the other countries involved, and now we know whom to turn to when we have problems.

"In Poland this is OK"

The inspectors on the quayside have split up into two groups. One group is next to the ramp and carries out checks for drink drivers and has a first look at the load. The other group is further down the quay and waves in trucks and trailers that need to be checked more thoroughly.

A truck with a blue tarpaulin has just been stopped. Farthest to the rear there are piles of closely packed, rectangular boxes that contain glass, according to the list of loads. But what has aroused the interest of the police in this particular vehicle are the 12 tons of reinforcing steel mats that are also on the list.

The driver lifts up the tarpaulin at the front of the trailer to reveal piles of reinforcing steel mats several metres high. The police immediately look at the free space between the goods and the front wall. One of them takes out a measuring tape and measures the gap.

– 60 centimetres, he states and puts the

measuring tape in his pocket. It is far too much.

They look more closely at the lashing straps. They are properly tightened but there are too few of them, and the Polish driver, Maciej Minta, is ordered to put four more in place.

– In Poland this is OK, he says in broken English, and points to the lashing.

But his argument cuts no ice with the inspectors and even though he has problems with the language he understands what needs to be done.

– It's no problem. This is important, he says and starts to make the lashing better.

Mikael Roos from Work Environment Agency appears between two vehicles. He put his hand into the black briefcase to hand back a certificate to one of the drivers. Mikael Roos has worked with securing loads for many years and in his opinion it is primarily ignorance that leads to poor lashing.

– A common mistake is that people think lashing straps are far stronger than they are in reality. Many people also believe that the load will stay still without any aids because it is so heavy, he says.

Drivers bear responsibility

No matter who has lashed the load, it is the driver who bears responsibility for how the goods are secured in the truck. And Mikael Roos tells us that he has had many discussions with drivers about securing loads over the years.

– Some are really interested and want to learn, while others don't care at all. One problem is the language. Some of them know so little English that they hardly understand what we're saying, but we usually have an interpreter with us, he says.

Patrik Granstam and Caroline Petrini, who both worked with load securing issues at the Swedish Maritime Administration, are also on the quayside in Nynäshamn.

– This is the first time I have been involved in an inspection and it actually looks better than I had expected, says Patrik Granstam. Certainly there are criticisms to be made, but I thought it would be even worse.

Caroline Petrini has a notebook in her hand and the two of them count how many lashing devices were missing when they inspected the vehicles.

– Only 60% had enough lashing eyes. Of course that is not good, but the result is not entirely unexpected, says Patrik Granstam.

Text and photos: Linda Sundgren

IMO says no to cargo-securing certificates

– We want to introduce a cargo-securing certificate but have not got any support for the idea from IMO, says Patrik Granstam from the Swedish Maritime Administration, who is currently working with a compendium of instructions for lashing cargo.

Patrik Granstam is a shipbuilder and works with cargo securing issues at the Administration. He believes that a cargo-securing certificate should be introduced. The certificate would include transportation on sea and land and would ensure that goods on carriers are correctly

secured. But when the Swedish delegation put forward the proposal at an IMO meeting, the reception was cool.

– It probably failed due to the administrative burden that it would involve. For a ship with several thousand containers, it would involve an enormous amount of administration. But we are going to take up the proposal again, says Patrik Granstam.

More accessible rules

Meanwhile he is occupied with summarising the current cargo securing regulations for the Swedish Maritime Administration. By creating a compilation, the rules for

cargo securing of and in load carriers, including bulk loads, will be more accessible to users. In this compendium there will also be a clear reference to the CSS code (Cargo Stowage Security), which contains IMO non-binding recommendations for securing cargo.

– We want cargo securing to come up to at least the standard in the CSS code. But we do not wish to interfere in how that is achieved, says Patrik Granstam.

Text and photo: Linda Sundgren



Patrik Granstam

Swedish Accident Investigation Board:

“Shifting of cargo sank Finnbirch”

Poorly lashed cargo can expose crew and passengers to mortal danger. The Finnbirch disaster, which resulted in two deaths, was probably caused by unsecured goods.

On 1 November 2006 there was a storm in the southern Baltic. The Swedish registered ro-ro ship “Finnbirch” left Helsinki, bound for Århus in Denmark. She never reached her destination. After having problems in the appalling weather conditions and remaining heeled over for more than four hours, she sank in the waters between Öland and Gotland.

Of the fourteen-man crew, two died.

An accident inquiry is underway at the Swedish Accident Investigation Board, and all the evidence indicates that the outcome was caused by movements on the cargo deck.

– We are working on the theory that there was a massive shift of cargo and many of the records will be concerned with the load, says Ylva Bexell, head of the investigation.

