



# ANNUAL REVIEW

**Twelve months at  
Port Skills and Safety**

**2020**



# Foreword

## Chair of the Board of Directors, David Brown



Welcome to the Port Skills and Safety (PSS) review of 2020. This document gives a taste of some of the elements the industry has engaged in to raise the bar yet further with our health, safety and skills performance. Perhaps, more importantly it also sets the scene for our ambitious and exciting plans for 2021.

2020 was an undeniably challenging year and I am extremely proud of the way that the sector rose to that challenge; keeping shelves stocked, luo rolls delivered, fuel in tanks and the economy operating. Everyone owes a huge debt of gratitude to the efforts of our 'quay' workers in all parts of the industry.

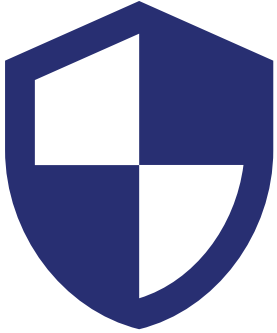
Despite the Covid Challenges, PSS remained determined to live up to that example and delivered a full member service in 2020 along with new actions to move the sector forward. We achieved that thanks to the unstinting commitment of Richard, Rean, Marcio, Rob and Sharon and to the collegiate work of our members on behalf of the whole industry.

Organisations should never stand still; so a key change for 2020 was the formation of a new, wider reaching Main Board, expanded to embrace other industry experts and with dedicated Board champions for every segment of our work. This Board balances port knowledge and experience alongside academia, plant, and transport health and safety.

I speak for all my fellow Board colleagues, many who have contributed their thoughts later in this report, in saying that we are absolutely committed to delivering these objectives, so all our members feel a tangible change through robust action in 2021.

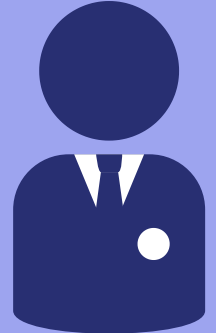
So this year is going to be one of swift delivery and dynamic action to penetrate the 'parts of our sector that other initiatives cannot reach' !

# 2020 in Numbers



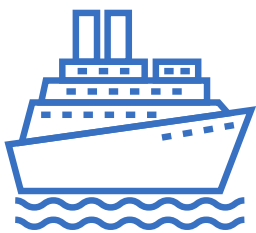
21  
Safety Alerts  
published in  
2020

7  
safety in ports  
guidance  
documents



89  
Members

67%  
Reduction in  
accidents since  
2000



18,000  
Workers  
covered by  
PSS

28  
Member  
Enquiries



Contributors to  
our 'Protecting  
Quay People'  
campaign

93%  
Average  
compliance with  
SiP documents







# Looking to the Future

The most exciting part of a ports new year is seeing the potential for new achievement and change.

We have an unstoppable force of a whole industry pushing to get ever better for the benefit of all. Astonishing expertise to draw on from our membership. Regulators supporting our industry, willing us to succeed. We have passionate engagement from workforce representatives such as Unite and UK Maritime Pilots Association. We have partnerships including Maritime Skills Alliance, Scottish Qualifications Authority and UK Harbour Masters Association.

Combine this with a far-reaching Board, leading the charge for swift delivery to an expanded audience and you have a full steam ahead programme of work to make the best of this powerful opportunity.

In 2021 members will still see the classic services including member enquiries, alerts, newsletters, guidance, work groups and events.

Just some of the other activity on our agenda includes: A ports sector skills strategy. Focused research on plant and equipment top risks. Projects to address key sector risk areas of Lashing and RoRo. Our second round SiP Impact Survey with 10 volunteer members. Developing complementary SiP products to enable them to reach a wider audience. Boarding and landing, end to end, guidance with the MCA. A fully on-line PSS dashboard.

Together, we will be ambitious in reach and achievement, speak on behalf of the sector, create innovative learning opportunities and be there to help you to run safe, skilled and successful organisations.





# January

January saw wildfires rage across Australia and protests grip Hong Kong.

PSS welcomed our new chair of the board of directors, David Brown. David's experience at the Port of Bristol, together with his personal drive and passion for health and safety, made him a natural fit for the role. Later in the year, David would be followed by a new board drawn from different areas of expertise.

A direct response to planned drive to bring in diverse and complementary experience.

We welcomed, two members of staff at the beginning of the year. Marcio Goncalves joined as PSS Health, Safety, and Skills Coordinator. Marcio is a former Naval officer with experience in safety and environmental management for one of the largest ports groups in the Mediterranean.

He quickly became known to members; taking on safety alerts, the PSS Dashboard and member enquiries work as part of his remit.

Robert Mitchelmore was seconded from Forth Ports for three months to assist in the SiP Guidance Survey; A review of the sector's adherence to the Safety in Ports documents in direct response to challenges by the Health and Safety Executive. Robert found that in the pilot group, compliance with Safety in Ports guidance averaged 93%; A figure we hope to increase with Marcio's work on the second stage of the survey.

January was also the month we launched a new Diving Projects Safety Awareness workshop. The two-day course informed duty holders on their obligations, responsibilities, and legal exposure when undertaking diving operations.

