



SAN NEWS

Work environment and safety in shipping

YEAR 35 1 / 11

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Sexual harassment led to speech disorder

By making what are called “health visits”, Furetank is trying to improve the health of its personnel and raise their awareness of diet and exercise. The shipping company's own health coach, Sussi Löfgren, is behind this initiative.

As a previous employee in the HR department and with a recent college diploma in the health area, Sussi Löfgren was re-employed at Furetank in 2008. Her task was to improve the well-being of the seafaring personnel and with that aim in mind she developed the idea of “health visits”.

– I travel with the ship for two or three days and talk with the crewmembers, both in groups and individually. If anybody wants help, such as with giving up smoking or starting to train, we can offer support. The concept is very simple, which I believe is an advantage if it is going to last.

Great interest onboard

Health visits start with a general introduction given on two different occasions so that everyone is able to take part. Individual meetings are then arranged.

The basis of discussions is a questionnaire about such things as smoking and alcohol habits, diet, exercise, sleep and general well-being. Sussi Löfgren gives advice to those who want it, and can also mediate with external contacts. Smokers can get tips about good treatment to give up the habit, a dietician can be engaged to



Emilia Åhfelt Dimitriadis was sexually harassed during a UN mission in Kosovo. Emilia consciously kept a low profile to avoid encouraging sexual comments.

help those who want to lose weight and an introductory programme can be arranged for those who wish to start training.

– But the big gain is that we focus on

these issues and show that we believe health is important. I hope to start off good habits for a few employees and in the long term I think that this can lead

to healthier personnel and a lower sickness rate.

During the ongoing crisis in shipping, the health visits were postponed as a result of the re-registration of ships, but Sussi Löfgren counts on starting them up again soon. So far she has been on four of the company's seven ships. Her experience is that seafarers are generally as interested in their health as the average man in the street, and that there is quite a lot of interest in diet and exercise onboard. But one factor that sticks out in the questionnaire responses is the sleep issue.

Lack of sleep widespread

Many feel that sleep is in short supply, despite the three-watch system.

– Above all, this is because we have arrivals and departures in the middle of the night, which means that staff have to be on off-duty watch, says Sussi Löfgren.

The company has an in-house training competition to encourage more exercise. Once a year the ship with the most active crew is rewarded with an extra contribution to its leisure activities account.

– We have well-equipped gyms on six

of our ships and hopefully soon on the seventh. Though the amount of exercise depends just as much on the people onboard as the equipment. On the ships where they train a lot there are generally one or two enthusiastic crewmembers who inspire the others, says Sussi Löfgren.

One thing that differs between seafarers and other employees is that they regularly change patterns and diurnal rhythms, depending on whether they are at home or work. This is an issue that seafarers often take up during health visits.

– Some people think it is easier to find good routines when they are onboard, while others say it is easier to live a healthy life at home. It is clear, though, that it can be difficult to readjust to new hours every four or six weeks, says Sussi Löfgren.

One of the health factors which employees onboard are not able to influence much is their diet. Sussi Löfgren's ambition is to introduce closer cooperation with the ship's cooks in order to encourage the health perspective on food served.

– When we went through the food



Emilia consciously kept a low profile to avoid encouraging sexual comments.

purchases from last year there were several people who commented on the biscuits. They said, "I would never buy those chocolate biscuits and have them at home, but here I eat them because they are available and on show". There are a lot of small changes that can be made, which all contribute to better eating habits.

Linda Sundgren

Adult bullying – subtle nastiness or open attack

Do you usually describe the talk at your working place as "raw but friendly?" If so, watch out! That sort of communication climate may well be a breeding ground for bullying.

Insulting discrimination, or adult bullying as it is also called, is a common problem at our workplaces. According to investigations, every ninth working person has been subjected to it, and women and men are affected more or less equally. Bullying comes in many different forms. Ignoring a person, getting up and leaving when somebody comes into the room, constant backchat and holding back information are some examples. Sometimes it is clear to others what is going on, but there are often just small signals which are only noticed by the person affected. Ilona Björk Bovin is a graduate sociologist and work environment consultant. She has worked with discrimination in working life for 15 years and has written a book on the subject.

