A holistic view on Safety Management

Abstract: Or a holistic view on prevention of accidents, which must be based on a well functioning management of safety. The major problem with accidents is that before they happened we believed everything was in order but only because nothing had happened up until then. The second problem is that risks are not present all the time and when the risk situation does occur then we are usually able to manage the situation and nothing happens. This makes us believe that we can handle the risky situations all the time. Jens Rasmussen expresses this in his “Drift to danger” concept (Ref). The only way to prevent accidents is to identify the risks in all kinds of situations and take precautions by establishing safety barriers either technically or by improving the processes involved in managing these barriers, as well as bringing about behavioral improvements through good leadership. A project initiated and supported by the UK Health and Safety Executive is developing a method for identifying major hazard safety barriers in the chemical industry and has been able to produce so called message maps of how to be aware of the barriers that must be in place and the role played by personnel, including managers, for avoiding accident occurrence caused by degradation of barriers. In connection to this project tools have been produced to raise the awareness for barriers through a combination of a change management system and a goal-feedback management system. The project is being undertaken by a Dutch and Danish team led by Linda Bellamy (White Queen BV, NL) working together with Kirsten Jørgensen (DTU, DK). An overview of this work, focusing especially on the awareness improvement program which has its basis in previous work carried out in Denmark, will be presented.