# **A New Board for a New Year**

By PSS Chief Executive, Richard Steele

We are pleased to announce a new, expanded board; sworn in to continue to drive forward pioneering safety and skills standards within the ports sector. With fresh outlooks on health, safety and skills, it is the intention of the Board to build on the work of its predecessors and renew PSS' commitment to promoting a safe and secure work environment for over eighteen thousand port employees around the UK.

Our Chair is David Brown, CEO of The Bristol Port Company. Joining him is Deputy Chair Stuart Wallace, Chief Operating Officer for Forth Ports and Jake Storey, Chief Financial Officer for Harwich Haven Authority, who sits on the board as Treasurer. Martin Lawlor, Chief Executive for the Port of Blyth further expands expertise in port commercial and operations management as well as bringing passionate advocacy for sector skills.

However, PSS was keen to ensure that the board also has substantial marine experience. Neil Glendinning and Peter Steen both served aboard ships before taking land-based positions later in their careers. Eddie Scoggins meanwhile, as Head of Safety, Health, and Environment

for Hutchison Ports UK, provides key understanding of the risks generated by port work along with specialist knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of emergency services in ports.

The aptitude of this group for direct port management is invaluable in informing PSS policy, both from a business viewpoint as well as determining what is practical for the quay worker. Joining these directors are members from other industries. Dave Patterson, VP of South and West Europe for Kalmar and Dr Alan Page, provide technological and academic rigour to policy decision-making. Johnny Schute comes to PSS as Chief Operating Officer of the RSSB, offering valuable advice on practices that have proved successful elsewhere. PSS Chief Executive Richard Steele completes the board.

The new Board of Directors' proficiency in their individual fields brings unique perspectives to the problems we face as an industry going into 2021, and their collaboration with PSS will undoubtedly lead to even better, more nuanced initiatives that will have more practical benefit for our members.



# February

In the U.S., the Senate voted to acquit Donald Trump of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress, while in the UK, Sajid Javid resigned as Chancellor and was replaced by Rishi Sunak.

PSS, launched our Safety in Ports (SiP) Impact Challenge, aimed at increasing the effectiveness and reach of the SiP Guidance. Orchestrated by Robert Mitchelmore of Forth Ports, the initiative was a direct response to the challenge issued by the Health and Safety Executive to monitor and ensure the widespread usage of the SiP documents throughout the industry.

At the same time, we began the first appreciative investigation workshop into RoRo safety. This followed the tragic fatal accident in January, and was designed to expand the toolset available

to members and prevent potential accidents.

We had several enquiries from members, including what controls should be put in place in the event of a driver falling unconscious during operations. One of our respondents, Health and Safety Advisor Ian Iveson noted that the London Thames Port process would be to take the employee off duties where they may pose a risk to themselves or others until the situation could be systematically investigated and understood.

Finally, in February, we sadly reported the passing of long-time ports safety champion Paul Johnson. Paul left behind a legacy of passion and success both at Shoreham Port and PSS, and is deeply missed by those who had the pleasure to know him.



# **PSS Across the UK**

Protecting Quay People Campaign, 24th November 2020

PSS is in a unique position to offer support and advice on skills, safety, and health to members the length and breadth of the country, to ports both large and small. To gain a snapshot of how we work with and respond to the needs of different ports, we asked the Port of Cromarty Firth in the Highlands of Scotland and the Ports of Jersey off the coast of France to give their impression of PSS.

Both Jersey and Cromarty Firth drew attention to the importance of the quality working relationships between themselves and the PSS team. Jersey commented that the guidance we provide is both comprehensive and flexible enough to allow ports some autonomy in its implementation. Both ports also stated that PSS has fostered an atmosphere of communication which has led to an improved standard of safety for the industry.

Cromarty Firth requested more options to attend PSS meetings virtually even once Covid-19 has finally ended and challenged us to review our website and

look for ways to improve navigation. They also recommended the inclusion of a members' forum for the rapid exchange of information. This was echoed by Jersey, who also said that the creation of a PSS app would facilitate the reach of our safety alerts and content.

As for communication, both ports believed that enhancing our presence on social media would be an important step in creating an ever more pro-active and assertive focal point for all port health and safety matters. Cromarty Firth added that campaigns of the sort that members have seen from us in the past on workplace transport and slips trips and falls should be made quarterly, highlighting nationwide "port themes".

Cromarty Firth suggested that a PSS manual be produced to act as a guide for all ports to follow, introducing an element of standardisation to the industry. We firmly believe that there is more that we can do to springboard from SiPs and have plans for a range of tools to enhance the visibility of the documents to wider audiences.



# March

With Winter drawing to a close, people were looking forward to warmer weather and getting out of the house. Unfortunately, March saw the four nations placed into control measures to limit the spread of a new virus, Covid-19.

Ports adapted to unprecedented circumstances at extraordinary speed and were on the front line of keeping the economy going. In 2020, just like our members, we remained open for business. We followed ports' lead; reshaping how we did what we did and continuing to support the sector.

All available guidance on Covid-19 was immediately placed at our members disposal on the PSS website, including advice from WHO, UK governing bodies, and port specific information from the

BPA, UKMPG and UKHMA. One of the aspects of the pandemic that required special attention was the toll exacted on mental health. In line with our policy on the "Whole Person" approach to health and safety, PSS also provided access to resources to employers manage the very real and harmful effects of poor mental health.

