



SAFETY MATTERS



Newsletter from **Boskalis**

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Distracting and being distracted

The risks of cell phones in the work place

Would you trust a surgeon who was talking on the phone while operating? Everyone knows that since calling and texting distracts you from the task at hand, it can be risky. And yet we all call in the car, text at the landfill, use Facebook in the crane cab, and type emails while we walk. What do we think about this behavior? Are we willing and able to change? In this Safety Matters, colleagues share their experiences.



While on the phone, senior maintenance engineer Wim Stander stepped from a crane pontoon onto a hopper

and fell. "Since then, I pay more attention to the risks."

"During a maintenance visit on the Amsterdam Rhine Canal, I stepped from the crane pontoon onto the hopper while on the phone. Shortly thereafter I stepped back onto the crane pontoon. That's when it went wrong. In order to bring it closer, the crew had extended a steel wire behind the hopper's bollard. The hopper was being loaded, so it lay deeper in the water, which caused the steel wire to spring loose from behind the bollard. It hit me between the legs and I fell between the hopper and the pontoon. Somehow, my reflexes enabled me to grab hold and I managed to crawl back onto the pontoon with the phone still in my hand... Thankfully, the only thing I suffered was a fright.

This experience made me stop and think. Literally and figuratively: if I'm walking on deck, I always answer my phone because it's part of my job. But if I know it will be a long discussion, I look for a quiet place to talk. Or I call back later. And if I have to transfer from one vessel to another, I hang up!"

Is it useful to implement a company policy?

"In general, it can help but every situation is different, so it ultimately comes down to behavior.

Sometimes you do things without thinking or quickly: I sometimes catch myself typing out an email while walking. It wouldn't upset me if someone called me to account on this."



People are distracted by their phone even when they are not using it

This has been shown by recent research: people who could not see their phone scored 20% higher in a test than those whose phone was in view. The presence of the device alone was found to severely limit reaction times. Such behavior is said to be typical of behavioral addiction and diminishes our ability to sustain attention.

Read more on: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-2867377/People-distracted-phone-AREN-T-using-study-claims.html#ixzz3r0B2mrOk>

Tabé van der Ploeg, project leader for Boskalis Netherlands, challenges drivers if they're phoning while on the road. But he, too, was challenged on his telephone use. "Now, I more carefully consider whether the circumstances allow safe phone use."

"We often see truck drivers calling while driving. Recently, a dumper container toppled over because the driver was on his phone and wasn't paying enough attention. Thankfully the incident caused neither damage nor injury, but it does

pose risks. This is why we've held several toolboxes meetings to raise awareness among drivers. And we've spread the word that we will no longer tolerate calling on the road and will impose sanctions if necessary. My experience is that sub-contractors understand this.

But I don't want to point the finger just at the drivers. I was recently on the phone while walking through a work area where they were busy paving, just behind a moving truck. A man in one of the asphalt trucks spoke up about my unsafe behavior. That really makes

an impression. I shared this experience in a work meeting and I'm now careful to consider whether my surroundings allow me to safely take a call. And wouldn't you know that many issues resolve themselves even if you don't react immediately. People call at the drop of a hat. That's the other thing we need to be more aware of."

Is it useful to implement a company policy?

"It's not your cell phone at work that's the problem. I think what we really need to do. ■

Construction site excavator driver fined over mobile phone use

At a construction site in the UK, an excavator driver was distracted when using his mobile phone. Without paying attention to his surroundings, he rotated the upper body of the excavator, causing the metal bucket to strike a co-worker on the side of his head. The sad result: a multi-fractured jaw and a punctured and collapsed lung. The excavator driver was brought to court and ordered to pay compensation and costs on grounds of not having taken reasonable care for the safety of other people who may be affected by his acts or omissions. ■

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Read more on: <http://press.hse.gov.uk/2014/employee-in-court-after-striking-co-workers-head-with-digger-bucket/>

Jouke Koning, HSE-manager Suez, observes that calling in the Middle East has become a way of life that is difficult to change. "But doing nothing is not an option."

"The drivers who shuttle our staff to and from the airport are used to driving fast with one hand loosely on the steering wheel and the other clutching their phone, which means they're also constantly shouting to be heard. We consider this unacceptable. We only saw a clear change in behavior after many discussions with drivers and the dismissal of those who refused to change. Perseverance pays off.

