



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Preventing human failure and breakdown

The importance of maintenance and the need to guard against failure and breakdown of ships and equipment is ingrained into the consciousness of all who are responsible for the operation of ships.

But what about the failure and breakdown of PEOPLE?

Issue No 9 of the International Maritime Human Element Bulletin **Alert!** focuses upon the efficiency and reliability of the seafarer, the human “glue” which binds the ship and its systems into an efficient, safe and productive unit. The bulletin, published by The Nautical Institute and sponsored by Lloyd's Register EMEA points out that the seafarer is just as susceptible to failure and breakdown as the ship and equipment, if he or she is not protected by standards and codes, or if the tolerances have been set too fine because of poor working and living conditions.

Owners and managers guard against human failure through realistic manning policies, workable watchkeeping patterns and satisfactory work/leave ratios, all guarding against fatigue, which has shown to be a contributory factor in many accidents. But good owners also have in place education programmes, a feedback process from ship to shore, effective communication and a culture that assists with the prevention of fatigue and stress by facilitating its recognition.

Just as the ship itself needs care and maintenance, such consideration is also a necessary for its crew, whose employers need to have in place monitoring systems in terms of regular appraisals, mentoring and regular health checks, encouraging a healthy lifestyle. And of course it scarcely goes without saying that the design of the ship itself is a major contributor to the health of its crew, along with the “match” of the crew to that ship through proper training, familiarisation, and the provision of relevant procedures and operating instructions.

It's time to stop pretending that the human element is not the most important contributor to the safety and efficiency of the ship.

**Alert!** No 9 also includes articles on the importance of communications, the avoidance of stress, good working practices and the priorities of ship operation, and a casualty report of a very avoidable grounding.

**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](http://www.he-alert.org).



Innovation in Ship Operations Award

*Improving the awareness of the Human Element in the maritime industry*