However, as the regular Safety Alerts illustrated, work continued apace on the quayside. One such alert featured a deck hand partially falling through an open gantry safety grill while inspecting a refrigerated container. Thankfully, the worker sustained only minor injuries, but the incident illustrated the need for vigilance of common deck hazards and for vessel crew to conduct regular checks of gantries during and after shifts.

# **Covid-19 Gazetteer and Advice**

PSS website, June 2020

Following the development of the Novel Coronavirus outbreak worldwide, PSS issued a Safety Alert to the UK Port Sector and Maritime Industry and set about compiling a gazetteer on Covid-19 measures. This document aimed to help employers, employees and the self-employed in the UK understand how to work safely in and around UK Ports during the impact of COVID-19.

The gazetteer does not set out any new guidance itself. Instead, it provides a map to multiple sources of guidance that you can use to help you decide which actions to take. The following is taken from advice issued by HSE and British Ports Association.

Before boarding the ship, crew and passengers should be asked about the history of travel to an affected area and/or close contact with a person who has confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) in the previous 14 days. If they are feeling unwell with symptoms of coronavirus they should not travel.

We encourage the use announcements in transport hubs to reinforce key messages, such as washing hands

before and after travel, and what to do if unwell.

If someone becomes unwell at the port [and has a history of travel to an affected area and/or close contact with a person who has confirmed COVID-19 in the previous 14 days], they should be moved to a room or area where they can be isolated whilst awaiting medical assessment.

Appropriate use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning of surfaces that a symptomatic person has come into contact with are key measures to stop the spread of the virus.

Should a port or ship have a member of staff with coronavirus they will be contacted by the local Public Health England Health Protection Team who will undertake a risk assessment and advise on any actions or precautions that should be taken. The Health Protection Team will also be in contact with the patient directly to advise on isolation. They will be in touch with any close contacts of the person with confirmed COVID-19 to provide them with appropriate advice.





# April

In April, Covid-19 dominated headlines as the world struggled to contain the pandemic while In Ukraine, state emergency services successfully extinguished a wildfire threatening the still contaminated site of Chernobyl.

The ports sector continued to operate, adapting where possible to allow for social distancing. Associated British Ports for example implemented several precautionary measures to ensure that apprenticeships and training courses could continue throughout the lockdown.

In our 'Protecting Quay People' campaign, ABP shared with us details of these measures, including reduced class sizes, online learning, and regular disinfection of common surfaces. Of course, Covid also impacted on ports

and consumers and suppliers became more conservative. Seafarers UK created a £2 million fund to support individual seafarers who had seen their livelihoods and mental wellbeing affected by the virus.

However, while Covid related precautions occupied most peoples thoughts, a safety alert towards the end of the month reminded us of the necessity to remain vigilant for more common risks. An alert from Forth Ports stated that a tug driver was reversing a double stack on the main deck of a RoRo vessel when he caught sight of a Rigger in an unsafe position. Although no-one was hurt, there was a serious risk an accident occurring and the incident reinforced the need for constant communication and cooperation during any operational activity.

# **Port Health and Safety: An Exterior Perspective**

By Johnny Schute, PSS Director and RSSB Chief Operating Officer

There are six main aspects to health and safety in the ports sector that should always be considered. First and foremost, everything begins with having the right culture within the industry. It has been repeated by unions, safety instructors, and even other board members, but it is vital that everyone considers health and safety as "their business". With the assistance of all levels of management, standards can be monitored and assured on a regular basis. Likewise, calling out inadequate standards should be an accepted practice.

Secondly, there needs to be an accepted health and safety strategy that all port CEOs sign up to – in blood if necessary. A strategy that is founded on confronting the existential risk of today and the emerging risk of tomorrow. It is not just a matter of "doing the right thing" for your staff, but also concerned with good business and saving money in the long term. This leads to the third aspect to consider which is one of cost. Expenditure on curtailing risk needs to be proportionate, and balancing risk against reasonable cost is crucial.

Following on from strategy, the fourth aspect of health and safety should be policy. Having a nationwide strategy is only as effective as the policies individual ports enact to translate that plan into working practices. This would require a level of oversight to ensure policies are being followed and may require SiPs to transition from guidance to mandatory standards.

Whatever form that oversight takes, the fifth aspect is that there must be an efficient and clear method of monitoring and assurance. For example, there should be a straightforward way to request and provide data in a coherent and transparent fashion. This isn't for competitive purposes, but to allow the industry to judge the effectiveness of strategy and policy. This would also allow for the reporting of health and safety issues in a comprehensive manner, leading to insight into, and the mitigation of, future accidents. Finally, training is fundamental to the safe conduct of port operations. Embedding safety within vocational training is an essential process for the welfare of the staff.





In May, the UK Government eased lockdown restrictions, allowing many to return to work for the first time in two months, while in the U.S., armed protesters stormed the Michigan capitol building, highlighting rising tensions.

For PSS, the impact the pandemic was having on mental health was becoming more evident. According to the Institute of Fiscal Studies, cases of stress, anxiety, and depression appeared to rise between March and May, especially among women and young adults.

Factors such as social isolation, financial insecurity, and working in front-line services all contributed to declining mental health, which is why in May our newsletter collated information regarding how best to support staff who may be experiencing these kinds of effects.

