

The International
Maritime Human
Element Forum

Alert!

PRESS RELEASE

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Why regulation needs to be realistic

Regulation is important, while compliance with it is essential for safe ship operation. Violations of the rules and regulations account for many accidents. The latest issue of **Alert!**, the International Maritime Human Element Bulletin focuses upon regulation, and concludes that while absolutely necessary, they need to be both realistic and practical.

There was a famous photograph taken a few years ago after a tanker master became frustrated by his job turning, apparently, into that of an upmarket clerk. To illustrate the realities of his bureaucratic burden, he made a pile on the deck of all the manuals, paperwork, regulations and directions that he was expected both to know and comply with, and had himself pictured alongside this awesome column. He was no midget, and the pile of paperwork towered above him.

Regulations are there for our guidance, but if there are too many of them to be realistically taken aboard by busy people running ships, questions must be asked, both about the appropriateness of the regulations and the provision of the available manpower to ensure compliance.

Alert! notes that human nature is such that we all break the rules - through slips, lapses or mistakes, through ignorance or misapprehension. But we may be virtually forced to break the rules, to take risks because of commercial or operational pressures, and this is where questions need to be asked. Are the rules sufficiently explicit? Is the manpower available so that the rules may be properly complied with? Is it an issue of inadequate training, the emergence of bad habits, complacency, or the improper interpretation of the regulations put in place for our guidance and the safe operation of ships?

In this "no holds barred" issue of **Alert!**, a shipowners' representative suggests that manning regulations have become disconnected to the realities of the regulatory burdens upon seafarers. A senior shipmaster points out that he is seriously pressed to do his proper job as a ship's Captain, such is the mass of bureaucracy upon which regulation now insists.

Regulations save lives but it is the human face of regulation, and the way that they are implemented at the "coal face" which makes the difference. These should be more, it is suggested, than "a remorseless and never ending escalation in time and paperwork".

All this and more in **Alert!** No 10, available now.

Ends

Notes to editors

The **Alert!** Project – launched in October 2003 – is a three-year campaign to improve the awareness of the human element in the maritime industry. This is a Nautical Institute project, sponsored by Lloyd's Register EMEA.

Further information about the human element awareness initiative, and electronic copies of **Alert!** can be found at www.he-alert.org.



Innovation in Ship Operations Award

Improving the awareness of the Human Element in the maritime industry