– We usually refer to it as subtle nastiness, she says. It may be pointed looks, or people stop saying hello. Sometimes it is

very subtle, but just as unpleasant for the person involved.

She says that almost anybody can be a victim of bullying. In contrast, those who bully often have some qualities in common; greed for power, envy and poor self-esteem are common background factors.

Negative respect

– People who do not dare to stand up for themselves and their opinions are more likely than others to use unfair methods to get what they want. They need to put other people down to assert themselves, she says.

According to Ilona Björk Bovin it is not uncommon, either, for people who bully to have a leading role in the working group.

– It is often somebody who others have negative respect for. People are a little scared to stand up against this person and some are maybe afraid of being bullied themselves. Then it often becomes like a silent mob that says nothing, even though they see what is going on.

She says that the risk of bullying is



Ilona Björk Bovin, work environment consultant.

greater at a company with an unhealthy culture. If vulgar talk and sexual jokes are accepted, it is more likely that people will be insulted and feel bad than if you have a more professional attitude to each other.

– This is very much a leadership issue. If the manager is weak and unclear and perhaps uses vulgar language, it becomes acceptable for others to do it. Sometimes



Anybody can be a victim of bullying at a workplace, according to the work environment consultant. The man in the picture has nothing to do with the text.

it is the manager who is behind the bullying, and then there is yet another dimension to the problem.

Difficult to solve

Ilona Björk Bovin says that it can be very difficult to solve a bullying situation that has been going on for a long time. Her first piece of advice is to work preventively. Discuss what good communication involves and how people like to be treated.

- In an open, healthy social climate, where everybody knows what applies, it is much more difficult for insulting behaviour to get a foothold. It is also a question of education and it is important that everybody understands what offensive behaviour really is and what effects it can have.

If a bullying situation should still arise, it is important to act as quickly as possible, says Ilona Björk Bovin. If you notice that a colleague stops saying hello or acts in an offhand way, it is best to deal with it immediately.

- Confront the person and ask why he or she has stopped saying hello, for example. Such behaviour among adults is really rather embarrassing and it will probably stop if you take up the issue. However, not everybody dares to take on a discussion like that, and then you must discuss the problem with your manager instead. Bullying seldom stops on its own.

Colleagues also have a responsibility to each other.

- It is important that those around are not just passive bystanders, but try to show moral courage together and question the behaviour of a bully, says Ilona Björk Bovin.



Avoid bullying at work

Ilona Björk Bovin, together with Krister Skoglund, is the author of the handbook, "Avoid bullying at work" from 2008. The book describes how insulting discrimination arises and what it covers, as well as practical advice on how to counteract it. The book may be ordered from Prevent at www.prevent.se or info@prevent.se.

Delegated work environment activities

In shipping companies with 10 or more employees, delegation of work environment tasks to ships must be done in writing. Only tasks can be transferred, and never responsibility.

The responsibility for work environment onboard belongs to the shipping company, but for practical reasons the execution of work environment tasks is delegated to the ships. Such delegation must be in writing if a shipping company has 10 or more employees. It must be clearly stated to whom the delegation relates to onboard, whether the information has been given in writing or orally.

It is often not sufficient to merely hand over a document with written information; the employer often needs to explain what it means as well. The employer must also ensure that the person who is assigned a task has sufficient authority, resources, knowledge and competence to manage it.

May be returned

Only tasks may be transferred, never responsibility, and although delegation may have taken place it is still the employer who has overall responsibility for the work environment. If for any reason an employee does not feel that she can manage a delegated task, it may be returned. It shall be clearly stated in the delegation how to make such a return.