We also made the case as to why adopting these measures are as good for business as they are for the workers. The Stevenson and Farmer report on thriving at work stated that there is a substantial annual cost to employers of between £38 billion and £42 billion, of which half comes from lower productivity due to sick leave and low mental health.

May was a busy month for safety alerts, with six published warnings on issues such as low-voltage cables and weighted heaving lines. One such alert warned about the use of alcohol-based hand sanitiser. A user touched a metal railing before the gel had fully dried, releasing a static charge that ignited the sanitiser. The lit sanitiser proceeded to burn the users hands, leaving painful blisters. People are advised to always wait for sanitiser to dry before touching metal objects.



# **Skills Development and the Whole Person Approach**

By Dr Alan Page, PSS Director

Education is the key to enacting good health and safety practices. From the new apprentice to the veteran of many years, five points must be considered regarding the development of the correct skills to ensure the safest possible environment.

1. Safety must be embedded as part of a wider development of skills. For every job there are a series of task specific skills. When you take on a new employee there is a period of initial learning of local practice, and there is a need to embed the safety culture and practices specific to the setting at this point as part of their training. However, it is not a single action, and this needs revisiting when processes, practices etc, alter.

2. A focus on safety cannot stand alone from the main operational business goal. Health and safety is often seen as a business cost. However recent examples from the construction sector have seen business enhancement when operations are looked through a health and safety lens. The HSE estimates that any accident would have a detrimental effect to a business on a ratio of approximately 1:8.

3. The development of port skills and personnel, of which safety is only one part, should align to corporate goals. A strong recruitment and retention strategy retains staff and develops the necessary skills to enhance the business. As part of this workers who do not feel safe or cared for are less productive and may leave the organisation creating a new cost in training new personnel.

4. Skills development should form part of the "Whole Person" approach to enhance operational capacity. A worker does not leave their personal life at the port gates. Intensive training and long shifts can impact on stress, attentiveness and care and thereby increase their chances of being involved in an accident. It is crucial to remember that these external factors change from day to day as does the capacity to cope.

5. The "Whole Person" approach can and should encompass sector skills but should also include recognising mental and physical health markers. This requires operators to choose the right person for the right job, with the right attitudes to embed safety into a wider sector skill set.



With disease came pestilence and war in June, as China and India became embroiled in minor clashes on their border while a plague of locusts, the worst seen in several decades, swarmed over Delhi.

In the UK, PSS published the Covid-19 Gazetteer; A map to sources of guidance on working safely during the pandemic. The Gazetteer was produced through consultation with government, the British Ports Association, and the UK Major Ports Group, and designed to allow members to identify operational areas and their relevant guidance as efficiently as possible. In addition to this, the Gazetteer also included port risk assessments supplied by port volunteers to help members meet legal obligations.

June saw the 26th signatory to the PSS

Health and Safety Sector Plan. Peterhead Port Authority joins other trailblazing ports committed to the UK's first ever Sector Plan, aimed at improving the industry through the Whole Person approach.

Following a thorough review and collegiate work by ports, Unite and HSE, we published updated SiP guidance 012 on RoRo Passengers and Cruise Operations. We also continued to publish Safety Alerts; sharing information to make our members aware of potential risks. One June's alert picked out substandard KN95 safety masks.

Finally, 25th June was the 'Day of the Seafarer', recognising the vital contribution seafarers play in the global community.

# **Drowning Prevention Week:** **The Beach and Tombstoning**

PSS Website, 12th June 2020

Created by the Royal Life Saving Society UK, the Drowning Prevention Week Campaign is now in its 7th year and over that time the charity has gained an ever-increasing amount of support to educate individuals and families, at a time of the year that is most crucial. Across the UK and Ireland, there is a spike in fatal drowning incidents during the summer months. The charity is increasingly concerned this summer as the impact of COVID-19 is far-reaching and has resulted in reduced beach lifeguard services and supervised venues.

Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) lifeguards would usually be starting to patrol the UK's beaches around now. But, because of coronavirus, we had to suspend our lifeguard programme. This means there are currently no RNLI lifeguards on beaches. And by the summer, we will only be able to patrol around 30% of our usual beaches. As lockdown restrictions in England have been eased, families have begun flocking to our beaches again. It is vital that people keep an eye on their families if our lifeguards can't be there.

Each summer, like many other ports and harbours, the Port of Milford Haven encounters problems with young people tombstoning into the water close to busy shipping areas.

It is well documented by the Coastguard, RNLI and other authorities that, aside from the hazards brought about by being near to commercial shipping, tombstoning is an extremely dangerous activity with many other risks such as submerged objects, strong currents and cold water shock.

With safety being the Port's highest priority, much work is undertaken to prevent tombstoning through educating young people about the dangers it poses and signposting to other ways to enjoy the water safely.

The Port can and does enforce its by-laws in order to stop people from risking their lives at Milford Marina. If anyone commits offences under Sections 33 and 34 of the Milford Docks Company Act 1981 they will be pursued through the civil courts and be liable for a £50 fine.





# July

By July, the year already felt twice as long as normal. UK and Chinese Relations continued to deteriorate with the suspension of the extradition treaty over Hong Kong, while Portland, Oregon, experienced daily clashes between police and protesters.

PSS, published the Safety in Ports (SiP) Impact Review in July; covering eight different PSS members. Robert Mitchelmore, seconded from Forth Ports established a clear picture of how SiPs were being used as well as uncovering industry best practice.

