



Advanced Engineering Days

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Occupational health and safety in maritime education

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Cite this study: Altınpınar, I. & Aladağ, O. (2022). Occupational health and safety in maritime education. 2nd Advanced Engineering Days, 53-55

Keywords

Maritime Education
Occupational Health
Occupational Safety

Abstract

Occupational health and safety history extend back a long time. The concept, which has changed and renewed from the past to the present, is in a favored position as it should be today. ILO and WHO have made adequate and accepted definitions of occupational health and safety and stated that they attach great importance to the issue. As a workplace, maritime education and training institutions are included in the class of less dangerous workplaces according to the occupational health and safety legislation. However, considering the practical training such as fire training, life-saving training, abandon ship training, which is outside of the theoretical training given in these institutions, there are many risk factors for trainers and students. This study, which is planned as a theoretical study, emphasizes occupational health and safety in maritime education. As a result, occupational health and safety practices in education were discussed, and suggestions were made. It is aimed that this study will be a pioneer for future studies on the examination and development of occupational health and safety for institutions providing applied maritime education.

Introduction

Occupational health and safety have a long history. Even the laws of Hammurabi, which is one of the oldest law inscriptions, contain articles related to occupational health and safety [1]. Since then, occupational health and safety rules have aimed to protect employees from work accidents and occupational diseases, take necessary precautions for both health and possible safety problems, and inform employees about this issue. WHO states the definition of occupational health in its most detailed and accepted form as follows “Occupational health is an area of work in public health to promote and maintain the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations” [2]. ILO has made a similar definition by adding environmental factors that may endanger occupational health and safety (OHS), health and safety in general [3].

The education sector is one of the major sectors that serve people from many different age groups, from kindergarten to graduate students. Education plays an essential role in the growth and development of a society. For this reason, societies that educate themselves and invest in this field at all costs are the societies that have the most say on the world scale. With this awareness, investments in education are increasing almost everywhere in the world today, and accordingly, the education staff is also growing. Education is not limited to the instructors' lessons in the classroom. Maritime education is somewhat different from other forms of education in this regard. There are detailed and challenging applied training during the maritime training, such as laboratory training, ship abandonment training, fire training, and survival at sea training. According to the occupational health and safety workplace hazard classes report, while higher education activities are evaluated in the less dangerous class, activities related to maritime courses are assessed in the hazardous category [4]. In addition, there are not enough seafarer trainers in many institutions for the education of the maritime profession. This situation brings with it problems that may occur in education [5-6]. The consequences of the dangers in this area can also be quite annoying.

Material and Method

In this study, in which qualitative data were collected, a general briefing was given in order to determine the hazard class of the applied training that comes to the fore in maritime education. The data obtained within the scope of documentary scanning were analyzed by content analysis.

Results

There are certain requirements to be a seafarer trainer, these conditions are clearly stated in the training and examination directive [4]. There are not many seafarers working in maritime training due to insufficient financial means compared to the personnel working at sea in the maritime field. The applied training have shown below, and much more, are conducted only by seafarer trainers.



Figure 1. Lifesaving equipment training platform



Figure 2. Training of survival at sea techniques



Figure 3. Firefighting training

In these training programs, both instructors and students are faced with some chemical and physical hazards, depending on the occupation they are trained for. Extra care must be taken, especially during the procurement of pyrotechnic materials and their practical training. Because many training programs use old machines donated by the industry or equipment that has expired, serious hazards may arise.

Conclusion

Practical training has always been a complement to theoretical training [6-8]. Practical training in maritime varies according to the content of the training received within the scope of STCW. Almost all crew working onboard must have the following STCW certificate.

- Personal Survival Techniques
- Personal Safety and Social Responsibilities
- Elementary First Aid
- Fire Prevention and Fire Fighting
- Proficiency in Survival Craft and Rescue Boats (PSC & RB) other than Fast Rescue Boats
- Proficiency in Security Awareness

The minimum theoretical training and practices are carried out in institutions providing maritime education. It is crucial to supervise these training and evaluate them regarding occupational health and safety in the hazardous class. In addition, the suitability of the equipment used during the training should be checked. It is essential for occupational health and safety not to use expired pyrotechnic materials or lifeboats. Pyrotechnic equipment and lifeboats are disposable materials. Although they are disposable, they are expensive products. Educational institutions that do not have enough financial means are trying to solve the problem with the help of sponsors. But in the meantime, high attention must be paid to occupational safety. Institutions should allocate budgets for these items, and the inspectors should collect the leftovers of the used products. The importance of maritime education for our world and our nation's seas should not be forgotten. The health and safety of trainers who receive training and are rare in our country should always be at the forefront.

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