



In order to build resilience, the crew needs to be deliberately trained to respond to tasks or situations that go beyond their existing level of competence and comfort. This can also extend to areas, such as the bridge or engine room operations, through the use of simulators.

Apart from resilience training, we feel there is an increased need for on the job observing of crew. We would not wish to advocate carrying out more audits onboard of ships, but rather change the emphasis from audits which are only conducted, when the vessel is alongside, to riding audits, where the auditor sails with the vessel.

Carrying out an audit whilst the ship is on route between two ports has several advantages. Firstly, the ship is away from the hustle and bustle of the port and the auditor can be alone with the crew, but secondly the crew can be observed whilst carrying out their daily routines, instead of merely reviewing checklists they filled in either before or after they did the job.

This has the benefit that training can be carried out on the spot and be very specific to the issues the auditor noticed. These riding audits do not need to be limited to the navigation of the ship, but can extend to other ship operations as well.

“
In order to build resilience, the crew needs to be deliberately trained to respond to tasks or situations that go beyond their existing level of competence and comfort.
 ”

Building resilient safety culture onboard

Capt. Yves Vandeborn, suggests focusing on resilience for the crew onboard rather than on competency only. This is the only way to understand the bigger picture and know how to respond to every situation.



Capt. Yves Vandeborn
 AFNI, Director of Loss Prevention,
Charles Taylor Mutual Management (Asia) Pte. Limited, Managers of The Standard Club Asia Ltd.

Last year, we indicated that the biggest loss prevention challenge faced by the maritime industry is the poor quality of crew training and lack of experience on the job. Unfortunately, we do not believe this has changed over the past year and we maintain that more work is required to improve this important aspect of ship management and operation.

The Standard Club - and we believe this will be similar for other IG clubs - frequently sees claims where the root cause is the human element. However, the crew has the necessary regulatory training and certification and are, therefore, considered competent by their Flag State. This, unfortunately, does not mean they are experts at what they do, often contrary to their own beliefs.

In 2017, The Standard Club worked with the UK Maritime & Coastguard

Agency, Teekay Shipping and BP Shipping on the production of the second book in the Human Element series: 'Being Human in safety-critical organizations'. Amongst other things, the book explains in detail how crew can progress from being competent to being expert.

The main difference between being competent and being expert is that the former is largely rule driven and based on theoretical training, whereas to be expert means understanding the bigger picture and intuitively knowing not only what to do but also how to do it. Part of this process is building up seafarer's resilience so they are able to apply their knowledge even in situations of extreme stress and danger.

Whilst most crew will regularly carry out drills onboard ships to respond to a range of possible emergencies, these drills tend to be repetitive.



More specifically, for navigational risk assessments, the benefit of carrying out a riding audit would be to observe the level of reliance on modern electronic navigation systems. Regrettably, we regularly find that navigators tend to over-rely on this technology without properly understanding the limitations of the underlying information. They frequently forget or think it is unnecessary, to cross-check the accuracy of that information against other independent means, sometimes with disastrous consequences.

Shipowners and managers need to continue to train their navigating officers in the use of the new equipment, ensuring that they are aware of the risks of over-relying on modern electronic navigation systems. Training should also focus on building resilience and creating a better understanding of the crew's own limitations in times of stress.

By concentrating on building a resilient and expert crew, shipowners can move from a situation, where the human element is the cause of claims to a situation where it will be saving the ship.