

Sharing Safety-Data for Learning and Engagement

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Today's challenges to the offshore oil and gas industry include aging infrastructure, operating in more severe environments, and economic pressures, to name a few. To meet these challenges, effective risk management is more important than ever before. Both industry and regulators recognize the key role of safety-data in managing risk through:

- learning from past events so that actions can be taken to prevent similar occurrences in the future;
- monitoring performance to identify safety trends and emerging issues;
- identifying accident precursors and early warning signals of unsafe conditions; and
- assessing the integrity of both physical and operational barriers that are put in place to prevent incidents by controlling hazards and to reduce incident consequences.

A number of industry consortiums, trade groups, private enterprises, and academic groups have programs to collect and share offshore oil and gas safety-data to provide broader opportunities for learning and promote collaboration on current or emerging safety issues.

For regulators, collecting and analyzing safety data is essential not only to effectively monitor industry performance and compliance, but also to identify operational risks and trends. In addition to helping promote more effective regulatory approaches and programs, this information enables regulators to communicate and collaborate with industry on important safety issues of mutual concern.

Individual regulators have the advantage of being able to collect safety-data that encompasses all operators, sectors, and operations under their supervision. The International Regulators Forum (IRF) leverages the information and knowledge gained by their members through the exchange of information during annual meetings (data shared are anonymized), IRF- hosted Offshore Safety Conference, and joint programs.

In one joint program, IRF's Performance Measures Workgroup is conducting a Pilot Study to collect and analyze barrier failure and causal factor information. The results of this study will be used to develop strategies to better identify risk so that IRF can engage industry in a meaningful way. Through this engagement IRF will seek to address important offshore risks and encourage the industry to find solutions and mitigate strategies that will drive continuous improvement in offshore safety performance.

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