Checklist when allocating tasks

- Decide which tasks for the work environment need to be allocated.
 - Start with the organization chart.
 - Give tasks to managers with responsibility for personnel, or to supervisors.
 - Give tasks to a specific person or post, but not to a whole group.
 - Make sure that no tasks are forgotten.
 - Decide what will happen in the case of illness, holiday or other absence.
 - Describe tasks in detail and in concrete terms.
 - Allocate authority, resources and knowledge so that tasks can be carried out.
 - State whether there are rights to further delegation.
 - Supplement written allocation of tasks with oral information.
 - Inform other personnel affected of the contents of the task allocation.
- Source: Swedish Work Environment Authority.

OUTLOOK

In the hope of legally binding noise limits

International noise regulations at sea involve many problems; partly because they are only recommendations, meaning that there is no obligation to follow the limits stated, and partly because the recommended values are far too generous.

According to the currently valid IMO Resolution A 468 (XII), it is permissible to have noise levels up to 60 dB in cabins; the World Health Organization recommends 40 dB, and Swedish research indicates that limits should be set at 30 dB. This guideline is now 30 years old and it is high time that the IMO (International maritime organization) sub-committee DE (Design and Equipment) took up the subject for discussion.

The undersigned is in a correspondence group that will try to achieve some small measure of consensus before the next meeting in March. The IMO consists of 168 countries and an equal number of interest organizations, so it will not be easy and it will take time before a revision is made. The aim is to try to

modernize these 30-year-old recommendations and make them obligatory. Our ambition is to reduce the noise limits if at all possible, and above all in cabins.

Sweden is in the forefront with a limit of 55 dB in cabins. Sweden, in addition to Finland and Denmark and other parts of the industry, has been the driving force in sharpening noise limits at sea. This is necessary since recommendations are not followed by certain flagging countries, shipyards and shipping companies. We have noticed such cases when purchasing used tonnage, such as an EU flagged ship (Germany) bought by a Swedish shipper.

Measurements taken in some cabins indicated a noise level of 64 dB. Such values should not be accepted anywhere in the world.



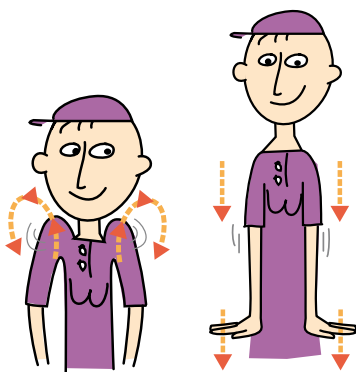
"But the feeling of shame was almost the worst thing - to stand there with your lunch tray in the canteen and not know where to go."

Emilia Åhfelt Dimitriadis Dimitriadis on when she was sexually harassed as a UN soldier in Kosovo.

Revised work environment manual

The annual review of the work environment manual for shipping is underway. Among other changes, one section on working alone will be added, and the chapter on ergonomics will be given one more paragraph. The revision will be completed by March at the latest. The manual can be downloaded free from the SAN website www.san-nytt.se, where there is both a Swedish and an English version. It can also be ordered as a folder from Prevent at www.prevent.se or by phone at 08-402 02 00.

Article number 596, ISBN number 978-91-7365-031-1 (Swedish version) and Article number 572, ISBN number 978-91-7365-036-6 (English version).



The annual revision of the work environment manual for shipping will be ready in March.

EDITOR HAS THE FLOOR

"We are each other's work environment"

I do not believe anyone participating in the autumn SAN conference left there feeling unmoved. The day's last speaker, Emilia Åhfelt Dimitriadis, talked about



how she had been subjected to sexual harassment by her closest colleagues while she was a UN soldier in Kosovo.

She finished her presentation by asking if anybody recognized what she was talking about, and a surprisingly large number of people in the audience mumbled yes as an answer. SAN news decided to look more closely into the issue of offensive behaviour at work, and you can read the results on pages one to three.

Among other facts we found out that almost 1 in 10 employees has been subjected to some form of bullying. The figures are probably even larger since there are almost always unrecorded cases in this type of study.

