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MAJOR HAZARD INDUSTRIES IMPROVING LEADERSHIP TO REDUCE RISK

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) today published new guidance designed to help directors and senior managers in major hazard industries to improve the effectiveness of their leadership. Leadership for the major hazard industries also aims to encourage senior managers to reflect on their current approach and challenge them to continuously improve health and safety performance in their companies.

In recent years several inquiries have concluded that failures at managerial levels were at least as significant as technical failures and human error in causing accidents in major hazard industries. Such industries include nuclear, offshore oil and gas, mining, chemicals and rail. Subsequently HSE has been working in consultation with these industries, to develop appropriate guidance.

Chris Willby, Head of HSE's Hazardous Installations Directorate said:
"Senior management commitment and involvement are vital for successful health and safety performance. This booklet is intended as a guide for senior managers in the major hazard industries to help them achieve the continuous improvement in health and safety which should be a key objective of every organisation. The checklist format gives useful prompts in terms of some of the behaviours required to successfully lead for health and safety."

HSE consulted widely within the major hazard industries during the production of this booklet and received a favourable response. Examples of some of the comments received are:

".....I have reviewed the subject guidance from HSE. I think it is an excellent tool which can be used by any senior manager to remind them of the role they play in ensuring strong safety performance."

".....I have shared the draft revision of the leaflet with my senior managers and directors .... The response has been overwhelmingly positive, fully endorsing the enshrined principles. Our senior managers have already stated that, as the document coincides with our health and safety principles, they would like to adopt it as a corporate directive."

"....Appreciate the emphasis on this issue, long overdue in my opinion....."
The guidance builds on the conclusions in the Turnbull Report on corporate governance, which supports HSE's view of the importance of leadership in effective health and safety management. Turnbull emphasises that it makes sound business sense to manage risks effectively, including health and safety risks.

Leadership for the major hazard industries (HSE reference INDG277) has been produced in a handy A6 format. It is available free from HSE Books, or can be downloaded from
http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg277.pdf
Notes to Editors
1. HSE's Hazardous Installations Directorate (HID) has updated previous guidance aimed specifically at the offshore industry to produce this booklet. The previous guidance was very successful, so HID has broadened the target audience.

2. Major hazard industries are those in which a major incident would affect the health and safety of many people, whether workers or members of the public. Such industries include: railways; nuclear installations; chemical manufacture and storage; gas storage and transportation; offshore oil and gas extraction; and mining.

3. References to inquiries that concluded failures at managerial levels were at least partly responsible for causing accidents are as follows:

* Major Incident Investigation Report: BP Grangemouth, Scotland: 29th May - 10th June 2000 (available at
http://www.hse.gov.uk/comah/bpgrange/contents.htm)
* The Ladbroke Grove Rail Inquiry Part 2 Report The Rt Hon Lord Cullen PC (available at
http://www.hse.gov.uk/railways/paddrail/issues.htm)
* Department of Transport, Investigation into the King's Cross Underground Fire, Desmond Fennell OBE QC, ISBN 0 10 104992 7

* Department of Energy, The Public Enquiry into the Piper Alpha Disaster, the Hon Lord Cullen, Volume One and Two, ISBN 0 10 113102

* The Esso Longford Gas Plant Explosion in Australia (see articles at
http://www.monash.edu.au/muarc//IPSO/vol3/editv3.htm and
http://www.doir.wa.gov.au/documents/mineralsandpetroleum/4RootCausesLongoford.pdf)

4. Directors' responsibilities for health and safety (INDG343) is available free from HSE Books or can be downloaded from
http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg343.pdf
5. HSE Books, PO Box 1999, Sudbury, Suffolk, CO10 2WA, Tel: 01787-881165 or fax: 01787-313995.
6. Internal Control Guidance for Directors on the Combined Code and Implementing Turnbull - A Boardroom Briefing, both published by the Institute of Charted Accountants in England and Wales in 1999, are available at
http://www.icaew.co.uk/viewer/index.cfm?AUB=TB2I_6342&tb5=1 and
http://www.icaew.co.uk/viewer/index.cfm?AUB=TB2I_26539&tb5=1

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