Vinca Gorthon sank in the same way

The investigation is not yet completed and Ylva Bexell does not want to go into details for that reason. But she says that the accident on the “Vinca Gorthon” in 1988 probably followed a similar sequence of events. In that case, too, it was a ro-ro ship sailing under a Swedish flag. The cargo was mainly trucks loaded with rolls of paper standing on end.

When the ship was hit by hard weather



in the North Sea the rolls of paper were torn loose. “Vinca” started to heel over more and more, and just over 24 hours later she started to slowly disappear into the depths. By then the crew had been evacuated.

Experts in agreement

Karl-Arne Johansson is in charge of work environment at Seko Seafarers and a member of the Swedish Marine Work Environment Board, SAN. He participated in an information meeting about the investigation of the “Finnbirch” in December last year, arranged by the Swedish Accident Investigation Board, and explains that the lecturers’ opinions of what had happened were unanimous.

– The experts were agreed that badly lashed cargo and hard weather caused the

accident, and that the outcome would have been different had the cargo been better secured.

“Great ignorance”

It appears that the international rules on securing loads were not followed.

– There seems to have been great ignorance, onboard and ashore, about how cargo should be secured. Quite simply, they did not know how the load should have been lashed, says Karl-Arne Johansson.

The final report on the “Finnbirch” has been delayed. Its completion date is uncertain.

– We were forced to deal with another matter meanwhile, but I hope that it will be completed before the summer, says Ylva Bexell.

Linda Sundgren

New year, renewed efforts

You are holding the first issue of SAN News 2008 in your hand. You will recognise it from last year, but a new vignette – Profile – has been added. Under that heading you will meet professionals that spend a large amount of time and effort improving the environment for those at sea.

The first person to be profiled is Anette Wugk at TT-Line, whom you can read about in this issue. Her ambition is to raise the status of work environment issues, which otherwise have a tendency to be put on the back burner when the workload grows and the pace of work increases.

You can also read about the tragic accident on the ro-ro ship Finnbirch in this issue. The Swedish Accident Investigation Board is looking into the accident at the moment and has determined that poor-

The first person to be profiled is Anette Wugk at TT-Line.

ly lashed cargo was probably the principal cause. Cargo securing is particularly in focus in this issue, including a report from the load carrier recently unloaded in Nynäshamn.

A burning issue that we revisit from time to time is the extremely high levels of fatigue that sometimes affect seafaring personnel. Small crews, frequent ports of call, increased administration and other activities have resulted in sleep coming in second place at times, and both Swedish and foreign research has shown that numerous accidents are caused by fatigue.

The issue is being discussed at the moment by IMO, but what this will lead to is as yet uncertain. An information brochure about tiredness onboard follows with this issue of SAN News. It is based on a research report from VTI that was published last summer. The brochure contains tips and advice about what can be done onboard to address the problem of fatigue.

We will naturally be following the issue closely, both here in Sweden as well as internationally.



Enjoy your reading!

*Linda Sundgren
Editor, SAN News*

~ OUTLOOK ~

"Yes" to super-convention

Work with ratification of the ILO super-convention for seafarers continues. The time period for submitting proposals in Sweden ran out in January, and when the responses are compiled the case will be prepared by the Swedish Ministry for Industry, Employment and Communications before a bill can be put before the Riksdag.

– A decision during the spring session of the Riksdag in 2009 is quite possible, says Leif Remahl at the Swedish Maritime Administration, who is the government expert on the case. Sweden wishes to make the ratifications at an early stage and I find it difficult to believe that the convention will not be adopted.

The convention was approved with an emphatic "Yes" in Geneva in 2006. It will come into force when 30 states that represent at least 33% of world trade tonnage have adopted it. At the time of writing only Liberia and the Marshall Islands have ratified it, but more are on the way.

Stricter handling of foodstuffs

– The work for ratification is in full swing in all major flag states in Europe. There is a lot of pressure from Brussels. The commission wants quick ratifica-

tion and the European parliament is encouraging member states to sign by 2010 at the latest.

According to Leif Remahl the convention will mean certain changes for Swedish shipping. Onboard it is mostly a question of more paperwork with administration of the new system, but also stricter handling of foodstuffs.

– At the moment anybody can work as a cook in Sweden, but when the convention is adopted everybody who cooks onboard must be trained as a cook or have another education that is approved by the Maritime Safety Inspectorate. This could present a problem for small tonnage, which often lacks trained cooks, says Leif Remahl.

For shipping companies the convention may lead to fairer competition.

– Hopefully the competition situation will even out as standards onboard become more uniform. And it was actually the international shipping association that initiated the convention from the start, explains Leif Remahl.

