

Guidance for the management of distribution terminal operations

GUIDANCE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF DISTRIBUTION
TERMINAL OPERATIONS

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FOREWORD

The purpose of this publication is to provide a general guide to safe practices in the management of operations of distribution terminals.

The guidance provides recommendations for safe practices rather than a set of rigid rules. It is stressed that the specific circumstances of each terminal should be taken into account when considering this document. It is not intended that the recommendations of the guidance should be applied rigidly where for a variety of reasons it may not be practical to comply with them.

Attention is drawn to the fact that in many countries statutory requirements exist, both local and national, pertaining to the petroleum industry, and this guidance should be regarded as being complementary to such requirements.

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Suggested revisions are invited and should be submitted to the Technical Department, Energy Institute, 61 New Cavendish Street, LONDON, W1G 7AR.

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SCOPE

The object of this guidance is to recommend good practices for the safe management of the operation of petroleum distribution terminals, including the receipt, storage, handling and loading of petroleum products.

It is not intended to preclude the use of alternative methods where these provide equivalent standards of safe operation.

The guidance does not specifically cover environmental protection, health, or product quality, although sections of this guidance may also prove useful in managing these aspects.

1 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

1.1 SAFETY CULTURE

An organisation's culture can have a significant influence on how people behave at work. Safety culture is a subset of this overall organisational culture and can be described as *the values, attitudes and patterns of behaviour that the members of an organisation share about the organisation's hazards, risks, and accidents*. Safety culture should be considered to be an important aspect of managing terminal operations as it provides the context within which members of the organisation assess the appropriateness of their behaviour.

Safety culture can often be considered just in terms of how employees comply with rules and whether they act safely or not. However, it should be seen as being more than this, and in particular, safety culture should be considered to include the way an organisation is managed. Examples include whether a distribution terminal operator is perceived to have a bias for production over safety, or a tendency to focus on short-term cost reductions rather than longer-term safety improvements. The role of senior terminal management should therefore be seen as being vital to the development of a positive safety culture within distribution terminals.

When trying to influence a terminal's culture, change can take several years. As such, terminal operators should consider starting any culture change programme by measuring their existing safety culture using safety climate surveys or interviews. Safety climate refers to how people feel about an organisation's safety and is used to identify the perceptions of the safety culture. Measuring safety climate can therefore help identify weak areas within the terminal's culture.

When measuring safety climate terminal operators should ensure that they do not just focus on their more junior employees. Senior managers should also be required to participate in any surveys and interviews.

Once the survey and/or interviews have been completed then feedback of the findings should be provided to all employees, and the findings acted upon. If individuals feel that their responses have resulted in management implementing improvements then this can have a positive impact on the terminal's safety culture. Conversely, if they feel that their opinions are ignored then this can have a detrimental effect on the culture.

When considering what initiatives should be implemented within a terminal it can often be most effective to focus on specific areas of weakness that have been identified. Targeted initiatives can then be put into place which aim to improve the specific issues identified rather than trying to implement generic culture improvement programmes.

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) *Human factors briefing note no. 7. Safety culture* highlights some of the main factors that contribute to a positive safety culture, along with the features that would indicate that these factors are in place, and some practical steps that management can take to develop a positive safety culture. This is shown in Table 1.