The results of this review prompted a second round, opening up the SiP review process to the rest of the sector. The review allows members to benchmark their organisation against industry standards contained in the SiP guidance.

Moving at speed since February, the industry had come together to reflect deeply on RoRo safety. Building on the PSS led Appreciate Investigation workshop and extensive consultation, a video and poster were released highlighting industry agreed "Seven Leading Principles of RoRo Safety" in July.

This was a collaborative effort, drawing on experiences from employees at the 'sharp end' of RoRo operations, and is a powerful example of the proactive measures undertaken in 2020 to facilitate best practice in the sector. The DfT led Maritime Safety Week also took place in July, during which members saw an intensive programme of materials released by PSS. A substantial new piece of work setting out a practical model for building effective health and safety culture ports was published.

# The Seven Leading Principles of RoRo Safety

PSS Website, 28th July 2020

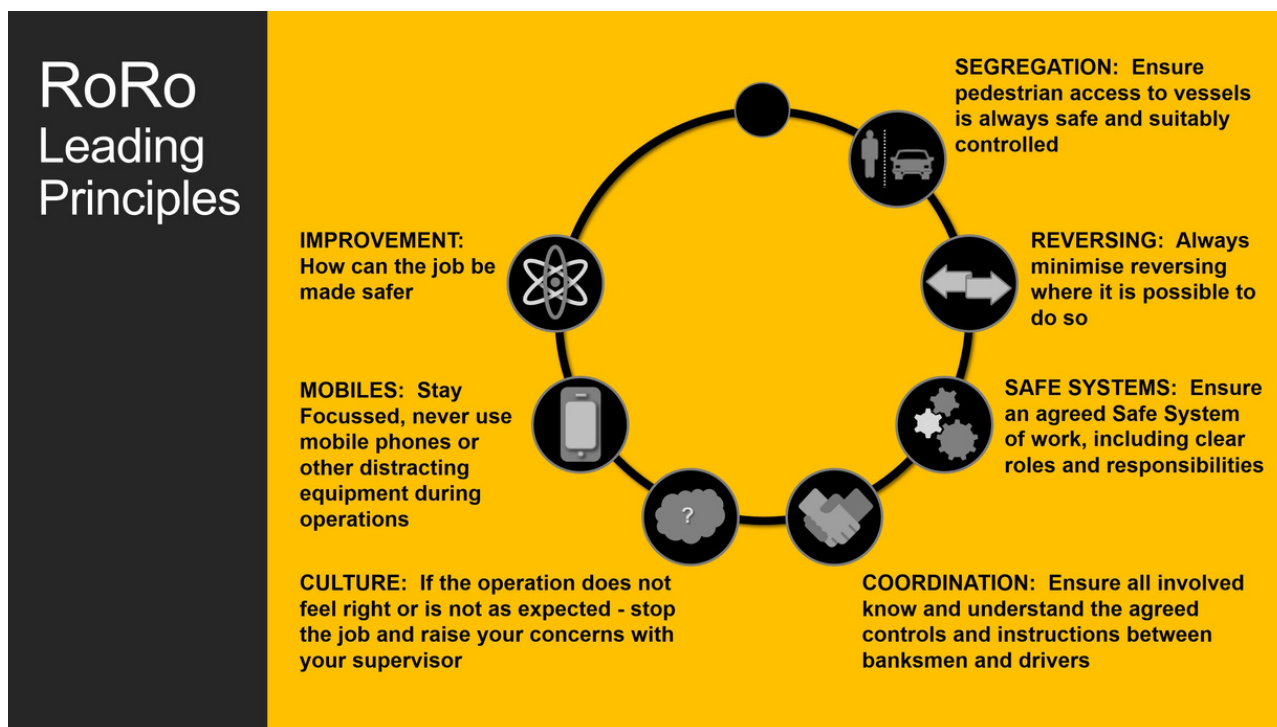
The 7 leading principles of Safety in RoRo Operations has been collectively produced by the ports industry with the support of Port Skills and Safety.

Following a tragic RoRo operation fatality, PSS designed and held the first ever Appreciate Investigation workshop with a volunteer group of members at our London offices.

The aim of the workshop was twofold. Firstly, to create something to help prevent future fatalities in the industry. Secondly to enhance member toolboxes

with positive-generative incident investigation and prevention method. The 7 leading principles were identified during this workshop and finalised through a formal consultation process.

One of the cornerstones of PSS's strategy is to serve as thought leaders; to challenge, to learn and do things differently. This is a pioneering example of key principles created by employees from the sharp end of the industry, working together to proactively raise standards across the sector and mitigate future accidents.







# August

Port safety became front page news in August when 2,750 tonnes of Ammonium Nitrate ignited in the port of Beirut. The resulting explosion claimed over two hundred lives, devastated the city and prompted the resignation of the Lebanese government. The tragedy resulted from a lengthy series of errors, as the volatile substance was stored improperly near similar combustibles.

The UK is the heaviest user of Ammonium Nitrate-based fertilisers in the world, the handling of which is heavily regulated and carefully licenced. The port industry has a track record of successfully managing ammonium nitrate risks, including short-term storage away from contaminants. A component of that risk management is the PSS 'Explosives Security Officer' course which we run in partnership with HSE and Cranfield University.

