

Annex C

Effective Team Briefings

Team Briefings are vital before any major operation takes place on board the ship. They may seem counter-intuitive to solving the time pressure issue that the modern-day seafarer faces, but a well briefed team will not only perform with a higher degree of safety, but also in a more time efficient manner. Team briefings ensure that everyone knows the plan for the operation. If this is not done and there is a deviation from the plan, team members will not be in a position to voice their concerns, as they were not aware of what the plan was in the first place.

Briefings are still vital even for routine operations that have been completed many times before. The maritime environment is very dynamic, and key aspects that may affect the operation could have changed since the last time the operation was conducted.

Structure of an effective team briefing

The team briefing should be conducted with sufficient time prior to conducting the operation so that it is not necessary to rush. It is vital that as many team members as possible are present at the briefing before the operation begins. However, the brief should be just that, brief. The briefing is the time when the team is formed that will conduct the operation and should be conducted by the person in charge of the operation. An effective team briefing could include:

- ✓ Specifics of the task. For example, for an enclosed space, this could be:
 - The space or spaces that are being entered.
 - Any pertinent information from the OOW or the EOOW.
 - Contents of adjacent spaces to the enclosed space.
 - Any specific hazards identified in the space.
 - Who is going to enter the space?
 - Status of enclosed space permit to work.
 - Previous contents of the space that is being entered.
- ✓ Assignment of duties designated to each team member, so that they are aware of what is expected of them, and that the workload is spread evenly. Proper task allocation ensures that human resources are used effectively.
- ✓ Duration of the job and any specific time frames to be aware of.
- ✓ Contingency response plans in case of an emergency.
- ✓ Give the team the opportunity to ask questions in case they need clarification.
- ✓ Finally, it is important that the person in charge of the brief encourages team members to be assertive at this point, and to challenge any orders or decisions they think are not correct or unsafe, and to encourage a culture where people can speak up. It should also be made clear that no team member will be ridiculed/disciplined for challenging an order that they deem to be incorrect.