



People on the rigs are best to solve safety issues that arise

WHEN IT COMES to the safety and health of a contractor's rig crew, sometimes a certain amount of empowerment can be the best tool.

"The fact of the matter is if you have safety issues you are not going to solve them at the office," said **John Auth**, **Diamond Offshore Drilling's** HSE Manager. "People on the rigs are the best to solve them.

"Some of their solutions are a lot harsher than what we would do," he continued, "but if we had offered those solutions there would have been a lot of push back."

That philosophy has resulted from an HSE career in the contract drilling industry of more than a quarter century, including a background in human resources and industrial relations.

Mr Auth also noted that a successful safety department with clear safety results requires the full support of company management. When he joined **Diamond Offshore** as HSE Manager in 1995, he said, the company had as much commitment to safety as any he had seen, and he still believes that is true today.

"They had a real strong commitment to safety and strong management support as well, and it has gotten stronger since I've been here."

Before his present position, he had never been a full-time safety manager but that didn't mean he had no safety experience. "Back then HR people also worked in safety," he explained. "I got involved in safety as a claims person, running safety on the side, but the function didn't gain its current prominence until about 10 years ago."

Under his leadership at **Diamond Offshore's** safety department he initiated job safety analyses (JSA) before most contractors utilized them. He also implemented safety meetings on the rigs.

Another program the company started was a six-day roustabout school on the company's old Mr Charlie submersible that was donated for use as a museum and school in Morgan City. Roustabouts stay on the rig for six days without leaving the school, just as they would offshore. This weeds out some of the potential candidates before they travel offshore and discover that the job's not for them.



John Auth has been involved with IADC's safety and training committees nearly as long as his career in the contract drilling industry.

The school's results helped increase safety on the rigs significantly. During the second six month period that **Diamond** held the roustabout school, its turnover rate was reduced by 60-80%, according to Mr Auth, and the roustabout injury rate was reduced by half.

IADC INVOLVEMENT

Mr Auth has been active with IADC since he joined **Global Marine** in 1980, and he continues to support the Association's safety efforts to this day.

His involvement with IADC began when he participated on the IADC Manpower Management Subcommittee of the Human Resources Committee. He subsequently was involved with the Benefits

Subcommittee in the early 1990s and ultimately as Chairman of the HSE Committee in the late 1990s until 2002. After serving as HSE Committee Chairman for five years, he is now IADC's representative for **SafeGulf**.

"We were at one of the meetings with the group and I left to get a bagel. When I returned I was the IADC liaison to the group," he joked.

On a more serious note, Mr Auth was instrumental in convincing the four **SafeGulf** operators, **BP**, **Shell**, **Chevron** and **ExxonMobil**, to accept IADC's **Rig-PASS** training as the standard in the Gulf of Mexico.

He has been the liaison for about a year and a half now, and the program will likely be implemented during the next year. A few minor changes were made to **Rig-PASS** to put it into compliance with the operators' requirements, but it means that rig crews can use their existing **Rig-PASS** card to show they have been through the required training and will not have to go through another basic training course on behalf of the operators.

"Other industry groups have been accepted by **SafeGulf** as well, but IADC was the first," Mr Auth proudly noted.

ON THE JOB TRAINING

Mr Auth's career has taken him to **ENSCO International** and one of the several iterations of **Chiles Offshore**. Through his efforts, drilling contractors for which he has worked and the industry have experienced increased safety rates and decreasing LTIs and other incidents.

He joined **Global Marine** in Los Angeles in 1980, where he worked in the benefits and investor relations departments. He was transferred to Houston after about a year and a half in LA. Mr Auth continued with the company until 1986 when the industry cycled down and he was made redundant. Following a brief stint with a cattle company he was able to get back into the drilling business, this time with **ENSCO International** when the company purchased **Blocker Drilling**. He later followed the company to Dallas where he was benefits manager and then HR manager for all of the company's drilling operations.

After leaving **ENSCO** in 1992, he joined **Chiles Offshore**, the company that was ultimately purchased by **Noble Drilling**, where he was Manager of Rehabilitation Services when the company was sold in 1995. ■