**Guidelines for Senior Staff visiting Vessels**

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| As you are probably aware, when the Deepwater Horizon exploded in the Gulf of Mexico there were a number of senior BP executives on board who were there to present the rig with a safety award. This caused some embarrassment for BP. In V.Ships, we have had similar instances where incidents have occurred with Superintendents or SeaTec inspectors on board.  ***‘About seven hours before the Gulf of Mexico oil well blowout of 2010, a group of four company VIP's helicoptered onto the drilling rig in question, the Deepwater Horizon. They had come on a “management visibility tour” and were actively touring the rig when disaster struck’***. | | | | |
|  | Most office staff visiting a vessel are there for a specific purpose and unless attending in a Port Captain type role, they are not expected to get involved in immediate vessel operations.  **The following is recommended before a visit**.   1. Ensure the visit is discussed with the Fleet Manager and you are aware of all key facts and any issues. This is typically to include recent incidents, problems, and concerns regarding senior officers, ongoing repairs, relief schedules, grievances and client relationship. 2. Ensure you have all required PPE to take with you, or arranged with vessel. 3. Check mailroom for any mail for the vessel. | | | *In the BP case, the focus was on conventional safety hazards (slips, trips & falls), and not on the major process or operational safety hazards associated with the operation underway at the time. This diverted the group’s attention. If this had not been the case, it is possible that they would have identified some of the non-compliances that were occurring at the time and could have intervened in such a way as to prevent the accident?* |
| **When on board:**   1. Meet with the Master and Chief Engineer and explain the purpose of the visit. Specifically ask if there are any problems or concerns and seek their solutions to these problems. Establish the status of cargo operations, stressing your visit must not affect vessel operations. Enquire after the well-being of the vessel and the ship’s staff. 2. Bring to the Master’s attention anything noted during boarding, e.g. an unsafe gangway or security failures. 3. Establish schedule for time onboard. This should include:  * Brief tour of vessel (accompanied by senior officer) * Meeting with senior officers, together or individually * Address all onboard (1 or 2 sessions) and again ask if they have any problems or concerns and seek their solutions to these problems.  1. Be alert for any signs that something is not right, such as a lot   of internal communications with the master that are conducted in a language other than English.  **Core Points – Do** the right thing, every time  **Compliance** – VMS / Environmental / Safety /Intervention  **Management – Commitment** to support them to do it right – you are not doing the company any favours by taking short cuts or tacitly encouraging non-compliance  **Set Good Example –** PPE / WP’s / Use of mobile phone   1. During the vessel tour, specifically ask the Chief Officer how cargo operations are going and if he has experienced any problems. Similarly with the CEO for the engine room or bunkers. 2. Discuss any significant accidents or incidents in the Group. 3. Bring forward any concerns they have – safety / environmental / vessel operations / complaints or compliments.   It was recognised that the BP executives were onboard to carry out a specific function; however during a walk round tour of the rig a number of important signs were missed that if acted on could have possibly prevented the explosion. People knew something was wrong but took no action  **OFFICE PERSONNEL VISITING VESSELS IN USA**  OPA90 has very clear rules regarding the people and organisations involved in an oil pollution related incident.  In the event of you being on board one of the vessels in the U.S when the vessel has an oil pollution related incident, please note the following so that the Act is not violated and additional burdens are not placed upon V.Ships or the Owner of the ships it manages.   1. The Master is required to make the notifications required by the VRP. Call 1 is to the QI who will normally alert the other response providers. 2. Maintain a low profile, assist by offering advice but at no time ‘instruct’ or tell the Master what to do. You should not do anything that could be implied as taking command of the situation or operations. 3. Remember your media training and don’t forget that lying to any US official is a criminal offense. 4. You should, if allowed, attend meetings as an observer, recording actions and suggestions. 5. You must give assistance to the Master, remembering that he is in charge of his vessel. | | | | |
| **If an Incident Occurs while onboard:**  1. Go to the bridge and monitor the incident. Ensure all notifications are made (Checklists are in SOPEP).  2. Do not instruct or tell the Master what to do, or take any other action that could be deemed as taking control. With some nationalities the Master will immediately ‘back off’ and leave you in charge and this could also result in serious legal problems for the company and yourself.  3. Refer to Company guidelines on major incidents. | | |  |  |
| ***“I think we have all been in situations where we have seen something that was unsafe, but failed to do anything’.”* Quote from a Master at a crew conference.** | |  | |  |