Another example: An employee wounded his hand when picking up freight because the crane

operator was on his phone and was not paying attention. Our response was to offer every ship a kick-off about safety related to the use of cell phones. This clearly gets people thinking. But not everyone. So what do you do if, after the kick-off, someone is caught calling on the job? You dismiss them. Even though we don't formally have the authority to ban cell phone use, the average captain recognizes the risks and supports us in this."

Is it useful to implement a company policy?

"Putting procedures or rules in writing is one thing, but it's really about sticking to them. How can you get people to follow the rules? You must continually underline their importance. In any case: doing nothing is not an option. ■



Two recent accidents in which cell phone use likely played a role set Bas van Bemmelen, area director for Africa, to thinking.

"When you're on the phone, your level of alertness is unconsciously compromised, which can put you and others in danger."

you and others in danger. There are always situations in which your work requires your full attention and cannot be done properly if you're on the phone because the risk of incidents is too great. One example is operating heavy machinery.

But there is something else at play: in the case of both accidents, the victims were on break, which means they were allowed to make calls. But even in 'break mode,' you're in an environment with work-related risk factors. We regularly see that people who consciously implement safety procedures while on the job, experience a kind of 'disconnect' as soon as they're off the clock. In such situations, a cell phone represents an extra risk factor that distracts you, causing you to pay less attention to your surroundings.

Is it useful to implement a company policy?

"We need to increase our awareness of the risks of calling in the work place and launch a discussion on the issue. I'm in favor of making joint agreements on what we are and are not doing, and establishing which facilities are needed to make calling safer, like car kits and designated calling areas." ■



"We recently experienced two serious accidents whereby there were strong suspicions that the use of a cell phone played a role. So what should we do about it? If you are in a coordinating position, the phone is an essential part of your work. After all, there are times you simply have to exchange information quickly and professionally while on the job. But a long or intense telephone conversation puts you in a different mindset. I notice this myself. I get absorbed in the conversation and become less aware of my surroundings. Ultimately, I start to pace. The level of your alertness is unconsciously compromised, which can put

Maasvlakte

The construction of the Maasvlakte in the Netherlands was a project that involved heavy machinery and many thousands of transport movements, thus increasing the risk of accidents and the potential of serious injury. The project was one of the first where special attention was devoted to the use of cell phones. “By continually raising the issue, it becomes top of mind.”

Gert-Jan Rodenburg (head of rock operations team, now manager of the Rock department): “At that time, we implemented various safety measures, such as only allowing hands-free calling. Car kits were installed and operators were required to bring headphones. If hands-free calling wasn’t an option, the driver had to stop before calling. Special areas were designated for this purpose.”

Wicher Renier (currently tender manager Salvage): “If you’re at the wheel and the phone rings it’s your responsibility if you answer. But aren’t you required to answer if the call is coming from the person in charge or your direct supervisor? Based on numerous discussions with employees, we concluded



Gert-Jan Rodenburg



Wicher Renier

that this is a tough choice. So rules are one thing, but it’s really about ensuring they are open for discussion. We did so continually in the daily meeting, based in part on near-misses. Slowly but surely, the rules have become a priority: telephone calls are made hands-free or not at all. And colleagues call each other to account, such as an operator who points out to someone in charge that he’s calling while walking through the work area.”

Anton van Dongen (currently head operations manager Earth Moving & Mining Boskalis Netherlands): “You can’t stop technological developments. That’s why it’s



Anton van Dongen

important to think about how we use them. In the past, we would walk around the Maasvlakte with a big work drawing that everyone could see. Now that drawing is on a tablet and you’re walking through the area looking at a little screen. If I’m not focused on my surroundings, can I assume that my surroundings are focused on me?”

Is it useful to implement a company policy?

Gert-Jan: “Yes, because you can refer to them, also when sub-contractors are involved. Rules prevent every project from having to reinvent the wheel. But you need to do more than simply implement rules: you also need to be aware that calling distracts you from your work.”

Wicher: “Maybe you should actually confiscate phones on large projects so that people aren’t tempted to use them. Just proposing this leads to a lot of discussion and that’s exactly what you want. People should be thinking about the possible consequences of their behavior, for themselves and others.”

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Rob van Gemert, project director for the Wiker project, simply turns off his phone during a face-to-face talk. But he knows how tempting the cell phone can be. “Make it a topic of discussion at your site.”