The biggest change will be felt by the Swedish Maritime Agency. New detailed regulations must be drawn up and incorporated into the rules, and inspectors must be trained.

Linda Sundgren

~ PRODUCT NEWS ~



Computer program predicts tiredness

Do you have problems with tiredness onboard, but find it difficult to get an overview of how serious the situation really is? A computer program called the Sleep and Wake Predictor (SWP) may be able to help you. It is based on a mathematical calculation model and can be used for planning watches, exercises and other activities onboard.

By entering information about working hours and off-duty watches for individual crewmembers before a coming voyage, predictions of how tired each person will be during the trip are made. Dangerously high levels of tiredness can be foreseen and avoided if it is possible to make changes in the watch schedule.

SWP is available on the Swedish Maritime Administration website at http://www.sjofartsverket.se/upload/Forskningssdb/swp_2008.htm. The program has been developed at the Karolinska Institute in collaboration with the Navy and the Swedish Road and Transport Research Institute (VTI).

~ SWEDISH MARINE SURVEYING DEPARTMENT ~

The Swedish Maritime Administration continuously publishes information that may be of interest to the shipping industry. Below is a selection from the latest reports. Complete articles may be read on the Administration's website: www.sjofartsverket.se – the Swedish Maritime Administration.

From Insjö

At the time of writing there are 1,983 reports in the joint database for shipping, Insjö.

One of the latest reports describes an exercise using a stretcher. The stretcher was far too bad to use (it was weak, it could not be used to lift people vertically and it could not be carried from each end), and it was decided to replace it with a better model. It just goes to show that there are good reasons for testing equipment and techniques practically so that devices can be used for their intended purpose.

Insjö id. 1980

Accident statistics for 2006 ready – continued fall in accident levels

Statistics from 2006 show that the number of accidents on Swedish merchant and fishing ships continues to fall, despite a small increase in the number of ships registered. No reason has yet been established, but one guess is that electronic aids such as AIS may influence the figures positively to some extent. Neither can it be ruled out that increased awareness of safety issues onboard and at shipping

companies, for example in the form of increased internal reporting of near accidents, may have had a certain influence on results.

It should also be mentioned that the Investigation Unit firmly believes negligence concerning active lookouts on the bridge and bypassing rest time rules are two very important factors in accidents. The number of collisions and groundings would be halved at least if these rules were fully complied with.

Engine breakdowns increase over time

In general terms it appears that accidents in all categories have decreased, even though it is doubtful whether the number of engine breakdowns is permanently falling. If we look at statistics over a full ten-year period instead, it seems that events in this category are rising slightly.

When figures for 2007 are completed, they will hopefully confirm the trend change from 2006 and the downward tendency.

Fishermen live dangerously

With respect to deaths at sea due to accidents over the last eleven years, there are three main categories that stand out. These are fishing (not leisure fishing), falls overboard and accidents that take place in closed spaces.

Closed spaces continue to be mortal danger

The risks associated with closed spaces have been highlighted previously, but deserve to be mentioned again. Figures show that there has been a striking rise in such accidents in recent years that is difficult to explain. The vast majority have taken place since 2005. It is mainly loads not normally considered dangerous that

have been deadly, such as wood pellets, timber and wood chips. In one case it was rotting fish waste. When the cargo hold was being cleaned, two crewmembers died and one was severely injured.

Other personnel injuries

Seamen run almost twice as large risks of injuries at work in comparison with other categories in gainful employment. The difference has also increased in recent years due to the general fall in injury frequency, while the number of injuries at sea has remained relatively unchanged. This can possibly be explained by the changes in terms and conditions related to injuries and procedures for reporting sick in the last few years, which may have had greater impact for those working on land. Nevertheless, these figures need careful consideration.

Older personnel injured more often than younger

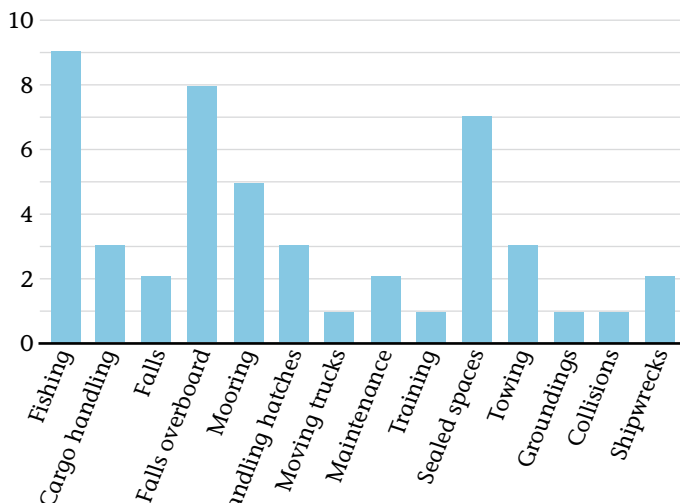
What is a little remarkable, though, is that injury frequency increases with rising age of personnel. The youngest categories have the lowest proportion of accidents whereas the proportion rises with age, finally growing radically for the age group 60–64.

