



# From One Hazardous Environment to Another

A Navy ship enters a shipyard, following an underway period. When this happens, Sailors have to stay alert because they're going from one hazardous environment to another.

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“**Moored**, shift colors.” We hear that phrase every time we end an underway period. It usually means it’s time to relax with family and friends, so we tend to let down our guard. However, when the lines go over to bollards in a shipyard, we can’t afford to let down our guard because we’re simply going from one hazardous environment to another.

How do we avoid the inherent problems related to shipyards? By planning and holding training months in advance. And that’s exactly what we did before starting a selected restricted availability (SRA) in October 2000.

Our preparations went beyond the typical safety stand-down. We included common themes, as well as some that people often overlook because they don’t realize the items are safety-related. In the preliminary stages, division safety petty officers discussed ideas to meet the challenges of the maintenance period. We also researched training topics and purchased personal-protective equipment. Our efforts culminated in a flurry of activities the last two days before the SRA started.

On the next to last day, we followed the format of a traditional stand-down, starting with an all-hands call, a safety overview, and then dividing the crew into smaller discussion groups. Subject-matter experts covered basic safety topics, such as PPE, including hearing and respiratory protection. With much electrical and electronic work planned for the availability, as well as related testing, we focused on shipyard expectations and refresher electrical-safety training for all hands. We also covered tagout procedures, hot-work safety, and quality assurance (QA).

“Since when is quality assurance a safety issue?” some of you may be asking. “I thought it was just an engineering program.”

However, all types of jobs, from working on a lube-oil system to repairing electronics for a radar system, involve quality assurance. Consider the implications of poor QA. Let’s say someone leaves a cleanliness plug in a high-pressure hydraulic system, which then causes damage to a relief valve. When the system is brought on line, there is a loss of over-pressure protection.

The last day before our SRA started was dedicated to operational risk management (ORM) training by people from the Naval Safety Center. What better time is there to focus on the basics of ORM than just before entering an unfamiliar, industrial, and therefore often hazardous environment? We owe it to ourselves, and our shipmates, to apply the five steps of ORM to the jobs we do every day.

Stand-downs are designed to reinforce basic safety or to prepare us for specific events. Before your next one, consider what other topics (with a tie to safety) you need to include. Remember ORM, and include something more than a standard slide show. Ask what might be available from other commands or outside agencies to make the training better. Use every opportunity you have to make sure people do things the right way—the safe way. 🌐