“In my former job, during construction of a new underground natural gas storage facility, cell phones were banned on the site. I thought that was nonsense. After all, part of your safety plan

is based on being able to make calls quickly. I think it’s better to make it a topic of discussion at the site: what do you do if your phone rings? Start a group discussion, so you can make sure cell phones are used in the most responsible way. I think this can lead to a code of conduct that’s acceptable to everyone: ‘if my phone rings, I first ensure everything is secure and then I call back.’ This approach means you take your people seriously and that’s the whole point.”

Is it useful to implement a company policy? “A guideline is the last step in a lengthy process. No. The point is that we all have to agree that it’s not a good idea to call or text at work.

You can only impose a ban if we all think that’s the best option. It has to affect you.”





Neil Martin, SHE-Q Manager Westminster, was shocked by a picture of an incident which was attributed to the use of a mobile phone. "The mobile phone can easily lead to distractions, which make people forget to do things or forget their surroundings."

"Some time ago I was talking to a superintendent who was constantly picking up his phone, giving it a quick glance, putting it down and picking it up again. This was in an office environment, but I thought: is he also doing this when he is on site? The mobile phone can easily lead to distractions, which make people forget to do things, or forget their surroundings. Only recently I visited a police station in the Netherlands, with the SHE-Q group NW Europe. During a presentation about accidents, the police officer showed

us a picture of a ship's crew member lying on the ground next to a winch, severely injured. Apparently something went wrong with the chain. Ugly detail: right by his hand was his mobile phone. This picture really brought it home to me: what is around you that can be distracting? And what should we do about it? Because you cannot ignore the advances of technology. For instance: using the mobile phone to report a potentially dangerous situation, as is now being done on some projects, is a fantastic development – but needs measures to ensure it is done safely."

Is it useful to implement a company policy?

"I'm not convinced we need a company-wide policy for this. I think we have to challenge ourselves to think about using these devices safely and reasonably. Create designated places and areas within our work sites and vessels. It is about caring for each other: if you are operating heavy machinery you should not be distracted by your phone. I believe that by taking NINA to heart we should be able to find a solution."

Separate pedestrian strip for callers

Last year, a separate safety strip was opened in Chongqing, China for pedestrians who wish to call or text on their cell phones. According to the city, the 50-meter strip was meant to be ironic, while also drawing attention to the problem of calling and texting in traffic. The Chinese initiative was inspired by an experiment that National Geographic Television had previously conducted in the U.S. capital of Washington D.C.



Chris Bos, salvage master on the Baltic Ace project, observed that his divers were distracted by their cell phones and wrote a memo: "Don't carry a phone on the job."

"Diving work requires you to pay constant attention in order to react quickly. So if the man onshore has to put away his phone before he can tighten the diver's slack line, that's clearly unacceptable. So I wrote a memo stating that no one was allowed to have their phone with them while on the job. They have to call and text during breaks. They will be given one warning; after that,

they're gone. I've had to issue several warnings, but no one has had to leave the project. So it works. They're clearly aware that it's unacceptable."

Is it useful to implement a company policy?

"I really think this should be addressed on a project-related basis and perhaps included in the dive manual."

Multitasking: fact or fiction?

Passing somebody on the highway while discussing a tender. This is a classic example of multitasking: doing two things at once. We often hear that women are better at this than men. Is that true? The fact is, no one can do it. Recent scientific research shows that our brains cannot really do two things at once. The best we can do is to very quickly shift tasks.

Conclusion: A multitasker who is calling while passing on a highway will not make the best deal nor pass as safely.



Read more:
<http://www.nrcnext.nl/bibliotheek/2009/10/21/niemand-kan-multitasken/>

SMIT Salvage, specialist in salvage operations

What does safety mean for SMIT Salvage?

What?

SMIT Salvage has three mainstays: Emergency Response (ER), Wreck Removal (WR), and Preparedness & Prevention (PP). ER involves situations of acute distress (fire, collision), whereby the ship can still be saved. This is not the case with WR, which is why it is more project-related. PP comprises training and consultancy based on the knowledge and experience that Salvage has accumulated.

Who?

A majority of the nearly 180 colleagues at Salvage have nautical and/or technical knowledge. They are all deployed for both ER and WR operations. Work experience is important: knowing the ins and outs of the ship you are boarding and what you can and cannot do with a load. To handle peaks in activity, Salvage makes use of freelance divers and the different pools of Boskalis employees.

How?