It would seem reasonable that age and experience should have a preventive effect on accidents, but there are perhaps natural explanations if one considers the increasing susceptibility to injuries with increasing age. These injuries are costly for individuals, companies and society as a whole and there is good reason to work with accident prevention.

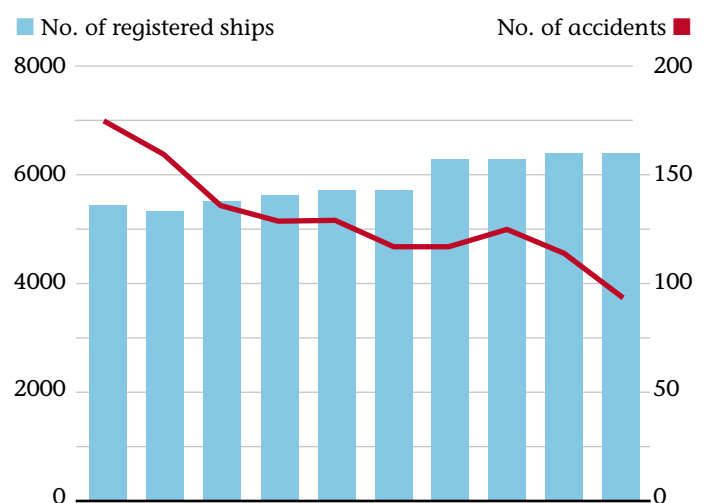
The Marine Surveying Department will continue to invest in inspections of work environment onboard ships.

Iu. SjöV medd. 1/2007

Deaths in accidents at sea 1997–2007



Accidents on board Swedish vessels 1997–2006



New guidelines will produce shorter sickness times

In the spring the National Insurance Office will apply new recommendations for the length of time off for sickness. This will lead to a decrease in absence due to sickness and other similar assessments.

As part of the government's efforts to reduce absence due to sickness, the National Board of Health and Welfare has produced a "decision supporting document" to be consulted when the length of sickness time is determined. The list has almost 90 different complaints, including symptoms, diagnoses and recommend time off sick.

– Investigations indicate that the process for giving time off due to sickness does not operate optimally at present. There are too large variations in how long people are registered as sick in different parts of the country and between different doctors. We hope that the guidelines will lead to more uniformity in assessments and shorter sickness times, says Anna Ericsson at the National Board of Health and Welfare.

The list includes the most common ailments in the register of the National Insurance Office. Lumbago, influenza and colds are some of them.

The guidelines will provide pointers

– Doctors will continue to make individual assessments on the basis of each patient. But the new guidelines will give an indication of approximately how long the time off should be, says Anna Ericsson.

As well as the recommendations, overall principles for time off for sickness have



Many tasks onboard may present problems for personnel who are not entirely healthy

been formulated. Illness reports must be active, with the clear goal of helping the person affected back to work as soon as possible. Right from the start of the report, the return to work should be planned. Further visits to doctors should not be seen primarily as an opportunity to extend the time off work, and a period of absence due to sickness may well take place in the middle of a working week.

Encourage follow-up

– We want to counteract passive registration of time off sick without any follow-up of how rehabilitation measures are being complied with, says Anna Ericsson.

Doctors and the National Insurance Office will use the guidelines. Doctors who judge a patient requires longer time off sick than that recommended by the National Board of Health and Welfare must give

Recommended time off sick

Guidelines provide recommendations for just over 90 complaints. Here is a short selection of them:

Influenza: one week

Lumbago: one week for light work, two weeks for heavy work.

Gout: one week

Breast cancer, no metastases: three weeks after a normal operation

Prostate cancer, no metastases: six weeks after operation

detailed motivation for their reasons. The risk is otherwise great that the National Insurance Office makes a different assessment from that of the doctor.

– Many doctors think that it is good to have these guidelines as an aid, Anna Ericsson points out.

Criticism from the medical profession

But there has been criticism of the guidelines, in particular from the medical profession. There is concern that the National Insurance Office will refuse medical assessments through reference to the recommendations. Some doctors feel that the recommended times off for sickness are too short in a number of cases.

