

DRILLING AHEAD

PDO's DOIRC process too good an HSE initiative to keep quiet

Mike Killalea, Editor & Publisher

SOMETIMES A GOOD idea is just too valuable to keep to yourself. And shrewd people are quick to adopt helpful innovations of others. The DOIRC initiative of **Petroleum Development Oman** is a case in point. "DOIRC" (pronounced "DORIC" to avoid a tongue twister), acronymic for Drilling Operations Incident Review Committee, was established by PDO in the early 1990s in an urgent drive to dramatically improve safety performance.

The initiative has proven very successful—so much so that other IADC members around the Arabian Gulf, including **Saudi Aramco, Kuwait Oil Co, ADCO in Abu Dhabi** and **Qatar Petroleum**, have begun adapting the program to their own operations.

To toot a horn, IADC has been continuously active in DOIRC over the years. IADC Director of Operations-Middle East and Asia **Norman Edwards** has frequently contributed to the group since its inception by PDO. Following adoption of the DOIRC process by other Gulf operators, IADC Vice President-Operations **Ken Fischer** has participated in like events with Saudi Aramco and Kuwait Oil Co.

The DOIRC meetings are the heart of the program's success. At PDO, for example, the group convenes the first Tuesday of each month, comprising representatives from the PDO Well Engineering Department and from drilling and service contractors from all facets of drilling and workover operations.

PDO facilitates these monthly open forums, but the chairmanship rotates among the contractors. Participants review safety statistics from the previous month, and discuss all reported incidents and near misses, even some that might have been considered initially inconsequential—sparking by a diesel generator, (a potential fire hazard), and a hammer not secured to a safety line falling from the

monkey board. Such events can ultimately lead to serious consequences.

DOIRC works because PDO promotes a "no blame" culture and because the program emphasizes encouraging peers and competitors to share safer operating practices. This "lateral learning" process emerges from every incident investigation. PDO even issues a "lateral learning poster" whenever appropriate.

And any worker is empowered, without potential penalty, to stop an activity at any time if he considers it to be unsafe.

Following this review exercise, the group shifts from the specific to the general. This second phase of the day's activities is a general HSE and Quality meeting, in which the participants can chew over general HSE or operational topics. The goal here is not only to share best practices, but to improve the *process* of sharing best practices. For this reason some meetings each year are held in one of the larger field operating centers.

The results have been telling. PDO has achieved a step-change reduction in vehicle rollover casualties and fatalities by stipulating mandatory vehicle design improvements—rollover bars constructed inside the vehicles to minimize potential roof collapse, for example—and obligatory desert driving course competence certification prior to driving in the field. Another benefit has been a united effort by all concerned to ensure that subcontractors and third party contractors also comply with agreed DOIRC safety practices.

PDO has always made visitors from other Gulf operators welcome, which has prompted the growth of the DOIRC concept throughout the region. Now, the various DOIRCS share meeting minutes regularly.

Who knows, DOIRC could wind up setting a new industry-wide standard for HSE improvement—a good idea blossoming to a truly great program. ■