Because it is important in the case of ER operations to be on-site quickly, the SMIT Salvage colleagues work from four locations: Papendrecht, Singapore, Cape Town, and Houston. A warehouse with the appropriate materials is set up at each location. Salvage owns one large pontoon with accommodation (SMIT Barge 1) and one sheerleg (SMIT Cyclone). In addition, equipment is leased from third parties or taken from the Boskalis organization.

Salvage of the Dutch cargo ship "Flinterstar" off the coast of Belgium



Project Flinterstar dredging personnel links oil hose to the "Vos Sympathy"

Robert Jan van Acker, director Towage & Salvage:

"Safety begins with the individual, not with the procedures."

"We come on board once the crew has left the 'burning' ship. In other words: where the procedures end. Our people are therefore very self-reliant. They must constantly safely adjust to changing circumstances. During a rescue operation, there is no time for traditional toolbox meetings, but there must be constant consultation. What are we going to do? What can and cannot be done? Our training programs are geared towards this: becoming aware of the many risks in order to learn how to judge what is and is not acceptable.

Dilemmas

Each team faces dilemmas during a salvage operation. One example is when we work for the oil and gas industry. While this sector has plenty of rules and procedures, there is a lack of clarity on what to do about people who don't follow them when doing so would compromise safety. For instance: an accommodation platform had partly fallen against a production platform. And every day it dropped a bit further. The client wanted four different analyses of each step we took. In our view, there wasn't enough time for that. How to approach such a dilemma?

The influence of social media is a new component. Every disaster is posted on Facebook and Twitter in no time. The influence of public opinion is on the increase. We must be prepared for this.

Which is why ER has an increasingly project-oriented approach, with a major role for SHE-Q. And the position of salvage master is also changing: he has to be able to communicate better than ever with the outside world, from the press to environmental organizations.

Personal responsibility

This work requires taking a lot of personal responsibility. That's exactly where NINA has added value for us. NINA enables dilemmas to be discussed in a constructive atmosphere. Everyone can be heard. In the projects where NINA has already been in use for a longer period, such as the Baltic Ace project, people are seeing that their input is being heard. In the cooperation with partners, I also see that NINA can help us reach a common consensus. For instance, NINA ensures that we become more aware that safety starts with the individual and not with procedures."

Communication is the key to success



Baltic Ace - a major salvage project

At the end of 2012, the *Baltic Ace* left Zeebrugge for Finland in poor weather conditions. Then, 65 kilometers off the coast, it collided with a container ship. In just 15 minutes, the ship sank to the bottom of the sea, in the middle of one of the world's busiest shipping lanes. On board were 1,400 new cars and a substantial amount of fuel. Of the 24 people on board, only 13 survived the accident.

"The highest point was only 12 meters below the water's surface," says manager of operations Pieter van Vuuren. "This meant the wreckage posed a threat to the 16,000 ships that sail to and from Rotterdam and that had to detour following the incident." SMIT Salvage carried out the salvage operation together with Mammoet Salvage. Right from the tender phase, the 'E' for Environment was key to the process. "All plans were checked by Rijkswaterstaat (Public Works) against the Water Act, which is aimed at preventing environmental damage. We included an oil slick control ship in our proposal, which would immediately clean up any spill on the spot."

NINA Kick-off

Baltic Ace was the first project in which Salvage introduced NINA. In order to quickly train all involved, we opted for a combined NINA project start-up and Do-it training. All team members of the parties involved, including the client and the shipyard where the ship's parts were dismantled, took part in the various sessions. An incident in the spring of 2015, whereby an employee injured his hand and wrist, provided an extra reason to present the NINA Workbox "Hands."

Communication

Pieter: "As is the case for every salvage project, here too we had to adjust the plans as we went along because the condition of



The raising of the bow section of the Baltic Ace

the wreckage quickly deteriorated. We ended up sawing the ship into eight sections and raised it using a floating sheerleg. Every change requires a new risk assessment. In accordance with the plan, we kept a risk file along with the client RWS, which was checked during execution." Good communication is crucial in this type of changing environment. "At every shift change, a toolbox meeting was held during which the work and all safety issues were discussed so everyone knew what would happen, including in all the simultaneous operations."

The *Baltic Ace* has since been completely salvaged and the seabed cleaned, without major incidents or environmental damage. An impressive result that's also well before the deadline of the end of this year. ■

Project Baltic Ace



Thought of
a good idea
to improve
our safety?

Send it to:

safety@boskalis.nl



Colophon

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