mca

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

MGN 351 (M)

Leadership Qualities for Effective Safety Management

Notice to all Owners, Operators, Masters, Officers, Manning Agents, Training Institutions, Shipping Insurers and Professional Maritime Institutions

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PLEASE NOTE:-
Where this document provides guidance on the law it should not be regarded as definitive. The way the law applies to any particular case can vary according to circumstances - for example, from vessel to vessel and you should consider seeking independent legal advice if you are unsure of your own legal position.

Summary

The MCA is committed to continual improvement in safety. It increasingly aims to move from an enforcement role to one in which it enables UK and REG registered ships to perform and function more safely by providing a range of safety related tools and guidance on best practice developed from effective research.

One safety critical area is the role and leadership of senior staff in safety management. Recent research carried out by the MCA has identified;
- the qualities of leaders that were most effective in promoting a safety culture
- constraints and enablers for making improvements in safety culture

The lessons from this research have been developed into best practice guidelines which have been published in the booklet "Leading for Safety". This booklet is freely available from the MCA.

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1. Background

1.1 It has been asserted that over 80% of maritime incidents are caused by human error. Understanding the contribution and consequences of human and organisational behaviour is therefore key to improving maritime safety. There is a significant body of work that identifies "commitment from the top" as critical to the development and embedding of a true safety culture. There is an increasing conviction that safety of operations at sea is highly dependent on the leadership capacity of the senior officers, at sea, on shore and at the ship-shore interface.

2. Research Project 521 – Driving Safety Culture

2.1 Against this background the MCA commissioned a research project whose aim was to identify key behavioural indicators for improving safety culture that could be used for benchmarking by operational managers within maritime organisations. Identification of these indicators enables learning tools and guidance for managers to be developed to increase and promote safety culture.

2.2 The research revealed:
- the most effective leadership qualities for developing and improving a safety culture on board vessels and ashore
- a range of strengths currently exhibited by the industry
- a series of enablers for carrying out improvements
- a series of barriers to carrying out improvements

A full copy of the research project report can be obtained from the MCA web site - **http://www.mcga.gov.uk/c4mca/mcga-research_report_521.pdf**

3. Leading for Safety

3.1 The conclusions from this research have been developed into best practice guidelines and published in the booklet "Leading for Safety". This is a practical guide for leaders and managers in the maritime industry to help improve leadership and people management skills to ensure safe operations. Whilst the ISM Code is a major step forward in safety management, its effectiveness depends on how leaders approach its implementation. This guide contains tips and best practice for ten core leadership qualities for effective safety leadership. Copies are freely available from the MCA by emailing your request to **human.element@mcga.gov.uk**

More Information

Risk, Analysis and Prevention Branch
Maritime and Coastguard Agency
Bay 2/18
Spring Place
105 Commercial Road
Southampton
SO15 1EG

Tel :   +44 (0) 23 8032 9358
Fax :   +44 (0) 23 8032 9371
e-mail: human.element@mcga.gov.uk

General Inquiries: 24 Hour Infoline
                      infoline@mcga.gov.uk
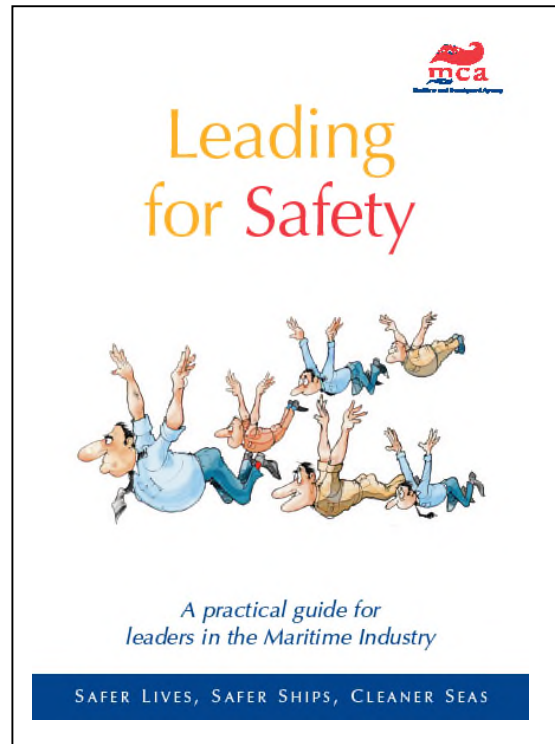   0870 600 6505

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