

DUBLIN PORT COMPANY – DUBLIN SAFEPORT INITIATIVE

innovative and collaborative approach to transform safety culture across the Port

the challenge

Before the launch of the SafePort initiative, Dublin Port faced significant safety challenges stemming from a lack of an aligned and shared safety culture across its multiple independently operated terminals. Each terminal operated its own safety procedures, leading to inconsistent standards in key areas such as signage, personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements, and vehicle speed controls. This fragmentation made it difficult to manage hazards port-wide, with safety practices varying between operators. Communication and collaboration were largely limited to individual terminals, which hindered the establishment of a uniform approach to risk management and safety awareness. Without a cohesive safety culture shared across all operations, workers faced increased risks from uncoordinated procedures and unclear expectations. This environment exposed the port to higher operational risks and complicated efforts to proactively address safety threats. The separation of operations inhibited the development of a unified safety mindset that could foster mutual care and prompt intervention across the entire port estate.

the innovation

The Dublin SafePort initiative is an innovative and collaborative approach led by Dublin Port Company (DPC) to transform safety culture across the Port. Recognising the complexity of operating multiple independent terminals, DPC sought to engage terminal operators as partners in a unified endeavour to create a shared foundation for safety that went beyond enforcing rules. DPC focused on fostering a safety culture centred on supporting workers, empowering them to actively participate in safety improvements rather than imposing regulations upon them.

Central to this effort was the creation of inclusive relationships between DPC and the seven main terminal operators, forming a collective partnership built on trust and mutual commitment. This collaboration enabled the alignment and standardisation of safety practices across the entire port estate, covering training, communication, and operational procedures. The initiative encouraged open dialogue and learning, sharing lessons and experiences port wide.

By establishing these relationships as the basis of progress, DPC and terminal operators created a broad and sustainable foundation for safety culture. This approach shifted the narrative from purely compliance to collective responsibility and continuous improvement. The result has been a positive cultural change across the Port, where shared commitment and ongoing collaboration enable safer working conditions and sustained progress for all port personnel.

how it was implemented

Dublin Port Company (DPC) took a strategic and inclusive approach in implementing the Dublin SafePort initiative by leveraging strong industry and terminal support, backed by expert consultant advice. This collaborative framework engaged the seven main terminal operators, who together represent the majority of port workers, ensuring that all voices were included in shaping the safety culture.



Figure 1 - Port workers attending a SafePort Engagement session. The sessions are led by SafePort Champions – trained port workers. Each session is visited by a terminal manager or member of the SafePort Executive Group, to listen to the group and provide management commitment to safety. In this photo a terminal manager is providing this management commitment to an audience of staff of 6 terminals.



Figure 2 - SafePort Executive and Workgroup members engaging in a team training exercise hosted by the RNLI. The event focused on teamwork, and communications and involved a great deal of fun.

DPC enjoyed the support of key stakeholders including the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU), which reinforced worker participation and aligned the initiative with regulatory standards and labour rights.

DPC worked closely with terminal partners and these supportive bodies to align and standardise safety practices across the port. Early initiatives such as consistent speed limits and standardised personal protective equipment (PPE) provided tangible safety improvements and empowered partners to believe in their ability to improve the overall safety landscape.

This partnership approach ensured the development of shared ownership of safety culture, moving to aligned standards and a collective commitment to safer working conditions. The involvement of experienced consultants (jnj.com) further helped embed safety leadership principles.

Once established, SafePort reached out to infrastructure and transport providers to learn and share everything learned on the journey so far. SafePort has engaged with Dublin Airport, Irish Water, PSS, IHMA, Irish Port Safety Forum and UK Chamber of Shipping amongst others.

SafePort has hosted safety leadership and training events, including reflective events of SafePort to identify what is working / what is missing to ensure SafePort continues to grow and support the Partners.

what was the result

Dublin SafePort has successfully unified Dublin Port's terminal operators and stakeholders into a trusted safety network of partners. With collaborative working groups and broader engagement of stevedores and state agencies, it has established a proactive culture focused on worker safety.

The result of the SafePort initiative has been highly successful, earning international recognition for Dublin Port. It has established a strong, trusted safety culture across the port's extensive estate, with close collaboration between terminal operators, port authorities, and key stakeholders like An Garda Síochána, Revenue, and HSE. This unified effort has fostered productive and collaborative working groups that promote ongoing safety awareness, training, and best practice sharing port wide.

The initiative has significantly improved safety relationships and procedures, with aligned standards around PPE, speed limits, and operational practices. These collective efforts have led to a measurable increase in health and safety awareness, creating a safer working environment despite the port's high activity levels—managing around 50 ship movements and 17,000 vehicles daily.



Figure 3 - SafePort engagement with transport and infrastructure providers – Dublin Airport



Figure 4 - SafePort Executive Group visiting a Dublin Terminal – Doyle Shipping Group - to view AI CCTV system

This commitment aims to ensure continuous improvement, maintain high safety standards, and foster a culture of long-term safety and trust amongst port partners and workers.

Dublin Port Company plans to build on this success by allocating further resources and expertise for ongoing SafePort leadership.

conclusion

The SafePort initiative has successfully established trusted safety relationships between Dublin Port's terminal operators, supported by productive and collaborative working groups. This network has expanded as the initiative engages a growing number of partners, including additional stevedores and key state agencies such as An Garda Síochána (Police), Revenue, and the Health Service Executive. These partnerships have broadened the initiative's influence and reinforced a unified commitment to safety across the port estate.

The collaborative environment fosters open communication, shared procedures, and joint responsibility for safety outcomes, creating a resilient safety culture recognised internationally. Building on this success, Dublin Port Company plans to appoint further resources and expertise to support the ongoing leadership and development of Dublin SafePort. This investment will ensure continued momentum, enabling the port to adapt to evolving challenges and maintain its position as a leader in port safety.



Figure 5 - SafePort using local billboards with terminal and EHS managers to demonstrate commitment to safety

Through these sustained efforts, SafePort continues to transform Dublin Port into a cohesive, proactive community focused on protecting its workforce and visitors, setting a benchmark for safety culture in the maritime industry.



Figure 6 - SafePort Executive Group visiting a challenging road construction site project within Dublin Port



Figure 7 - SafePort commitment workshop - 14 organisations and 50 persons attending to collaborate and to identify what's working / what's missing

LINK: <https://www.dublinport.ie/>



Dublin
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