Everybody's responsibility

It is easy to understand that people who are harassed and ignored must feel bad. Such situations may of course have far-reaching negative consequences for the person in question, but also for others in the work team and for production. A work team in which there is bullying cannot operate optimally and if the personnel group is not working smoothly it will reduce the efficiency of work. In other words there are many reasons to work against bullying, and in this we all have our responsibility - we are actually each other's work environment!

And now for something completely different. As many of you probably already know, in conjunction with the autumn conference SAN generally awards a prize to a marine person with a particularly great interest in the work environment. Although it is still early days, we would like to take the opportunity to encourage our readers to submit their proposals for suitable prizewinners. Mail a couple of lines to the secretary at SAN, Eva Ohlsson (eva.ohlsson@transportgruppen.se), and she will make sure that your proposal is taken care of.

Enjoy your reading!

Linda Sundgren/Editor, SAN News

The Maritime Department of the Swedish Transport Safety Agency (previously the Swedish Maritime Safety Inspectorate) will spread information about relevant events and convey important messages to the shipping industry. The aim is to increase knowledge and safety awareness among parties in the shipping industry.



Severe personal injury when mooring

A crewmember was so badly injured by a winch during mooring work that one of his legs had to be amputated. According to information, the winches onboard the ship were only used to take up slack in the mooring ropes, which were then made fast to bitts on the deck. The procedure caused the mooring rope to have a dangerous angle between the winch and the bitt, with a roller in the center. The crewmember was standing between the winch and the roller in the middle of this angle. He pulled the lever on the winch to take in the mooring rope. Suddenly there was a crack and the roller broke loose from its base. The mooring rope snapped free, hitting the crewmember on his legs, who held on to the lever by reflex. This pulled him into the winch, where he was crushed. His injuries were so severe that one of his legs had to be amputated later. The Transport Agency wishes to draw attention to the risks involved in mooring work. The crewmembers who carry out this work must be well aware of the risks and work in accordance with established and documented procedures. The equipment used must be strong enough to withstand the forces which may occur. Painting warning lines around and on the winches may raise safety levels in some cases, and it may be possible to select mooring ropes that are less likely to whiplash if they break. Inexperienced crewmembers who participate in mooring work should be kept under supervision by those with

more experience.

Understanding mooring incidents, UK P & I Club LP News January 2009; SFu journal no. 06.05.02-2010-2099

Asbestos in gaskets

Asbestos has been discovered in gaskets on a number of ships built in Turkey under commission from Dutch purchasers. This problem has already been noticed on ships that have been repaired abroad. When paying a visit to a shipyard in Holland with a Dutch-flagged ship, gaskets were noticed which were suspected to contain asbestos. Work onboard was stopped by the Dutch Workers' Union and after samples had been taken, it was confirmed that almost all the pipe systems had gaskets containing asbestos. Asbestos consists of mineral fibres which are so small and thin that they can penetrate into the body, and dust containing these fibres can enter the lungs and cause several serious lung diseases. In the investigation which was carried out later, it transpired that gaskets containing asbestos are still used in Turkey, China, India and Vietnam, among other countries. With only a few exceptions, it is not permissible to use gaskets containing asbestos in piping installations on ships built after 1 July 2002.

PSCC43/4.3.14

Rope ladders in poor condition

It has been noted internationally as well as nationally that rope ladders onboard ships are sometimes in poor condition. In addition to the examples described below, it is not uncommon that rope ladders for lifeboats and rafts snap with the sudden force that can occur where they are thrown over the side.

Case no. 1

After departure, the pilot was going to disembark using a rope ladder which had been supplied to the ship a few months previously, and appeared to be in good condition. When the pilot had descended a couple of steps on the ladder, the rope broke on the right-hand side and a second later on the left-hand side too. The pilot fell into the water and glided along the side of the ship, tangled in the rope ladder. At the time the ship was doing about 5 knots. Fortunately the captain succeeded in stopping the main

engine in time and the pilot could be rescued by the pilot boat shortly afterwards, relatively unharmed. In the investigation of the accident it was stated that the rope ladder, which was approved by SOLAS, was made of sisal rope, which is about 10% weaker than manila rope, and which had been rotted by microorganisms. The rope had also been severely chafed by the ladder rungs on both sides. Tension tests that were later carried out showed that the rope broke at a force of 160 kg instead of the normal 3,500 kg.