August also saw the launch of the final research phase of our pioneering journey with the University of Bath. Producing the first-ever PhD level, safety climate survey tool; made by the port industry for the port industry.

The survey tool will provide quantifiable evidence of themes in our sector's health and safety culture, individual organisational strengths and vulnerabilities and areas for nationwide intervention; taking our vision of raising standards to a brand-new level.

Finally, MAIB published their report into the grounding in storm force conditions of Thea II and Svitzer Josephine. The main lessons were for vessels and crew. But MAIB also drew attention to the vital role that port and shore-based services have in helping prevent this kind of incident.



# **Beirut: PSS Addresses Use of Explosives in Ports**

August PSS Newsletter

On the 4th August 2020, in the port of Beirut, Lebanon, a team of nine firefighters and one paramedic attended a large fire burning out of control dangerously close to a large grain silo vital to the country's food supply. Unbeknownst to the emergency services, the warehouse contained 2,750 tonnes of Ammonium Nitrate; A highly combustible aggregate used primarily in agriculture and mining. Within hours this volatile stockpile ignited, resulting in a shockwave felt in Cyprus approximately 240km away. Alongside the first responders, over 200 people lost their lives in the blast and another 5,000 were injured.

While the UK is the heaviest user of Ammonium Nitrate-based fertilisers in the world, accidents are thankfully rare in the UK ports sector. Regulations such as The Dangerous Goods in Harbour Areas (DG HAR) and Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) are specifically designed to break the chain of decisions that led to the destruction witnessed in Beirut. Meanwhile, the handling of any highly explosive material in a British port requires a license

issued by local authorities, Police, the Health and Safety Executive or the Office for Nuclear Regulation. This ensures that compounds such as ammonium nitrate are stored for only short periods of time, away from other combustible materials, and in clean, dry spaces free of contaminants.

Despite the high amount of legislation and licensing required to manage explosive goods, it is still advisable to keep informed and up to date on best practises within the sector. As part of our commitment to raising standards in UK ports, PSS, together with the HSE, held a course looking at explosive security, licensing, and current regulations. This popular event was directed towards any port organisation looking to train or revise their understanding of correct explosives safety a licensing.

The intention was to ensure that all levels of seniority were aware of the dangers inherent in handling unstable materials, and to provide an additional stop gap to prevent a tragedy like Beirut from happening in the UK.



# September

As Summer waned, September witnessed increased protests against Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko while pyrotechnics at a gender reveal party in California were blamed for one of several forest fires resulting in two million acres burning to the ground.

September was a busy month for PSS. We launched the second stage of the SiP Impact Survey, formally extending the programme of monitoring SiP adherence to the rest of the industry. The call for volunteers to test the ports safety culture tool ran on apace.

PSS also published the highly anticipated 2019 Industry Accident Statistics Report. The report contained new data covering the whole of 2019 and showed a reduction in reportable

accidents across the sector as a whole against 2018.

A key benefit of unique resource – only available through PSS – is that it draws upon two decades of sector safety data, allowing members to benchmark their progression not just against short-term actions but long-term trends.

The results indicate an industry that has witnessed measured improvements in safety standards over the last twenty years, fostered by an increased atmosphere of cooperation among nominal competitors.

However, in recent years, the accident rate has plateaued. We firmly believe that the 'Whole Person' approach to health and safety is integral to overcoming this challenge.

# **PSS and the Health and Safety Executive**

Protecting Quay People campaign, 25th November 2020

One of the biggest strengths of PSS, according to the Health and Safety Executive, continues to be the industry tripartite guidance, otherwise known as the SiP documents. These documents are unique, in that not only do they have the direct involvement of unions, the industry, and the regulator, but are also directly referenced in HSE's Approved Code of Practice, L148 Safety in Docks. HSE also reserved praise for the creation of the PSS safety alerts system and the increased sharing of information throughout the ports sector. Few industries can claim the level of communication and joint working between nominal competitors as ports.

In September 2019, the HSE issued three challenges to the sector. To implement a system of audit and review to ensure SiP document compliance; to increase ship/shore communication and cooperation and to increase workforce engagement. These have also been common aims of both industry and employee representatives, and PSS has renewed efforts to meet these targets.

In February 2020, Nicola Jaynes, HM Inspector of Health and Safety for the Transport and Public Services Unit, met

with David Brown and Richard Steele to discuss how PSS was helping to improve sector safety. At the meeting, we advised HSE that we were adopting several measures, including expanding the Board and engaging even further with Unite the Union.

Since then, we shared the anonymised results of the independent SiP Survey with HSE. Showing that the pilot group of volunteer members were averaging 93% compliance with the SiP documents. Accepting that this was a sample, in September we commenced the extended SiP Survey program to cover more ports and more SiPs.

PSS and HSE have a constructive relationship, with a great deal of cooperation on behalf of the ports industry. "HSE is one of our key stakeholders," says Richard Steele.

"Maintaining an engaged and effective relationship between our sector and the regulator is one of the six industry leader priorities". This is a core purpose and success measure of the work that we do and is indicative of a relationship that continued to thrive in 2020.





# October

Towards the end of September, the world reached the grim milestone of one million deaths globally due to Covid-19. A month later in the UK, as evidence of a second spike began to emerge, the Prime Minister announced a second national lockdown for England.

Once again, the need to understand and address mental health impacts on those feeling the economic and social strain was apparent.

