



How Much Do You Really Know When You Join A Vessel?

The telephone rings and it's the manning office, union hall, or personnel department calling you back to the ship.

A multitude of questions race through your mind: Where am I going? What run is she on? Who's on-board? What do I pack?

The expectations of joining a ship are always filled with a certain amount of anxiety and emotion, but beyond that we should always consider one aspect: "How safe are we prepared to be?"

The nature of our job and the often hostile nature of the environment we work in requires us to be vigilant every single day of our assignment and without this commitment to making sure our behaviors and those of our fellow shipmates are "Safety Based," we will always leave ourselves open to a degree of accident risk.

What should our primary goal be when joining a ship? Naturally we want to finish our assignment just as we started, mentally and physically healthy. There are a number of ways to achieve this from the moment we step on board.

- **Ask Questions**

Sometimes we are affected by peer pressure, and fail to ask questions, or ask for help when we are presented with a situation that we are not quite sure of.

- **Make Sure You Know Your Vessel**

Re-indoctrination is just as important as indoctrination. Don't take your ship for granted. Walk around. Make sure you are fully aware of dangers, safety equipment, mooring operations, etc. Situations and equipment can often change while you are away on vacation, especially if the ship has been in the shipyard during your absence.

- **Do Job Safety (Job Hazard) Analysis**

Review the job safety analysis for all your routine and non-routine activities. These may have changed because of equipment changes, near misses or best practices. Remember Job Safety Analysis is designed to make your job safer and is a crucial tool in both following procedures and knowing the dangers associated with the job.

- **Personal Protective Equipment - USE IT!**

Ensure that you are wearing the appropriate PPE for the job. Make sure it is clean and is functioning properly.

The goal of every voyage is to make sure that everyone stays safe. Take the initiative to prevent your shipmates from doing unsafe acts. Don't be afraid to question others about what they are doing and ask if there is a safer way to do it. Accept the safety advice from your shipmates. When voyages end everyone should go home safely to family and friends.



- Patrick Shimson
Chevron Shipping Company
Safety Bulletin
Marine Section Member

*Copyright 2002 * National Safety Council * All Rights Reserved. Reviewed 5/05*