MARS 201048

Case no. 2

When disembarking, the boatmen onboard the pilot boat noticed that one side of the rope ladder was so damaged that there were only a few fibres remaining to hold it together. When one of the boatmen pulled on the ladder, the rope on one side broke. He then warned the pilot about the condition of the rope ladder. The crew standing next to the ladder had not noticed that it was in poor condition and claimed that the boatman had broken it. One factor causing the rope ladder to be in such poor condition may be that they often lie on the deck and are covered by ice during the winter. When the rope ladder is next used, the crew hammer off the ice, breaking some of the fibres and considerably decreasing the strength of the rope ladder.

SFu journal no. 06.05.02-2010-3669

Life rafts in ice and snow

We can safely say that supervision is sometimes deficient when it comes to keeping rafts and other life-saving equipment free from snow and ice, resulting in their poor functioning. It is crucially important onboard all ships to carry out the required checks and, when necessary, to improve the inspection of equipment that may be particularly vulnerable.

SFu Safety Alert 2010-12-17



Marine academies lay the foundations for work environment activities

The foundations for work environment activities are laid down at maritime academies. The content and the length of the courses influence the knowledge of future seamen in this area, as well as the timing of courses during studies.

According to Per-Åke Kvik, work environment lecturer at the Kalmar Maritime Academy, it is a great advantage if students have already experienced the upsides and downsides of ship environments when the subject of work environment comes into the timetable. Students with experience are able to follow lectures better, as well as contributing more to discussions and finding it easier to understand problems and propose possible solution, compared with students who come directly from upper secondary school programmes.

Certain things are very abstract for them, says Per-Åke Kvik. But if they have already been on some placements or have perhaps worked for a while, you notice that they are able to get more out of the course.

Interest gradually evolves

Per-Åke Kvik has also noticed that interest in the work environment may require a little time to evolve. Those who have just started a course are often less receptive to the subject than those who are approaching final examinations.

– At the start of the officer courses students often think that there are other subjects which are more fun to study than work environment, such as technology and nautical science.

Another effect of studying work environment at a later stage in the programme is that not all of the students have had time to grow into the officer role, says Per-Åke Kvik.

– Then you look at the work environment more from the personnel perspective and do not really understand your role as a supervisor. This is most clearly noticeable when you talk about laws and rules, since they are rather different depending on what post you have.

In Kalmar students study 4 credits in work environment and marine environment. The course is divided into four



PHOTO: MARGARETA DAHLQVIST

Per-Åke Kvik works at the Kalmar Maritime Academy.

modules: laws and rules, physical, psychological and psychosocial work environments; gas measurements (in closed spaces and carrying out hot work) and the marine environment. According to Per-Åke Kvik it is the first two subject areas which are given the greatest space.

– I think probably that the time we spend on the work environment is sufficient, at least in relation to everything else which must be studied. But the work environment is something which also comes up in several other subjects, such as dangerous goods, where we discuss safe handling methods and protective equipment.

During the almost 30 years in which Per-Åke Kvik has taught future officers the subject of work environment, the content of the course has changed somewhat. Less time is spent studying chemicals and how to handle dangerous substances, while more time is now given to a systematic approach to work environment activities and reporting incidents.

– Seen in the long-term perspective, work environment teaching has diminished rather than expanded. This is probably not because it has been given lower priority, but because there are many other new subjects that students must study.

Work journal almost devoid of environment aspect

During the 12 months of practice that officers without time at sea must spend onboard to obtain their qualifications, they take with them a work journal which they must fill in. The work journal is based on the ILO convention, which states what must be included in an officers' training course.