In October, a raft of behind the scenes work culminated with the swearing in of a new board of directors. Maintaining a core industry knowledge was a given. Complementing it with fresh perspectives and new learning was baked into the plan. All of this took place under the watchful eyes and with the approval of the two PSS Ltd shareholders BPA and UKMPG.

In our October newsletter, we invited Shenaz Bussawon from the BPA to write on the value of diversity in the ports sector.

Research published by Deloitte supported the view that people must feel included and valued in order to thrive in an organisation. The same can be said of safety culture. We proudly supported Maritime UK's Diversity in Maritime mission, as well as the Interview Pool initiative; aimed at enhancing representation in hiring.

In October we gathered HSE, Unite and UK Harbour Masters Association around a virtual table to locked down new guidance on self-mooring safety. Finally, we completed the joint design and planning with HSE and Cranfield University for a new on-line Explosives Security Officer Course.

# **The Importance of** **Mental Health**

By Wendy Freeman, Occupational Health Manager, Peel Ports

Working in such an environment as a busy port, the expectation would be that we would see mainly musculoskeletal issues given the nature of the environment and the labour-intensive aspect of many roles. Indeed, when I returned to the Port of Liverpool after first working here some 25 years ago, the presenting cases initially seemed to match those that I encountered first time around. As I became accepted back into the Port culture and developed the trust and relationships with our colleagues, it became increasingly evident that mental health was an area we needed to address. Most of us are now aware that the estimation is that 1 in 4 of us will have an issue with our mental wellbeing however this is particularly problematic with the NHS statistics showing that men aged 40-49 have the highest suicide rate in the UK given our workforce demographics.

Managers are actively encouraged to undertake stress risk assessments with colleagues who report work-related stress and many are increasingly becoming more skilled in using these assessments as a positive tool for

addressing work pressures now the initial fear of a "risk assessment" has subsided. They have now realised that it is merely a conduit for opening honest and frank discussions about individual perceptions, many of which can easily be remedied and have a positive effect on both interpersonal relationships but also job enrichment. On occasion it has been necessary to adjust roles and hours to facilitate recovery for a short time but this has been advantageous for both the organisation and the individual in that the affected individual has continued to contribute but in a far more effective and safe manner which ultimately often leads to greater motivation and appreciation of their role.

Our team is still in its infancy however we are starting to see the benefits of our work. What has become evident from our statistics is that reported musculoskeletal issues are decreasing slowly as are accident rates. My aim is to enable our colleagues to feel comfortable in approaching the business for support and finding that when they do, it is with a positive outcome that improves their working lives.





# November

As the U.S. experienced the bitterest presidential election in decades, November also heralded our Protecting Quay People campaign. The campaign saw twenty articles published over the course of November, with the assistance of over twenty-five contributors from across the ports sector. The wide-ranging campaign covered issues from the importance of skills training to what employee representative groups wanted to see from PSS as we approach 2021. Above all, PSS wanted to reaffirm our relationship with our members after a year in which we have all had to adapt.

While the Protecting Quay People campaign was underway, we also published the latest version of SiP 005 - Guidance on Mooring; The first Quadripartite SiP document with the additional badging of the UK Harbour

Masters Association. Following on from consultation in October, itself a response to at least three self-mooring related fatalities in five years, this SiP document on mooring is the most comprehensive guidance yet on access and egress from a vessel and is available on the PSS website.

Finally, in an effort to fully address the 'Whole Person' approach to health and safety, PSS announced a partnership with mental health charity Mates in Mind. Given the damaging effects of the pandemic on mental health, PSS and MinM are developing a virtual Mental Health First Aid course for early 2021. This adheres to the foundation of mental health awareness we first established in 2019, and emphasises the importance of a holistic approach to quay-side safety.



# **PSS and the Maritime Skills Alliance**

By Iain Mackinnon, Maritime Skills Alliance

It's no accident that Port Skills and Safety has both words in its name; skills and safety are in many ways two sides of the same coin. Someone who has been properly trained to do their job is a safer worker; they're much less likely to put themselves, or colleagues, in harm's way, and much less likely to damage the equipment they're using.

I see an economic benefit, too. There's less time lost to accidents, and greater profitability means more scope to invest in the latest safety equipment and processes, and the training to use them.

It's no surprise therefore that Port Skills and Safety was one of the founder members of the Maritime Skills Alliance in 2004. There were three members back then – the other two were the Merchant Navy Training Board and the Sea Fish Industry Authority – and now we're 18, covering all of the 'wet' side of the sector.

The core of our work has revolved around the creation and promotion of qualifications and apprenticeships, and that's become a base on which to build a broader range of activities, including

influencing Government policy where it affects maritime businesses. For example, PSS has convened employer-led groups to shape new apprenticeships, working within the rules set by the Institute for Apprenticeships (IfA), which is the responsible Government agency in England. We work with the IfA across the full range of the maritime sector, helping them to understand the sector better (particularly the crucial role of regulators), and to adapt their requirements so that they are a better fit.

We are also working with the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) to re-shape existing qualifications which offer a route into the sector. When SQA reviewed their Diploma in Shipping and Maritime Occupations, they found strong interest in broadening its scope so that it also served as an entry route to other maritime roles – including those in ports.

