

Considering Job Safety in the Oil and Gas Workplace

Making safety and environmental protection an integral part of the culture of our industry



(API Photo)

API and industry standards and recommended practices (RPs) have played a key role making operations safer.

- RPs have been designed to aid companies in initiating the development of a safety and environmental management system (SEMS).
- RPs are updated on an ongoing basis, both at regular intervals and whenever experience warns of a safety issue that needs to be addressed.
- RP documents reflect the contributions of many industry safety and operational experts with hundreds of years of experience, including government agencies, representatives of other trade associations, and third party experts in industrial and workplace safety and accident prevention.
- The design of each company's system is unique and tailored to the company, its operations and its business plan.
- The industry's safety performance is also overseen by federal and state government regulation.
- Operators obtain numerous federal permits and comply with many sets of federal and state regulations to carry out exploration and production operations.
- The industry closely cooperates with government regulators to comply with rules that improve safety performance.

No task is so important that it be performed at the risk of health and safety.

Our industry takes every incident seriously.

Each incident provides an opportunity to learn and improve.

Lessons learned are captured and disseminated to improve performance and operating practices.

In the great majority of cases, oil and gas operations in the United States are as remarkable for their safety as for their technology and production of energy to meet our nation's needs.

Companies have successfully managed the risks associated with exploration and production through comprehensive health, safety and environmental management programs that emphasize:

- Safety of work and operating processes;
- Frequent updates to safety standards and procedures;
- Improved technology;
- Ongoing training;
- Effective communication with employees; and
- A willingness to learn from mistakes.



(API Photo)

API publications relating to safety are available at:
<http://www.api.org/Publications/epstandards/index.cfm>
Or at our e-store: <http://global.ihs.com/?RID=API1>

Each industry may be characterized by:

- General occupational risk factors (e.g. driving where required to perform the job) and
- Risk factors unique to the nature of the work performed in the particular industry.

The oil and gas industry is no different.

Operating drilling and production equipment, maneuvering supply boats offshore and heavy trucks and equipment onshore, and working outdoors in a broad range of weather and temperature conditions present identifiable occupational risks.



API Photo

Advancing technology has transformed the oil and gas industry over the decades, expanding opportunities, boosting productivity, but also enhancing safety.

Communication has been critical to improving safety – within companies, between industry associations and their members, and between government and industry.

Finally, planning is essential to safety. Before new projects are undertaken or new equipment, procedures and personnel are employed, managers and workers consider risk potential and plan how to reduce it.

High performing companies routinely seek every means to enhance safety performance and make safety an integral part of their businesses.

- In the offshore exploration and production segment, the industry has achieved an outstanding safety record while operating in a challenging environment and by meeting some of the world's most rigorous and comprehensive safety standards.
- By virtue of their effectiveness, these have become models for offshore oil and gas operations around the world.
- The overall trend in occupational fatalities offshore has been downward since 1968, over a period when by virtually every other metric, offshore drilling and production activity have increased significantly.
- According to government statistics, our offshore industry is safer than many other industries and among the safest among all U.S. oil and gas industry sectors.

Oil and gas production operations have had among the lowest individual segment workplace injury rates among industry categories for the past four years.

- Over the past four years the majority of oil and natural gas exploration and production work-related injuries have been occurring in the support activities for oil and gas operations segment, followed by drilling oil and gas wells.
- The great majority of safety incidents leading to workplace injury resulted from transportation and driving, followed by contact with objects and equipment, and situations involving fires and explosions.
- Similar to the oil and natural gas industry, other industries experienced many fatalities attributable to transportation incidents; driving is among the riskiest things we do.
- In onshore drilling operations, an increase in workplace injuries is attributable the increase in activity and a significant expansion of the workforce with many new employees.

What is API doing to improve safety in the oil and gas workplace? Here is a select chronology of actions we've taken:

2008:

- Developed an E&P Onshore Jobsite Safety Handbook that will be provided free to industry and serve as the "workbook" for an E&P Worksafe Program
- Developing safety training awareness modules that could be accessed online from the internet as part of a broader safe worker certification program.

2007:

- Updated and Reaffirmed 5 safety standards; provided them to industry as free download documents from the API website
- Revised and Published RP67 on explosive safety; provided it to industry for free
- Initiated an effort to develop a Safety and Environmental Management System document for onshore E&P operations planned for completion and free distribution to industry in 2008

2005 and 2006:

- Conducted API Contractor Safety Management Conferences in conjunction with Association of Energy Service Companies, International Association of Drilling Contractors — with participation by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

2004:

- Published RP 76, Contractor Safety Management for Oil and Gas Drilling and Production Operations.

2003 and 2004:

- Worked with OSHA to develop "eTools" on drilling and well servicing operations.

2002:

- Developed and published guidance on safety systems training for offshore workers.
- Developed a Training Providers Certification Program that would improve the quality of training provided to industry workers