– But there is hardly any work environment in the work journal. It focuses very much on safety, but from a different perspective. The nature of practice onboard depends to a large extent on which ship students work on. Some of them are given a lot of work environment studies and are involved in safety committee meetings and safety rounds, while others hardly do any such work, says Per-Åke Kvik.



Age: 62

Family: wife, 3 children and two grandchildren

Lives: in Mönsterås

Job: Lecturer at the Kalmar Maritime Academy teaching future sea captains and marine engineers in work environment.

Background: went to sea as deck hand in 1966. Seven years later he started to study to be a mate in Kalmar, and in 1978 he gained his sea captain's diploma. He then worked at various shipping companies such as Sahlén, Grängesberg and Kihlberg, and at the end of 1980 he went ashore to work for a while at Oskarshamn shipyard before starting to teach work environment at the Kalmar Maritime Academy. He has also read work environment science in Lund and has completed a course in protective technology in Göteborg.

Meet the SAN board members

SAN is a liaison organization between unions and maritime employers, and was established in 1955. The board has one chairperson, seven permanent members and two co-opted members, all with specialized knowledge of the marine work environment. Here you will meet three of them. You can read more about SAN's work at www.san-nytt.se

Anette Wugk Permanent member

Anette Wugk has been a permanent member of SAN since 2007. She normally works as assistant personnel manager at TT Line and is responsible for personnel and work environment issues for employees ashore and at sea.

To have everybody (officers, personnel, and employees ashore) on your side in work environment activities is something which Anette Wugk sees as a requirement for really achieving results. The issues which land on her desk often affect people in different areas and require joint efforts.



Anette Wugk has a degree in personnel science from Lund University. After a placement with TT she was offered a job in 1990 with the shipping company, where she has remained ever since.

Jens Ole Hansen Permanent member

Jens-Ole Hansen is the shop steward for Seko/Seafarers at Stena Line and has worked full time with union issues since 1984. His choice of profession was easy since his father was a fisherman, and he first went to sea in 1967.

He says that although the work environment onboard has generally become a lot better over the years, there are still many issues that need addressing. Above all, he wants to see psychosocial issues being given more attention. He also feels it is important to emphasize that everybody onboard is responsible



for the work environment, not only officers.

He was voted as permanent member of SAN at the start of the 1990s after being a deputy for many years.

Mikael Huss, Permanent member

Mikael Huss has been responsible for work environment issues at the Merchant Marine Officers' Association since the beginning of the 1990s. In 2003 he was voted as permanent member of the SAN board after many years as a deputy.

He went to sea at the early age of 16 as a deck hand, and then continued his studies, finally taking a diploma as marine engineer. Mikael Huss has long practical experience of work environment at sea and has worked at Broströms and Wallenius.

Mikael Huss also promotes work envi-



ronment issues internationally through the IMO (International Maritime Organization). The work progresses very slowly there, he says.

IN BRIEF

Record year for pirate attacks

The spread of pirate activities off the coast of Somalia has taken a turn for the worse, and 2011 will be a new record year for pirate attacks. This prediction is made by representatives of the Swedish Navy as well as the managing director of Höegh Autoliners, whose ships regularly sail through the Gulf of Aden. At the end of January, 31 ships had been hijacked and over 700 seamen held hostage. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) will bring particular attention to the scourge of piracy during the World Maritime Day later this year. (SAN)

Change in responsibilities for load securing

Those who load trailers, containers and similar should be responsible for the goods being secure during sea transport instead of the ship's captain, as is the case today. Some form of load securing certificate is also being considered. This is stated in an interim report from the Transport Agency on load securing. The final report will be presented at the end of May/beginning of June. (Transport Agency)

SAN NEWS

SAN is a joint body for Swedish Shipowners' Employer Association (SARF), Swedish Ship Officers' Association (SFBF), Merchant Marine Officers' Association (SBF) and SEKO Seafarers.

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