

Port Skills and Safety Ltd

emergency flash cards to support discussions on emergency exercises that can also be used to test the reliability of emergency plans and challenge employees' knowledge

the challenge

Port Skills and Safety Ltd is the professional safety and skills membership organisation for UK ports. We work in collaboration with our members to promote best practice and innovation, develop guidance and deliver services to drive continuous improvement in safety and ensure a highly skilled workforce.

Emergency planning is vital to safe operations in the port sector and knowledge and training forms the foundation for this. The Emergency Flash Cards developed by PSS, provide a framework to test and strengthen emergency planning.

The cards allow operational teams to run drills and training sessions in a structured way with minimal preparation. They help to prevent teams running the same tried and tested emergency drills where everyone knows exactly what is going to happen and how to deal with it. They ensure that emergency planning incorporates the type of unforeseen events that a real emergency would involve

the innovation

PSS worked with The Workboat Association to develop a set of Emergency Flash Cards to support discussions on emergency exercises. The cards can be used to test the reliability of existing emergency plans and challenge employees' knowledge.

Similar to a deck of playing cards, the emergency flash cards are easy to travel with, fitting into a pocket or bag. The cards can be used in operational settings during working hours, without the need to remove workers to training facilities. This provides a flexible solution, which can be easily used by operational teams.



The deck includes coloured 'suites' for weather, location, incident type, severity and variables. The cards have countless scenarios which can be achieved by selecting a combination of factors, either completely at random, or by selecting the desired location or type of emergency.

The features of the colour coded cards include pictograms and easy to understand descriptors which allow users to adapt the scenarios to their specific working environment. They are highly visible and engaging for users.

The cards were developed using industry knowledge to produce lists of emergency types and scenarios. Weather and wind conditions were planned to reflect real port challenges, including wind speed limits for crane operations. The number of scenarios allows numerous potential incidents to be generated.



how it was implemented

The cards were printed, presented in plastic cases, and sold at PSS and other events. Demonstrations highlighted the ease of use of the cards with participants able to understand the process in minutes.

Users are free to experiment with ways to use the cards to suit their operational needs. Some users chose to totally randomise the card selection and then discuss the results in team briefings, whilst others chose specific locations and emergency types to allow more in depth discussion within their teams. They have also been used as part of recruitment exercises to gauge applicants' ability to adapt to random and evolving events.

The variable cards, which is played once the team have begun resolving the emergency, adds the realistic element of an evolving emergency such as rescue equipment failing, weather worsening or the severity of the incident increasing.

The flash cards are an inexpensive and fun way to boost toolbox talks, create engaging emergency drills and get teams talking.



result

The cards have proved popular with members and non-members across the port sector with many organisations buying multiple packs to deploy across teams. Feedback has been

overwhelmingly positive, with many port members implementing them within their workforce and finding a noticeable change after doing so.

User feedback has described the cards as 'easy, engaging, useful and adding something different our drills'. One user said the cards had encouraged engagement and collaboration as they require open discussion with co-workers.

Feedback has shown that the Emergency Flash Cards not only strengthen users' current knowledge but also encourage them to discuss responses to scenarios that may otherwise be overlooked or unplanned for.

For example, a port member has rolled out the use of Emergency Flash Cards across all their sites giving them to each shift team. They carried out an emergency planning exercise with the fires emergency card pre-selected to test the teams understand of fire response. Just a few weeks after undertaking the exercise, their site was able to effectively execute a seamless response when a fire broke out in real life, preventing harm and minimising potential damage it could have caused.

The Emergency Flash Cards have supported members in continually improving the skills and knowledge of employees by providing a mechanism for emergency planning to be discussed and practiced at an operational level.

conclusion

These cards are a very simple innovation that have provided an effective tool for discussion on emergency scenarios.

The example given where the impact of a fire was minimised because the team were well versed in the emergency plans demonstrates the effectiveness of the cards.

LINK: <https://www.portskillsandsafety.co.uk/>

