

ICHCA

INTERNATIONAL

Technology can drive port safety but staff training and buy-in are critical to safe working practices.

London, 29 June 2023

Advances in technology, such as in drivers' cabs has improved port worker safety substantially according to speakers on the port safety webinar jointly hosted by the International Cargo Handling Coordination Association (ICHCA) and Port Technology International.

The webinar, entitled How to Innovate for Workplace Safety in Ports and Terminals discussed key issues around workforce safety. The industry figures speaking where in agreement that technological innovation must be accompanied with buy-in from all port users and stakeholders is critical to keep all users safe.

ICHCA CEO Richard Steele told attendees that there had been 354 shore-based fatalities, including 349 port workers and 20 truckers globally since the year 2000. This made it essential for the cargo industry to keep on proactively searching for ways to improve health and safety; building on what has worked and looking for new ways to address risks.

Steele commented: "The key thing that industry can do is to agree common good practice and then act as champions, role modelling those good values and creating expectation of standards across the industry."

Safety and sustainability advisors Rombit CEO Evert Bulcke explained that technology in a driver's cab that acts as a constant reminder to drivers to perform their tasks safely can result in a significant decline in accidents, by as much as 80%.

"To be successful you need training and procedures, supported by continuous training and alerting through digital tools," said Mr Bulcke.

Bulcke pointed out that maintenance, energy and repair costs were reduced by around \$5,000 per vehicle, per year, from such innovations as the real time digital coach, while the US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) estimates that around 70% of all lift and crane accidents could be prevented through training and the application of digital tools.

Steve Biggs, a senior assistant for the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) also emphasised the importance of making sure that changes to work practices were agreed

with staff, getting their “buy-in”. Only then could new technological fixes and innovations in work practices be successfully applied.

Steele agreed, pointing out that the IMO provides excellent international regulations but once national borders are crossed the regulatory frameworks are individual and it becomes more complex to try to get uniform application of procedures. Industry itself has an ongoing responsibility to all of its stakeholders to continue to show health and safety leadership.

The consensus was that all stakeholders, both inside the terminal gates and those coming into the port from outside should be aware of and actively included in safe working practices. Health and safety manager Lee James, who works at DP World’s terminal in Southampton stressed the need to explain why changes were being made to prevent the often-strong resistance to what might otherwise be seen as unnecessary change.

“You hear people say if it’s not broken why fix it, but in my opinion, you have to ask why wait until something breaks before you fix it?”

Safety rules need to be reiterated constantly, but that must be combined with visible and felt health and safety leadership from management to the shop floor. All of which can then be supplemented by tech that produces data and can monitor safety performance. In its continued campaign to encourage such innovation ICHCA will once more launch the annual TT Club Innovation in Safety awards on September 4th this year. Further announcements on entry criteria will be made.

ENDS.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

About ICHCA International

Established in 1952, ICHCA International is an independent, not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the safety, productivity and efficiency of cargo handling and movement worldwide. ICHCA’s privileged NGO status enables it to represent its members, and the cargo handling industry at large, in front of national and international agencies and regulatory bodies, while its Technical Panel provides best practice advice and develops publications on a wide range of practical cargo handling issues.

Operating through a series of national and regional chapters, including ICHCA Australia, ICHCA Japan and plus Correspondence and Working Groups, ICHCA provides a focal point for informing, educating, lobbying and networking to improve knowledge and best practice across the cargo handling chain.

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