

Human and organisational factors identified as central to major accident prevention in the offshore industry

'Human and organisational factors' are now widely recognised as a significant causal contributor to major industrial accidents. However, initiatives to address risks arising from human and organisational factors have only recently been developed in the oil and gas industry.

In light of this, a RAND Europe study, commissioned by TOTAL E&P Research and Development, looked at academic insights and industry approaches to 'human and organisational factors' in major accident prevention in the oil and gas sector.

The research found:

- Despite recognition that 'human and organisational factors' are the main cause of major industrial accidents, studies still attribute 80 per cent of accidents to human error.
- Organisations that focus on 'human error' as a cause of accidents can lead to employees not reporting errors due to a fear of being blamed.
- Economic pressures, regulatory constraints and cultural limitations can impede major accident prevention efforts within organisations.
- Several 'good practices' in accident prevention have been identified, such as adopting a 'no-blame' approach to error management, establishing a reporting culture to identify errors and near misses, and providing training tailored to specific human and organisational challenges.
- Accidents are no longer considered to be caused by a single 'chain of events' (i.e. with each accident causing the next).
- Productive partnerships have been formed between academia and industry, but much of the academic knowledge is considered to be too 'abstract' to have practical applicability.

To view the full report visit http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1512.html

To review a summary of the report visit <http://www.rand.org/randeuropa/research/projects/major-accident-prevention-factors.html>

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