– I can understand that there are some concerns, but we will follow developments closely in 2008 and 2009 and carry out follow-up work and evaluations. If it turns out that the recommended times do not correspond to normal practice we may need to correct them to gain better accuracy, explains Anna Ericsson.

Linda Sundgren

“Time off sick for seamen a special case”

Monica Widell, doctor at the company healthcare Feelgood in Göteborg, is uncertain what the new recommendations for sickness times will mean for seafaring personnel.

Feelgood has several shipowners among its customers, and Monica Widell points out that time off for sickness with seafaring employees is a little special.

– We must take into consideration the work situation onboard and the fact that people must have the energy to work 12 or 13-hour days for long consecutive periods.

– Those at work must also fulfil the

safety requirements for their position. It is information like this which must be included in doctors' motivations to the National Insurance Office when it is not considered possible to follow the recommendations of the National Board of Health and Welfare.

Painful ailments can be problematic

What effect the recommendations have in practice will depend to a large extent on how the National Insurance Office



chooses to interpret them, Monica Widell believes. Unquestioning compliance may mean that doctors' opinions are not taken sufficiently seriously.

– I think there may be a problem with painful ailments that are difficult to assess, such as chronic back pain. In this area the recommendations are rather vaguely formulated.

– But the guidelines may also do some good. Time off for sickness varies a great deal at the moment and this is perhaps a good way of achieving more uniform assessments.

Linda Sundgren

~ PROFILE ~

Anette Wugk: "I want to raise the status of work environment activities"

Raising the status of work environment activities. That is what Anette Wugk, deputy personnel manager at TT-Line, sees as one of her most important duties.

– We must get personnel to understand how much they have to gain by getting involved in their work environment.

"It varies." That is how Anette Wugk describes the general interest in work environment activities onboard the company's three Swedish-flagged ships. The work environment is something people work with because they must, not because they want to. But the lack of involvement is not so much due to a lack of interest as a shortage of time, she says.

– The crewmembers have so many rules, regulations and demands from the authorities that they do not have time to do work environment activities properly. What we can do on land to make things easier is to develop procedures and compile documentation. When new demands arise, as they do the whole time, we find out as much as possible before we inform the personnel on ships.

18 years with TT-Line

Anette Wugk started with TT-Line in 1990 and right from the start she was working with personnel and work environment issues, the latter taking more and more of her time - particularly since 2003 when the Work Environment Act was first applied at sea.

– The work environment has become better and we often hear from colleagues in the business that we have made good progress in this area. But there are certainly many aspects that we can improve on. For example, we need to spend more time on psychosocial questions, she says.

Long-term goals

– I want to raise the status of work environment activities and make personnel understand what they have to gain. But that is a long-term goal which will probably take time to achieve. Better atmosphere and solidarity, improved



Anette Wugk

Age: 42

Background: Personnel administration programme at Lund University

Present job: Deputy personnel manager at TT-Line, Trelleborg

Work environment is important for: being a competitive employer with the objective of creating and maintaining a safe place of work, physically as well as psychosocially.

health and fewer accidents are examples of results that can be gained from work environment activities.

Just now we are trying our best to find methods for changing attitudes and approaches to work environment activities.

– One way could be meetings with the crewmembers when they say how they think we should do things. Workshops and courses are among other suggestions. I would also like to have a network between shipping companies in which we can exchange experience with each other.

Diet and work satisfaction

Diet onboard will be reviewed after suggestions from the crew. Project groups with representatives from the crew as well as officers and the restaurant department have been started to come up with proposals for how to make the food healthier. Other areas that Anette Wugk would like to give more time are job satisfaction, motivation and leadership.

– It is not always easy to take up "soft" issues, and many people think that they are too sensitive or personal. The officers and we in the land-based organisation have a large task ahead of us to get it included on the agenda.

Linda Sundgren

~ IN BRIEF ~

Information on cleaning agents

Some cleaning agents and disinfecting liquids contain chemicals that can be harmful, and there are a number of different products used on ships. The Swedish Work Environment Agency has now compiled facts and statistics on cleaning agents in their series "Short facts in figures". They can be read at www.av.se/statistik under the heading Rengöringsmedel (Cleaning agents) - no. 14/2007.

Millions will go to noise research

AFA Insurance will donate a total of SEK 27 million to increase knowledge about noise and vibration in working life. The funds will go to a research programme that will run for three years and focus on noise-related problems through a number of different projects.

Debt for ill health falling

The so-called government debt for ill health is falling. According to the National Insurance Office, the debt amounted to SEK 765 billion in 2006, which was a decrease of SEK 28 billion since 2004.



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