

SHIFT WORK AND OUR INDUSTRIES

In every industry, especially the chemical and oil and gas industries, hazards are inevitable. The presence of these hazards if unchecked may lead to embarrassing as well as disastrous situations which can claim lives and facilities. In both onshore and offshore activities, it is therefore important to identify these hazards, carry out a risk assessment, and suggest ways to minimise their occurrences. This task is usually carried out by a recognized and approved safety regulatory body, either attached with or independent of the industry in question. Safety practices carried out are mostly in work design, operations and maintenance of plants and equipments used in carrying out tasks.

However, people are needed to carry out the operations and maintenance of these plants and equipments, usually within a 24 hour, 7 days a week and 365 days a year on a continuous basis. In order to achieve effectiveness and efficiency, people (workers) are frequently rotated on a routine basis within a cycle referred to as shift work, with the process known as ***shift handover***.

Maintaining continuity between shifts is very important, not only in the offshore oil and gas industry, but also in all continuous process operations.¹The safe operation of plants requires an effective communication between shifts and the various tasks involved which includes operations and maintenance. In any case of ineffective shift communication, the consequence could be alarming and long lasting.