At the heart of it all is collaboration. Sharing is a core strength of PSS, evidenced by the trusted relationships which underpin PSS's guidance.



# December

Around the world, people were struggling in their own ways to make sense of 2020.

In PSS, we were keen to build on the sometimes hard-won lessons of the year and to look forward to what could be achieved in 2021.

Ports showed extraordinary agility and resilience. In response, our job was to drive further and smarter, bringing innovation and learning to support the industry. With Board Champions on point, we have set the 2021 programme of work and made ready to hit the ground running. Just some of the work ahead includes...

**People and Skills**, we will research existing port qualifications to understand who is using them and how. We will support the Maritime Skills Commission funded future skills needs project for the

industry and create a sector skills strategy.

**Plant and Equipment**, we will analyse where, when and how injuries occur, setting to work a task group to address the top plant and equipment priorities.

**Process Assurance**, we will have task groups for Lashing and RoRo, key risk areas for the sector. We will complete round 2 of the SiP Impact Survey with 10 volunteer members. We will develop new SiP products to reach a wider audience.

**Marine**, we will develop boarding and landing guidance and identify the top three port marine safety priorities with the MCA.

**Data**, the PSS dashboard will be migrated on-line for easier use and viewing by members.

# **Knowledge in Health, Safety, and Wellbeing Skills**

By Colin Bassam, Manager, Port Training Services

The port industry, led by Port Skills and Safety, has the desire to reduce the number of H&S incidents to zero. This is a big ask in an industry that faces several challenges ranging from the day to day considerations to wider geopolitical concerns. The nature of the work is never constant, unlike a manufacturing production line.

The plant operating skills is the starting point, which is vitally important to ensure the operator has command of the basic skills and operating knowledge of that specific bit of kit. The model used by Port Training Services, within the Port of Blyth, is that wherever possible the initial and refresher training is delivered to an external accrediting standard. This is the National Plant Operators Registration Scheme (NPORS), ensuring not only compliance but a consistently high quality.

Once the basic training and "on the job" familiarisation is complete, a formal proof of competency is undertaken in the form of the NVQ in Port operations and the technical certificate in stevedoring essentials. This examines both the performance and the capabilities

and the underpinning knowledge against the PSS developed National Occupational Standards. The operator must prove his proficiency on three separate occasions within the chosen units to match his job role and provide evidence of related knowledge to the activity. This requires a working knowledge of the relevant legislation, applicable regulations, industry guidance, company policies, and the associated hazards and preventive measures.

The physical health and mental wellbeing of the individual operative is another major factor to be considered. It cannot be denied that poor diet, lack of exercise, excessive alcohol and drug use, and even dependency are commonplace within society, especially within areas of deprivation. It is important that ports identify this issue and assist to improve this situation. My message is that we must educate and train those working within the port not just how to drive a bit of plant but how to lead a fit and healthy lifestyle. Invest in your people and in return, we can begin to reduce the cost of accidents, lost time, and reputation.





Few years in recent decades have been as turbulent as 2020. For many, the way we work, socialise, and consume changed profoundly. For the ports sector keeping going and overcoming uncertainty required an 'all hands' effort.

PSS remained open for service throughout. Always endeavouring to support our members, by listening and acting on what is relevant to them.

This was the year in which we enacted the two-step SiP Survey to improve the way in which our greatest tool-set is used. We supplied a gazetteer to provide an easily accessible map to the latest guidelines on Covid. And we published our Accident Statistics Report, giving the clearest image yet of an improving industry but highlighting areas where we still have a journey to make. We published a model for health

and safety culture in ports, based on analysis of what has worked on quays and in boardrooms.

New members of staff joined the team to improve the way in which we conduct our mission. For example, our "Protecting Quay People" campaign shared ideas and learning on how the industry can improve in 2021. All in addition to regular workshops, safety alerts, newsletters, and member enquiries despite difficult circumstances.

PSS will continue be there for our members, building on successes of the year just past. We will always be available to members, acting as a go-between for ports to create and share best practice and as an essential part of our world class, safe and skilled port sector.





# About PSS

Port Skills and Safety is the UK's professional ports health and safety membership organisation. We exist to make UK ports safer and more skilled. Our parent organisations, the British Ports Association and UK Major Ports Group, cover most of the UK commercial ports and we draw upon their networks and expertise. PSS is recognised by Government departments and agencies, including the Department for Transport, Health and safety Executive and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

We work closely with the ports industry, the HSE and trade unions in promoting safety in the workplace and improving the safety culture throughout the industry. One way we work towards achieving this goal is collectively developing the "Safety in Ports" suite of guidance.

We are the standards setting body for the ports sector and work with employers and other key stakeholders to maintain a suite of National Occupational Standards for port Operatives, Harbour Masters, Marine Pilots and VTS. We have developed port qualifications for England, Scotland and Wales and apprenticeship frameworks and are also responsible for the development and introduction of a national certificate for Harbour Masters with our partners UKHMA.

PSS also administers a series of work and advisory groups including the long-established Port skills and Safety Group which provides the industry with a forum for health and safety practitioners to learn about, discuss current industry issues and to share information through partnership and consultation.

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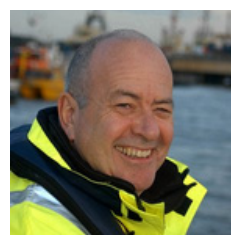
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