SAFETY FIRST

Developing the Offshore Wind Industry: Safety from the Start

The offshore wind industry is new to North America and brings numerous safety hazards with it. High injury and fatality rates are inconsistent with the goals of green energy and growing the blue economy. Traumatic injury and death can be prevented through improved design of infrastructure, effective safety management systems and a well-trained workforce. The nascent US offshore wind industry thus presents a unique opportunity to design in safety from the start.

Learning from the United Kingdom’s and the European Union’s experience

Exploring the G+ surveillance data, and interviewing UK offshore wind workers, managers, regulators and other industry experts will allow us to:

- Identify safety hazards, both physical and organizational.
- Determine obstacles to safety and strategize to overcome them.
- Identify training priorities and training needs for the future offshore wind workers in the US.
- Recommend regulatory protections.

Bristol Community College partners with Maersk for U.S. offshore wind training.

Massachusetts Maritime Academy, in cooperation with Relyon Nutech, has developed the first program in the nation to offer all five modules of GWO Basic Safety Training for Offshore Wind.
Safety Management Systems in the US

An effective safety management system, as part of corporate safety culture that prioritizes preventing death and injury, is crucial to the success of the industry. Reviewing the literature, best practices in other high hazard industries in the US, as well as tapping our extensive experience of effective management systems, will yield:

- Necessary elements for effective safety management systems that promote injury, hazard and near miss reporting
- Best practices to establish learning organizations, that is, those that learn from mistakes and can avoid them in the future
- Ways to promote the crucial element of worker-management engagement
- Identify opportunities to establish real incentives for safety, as opposed to programs that discourage injury and hazard reporting and do not improve workforce safety.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that Wind Turbine Service Technicians is the fastest growing occupation by more than a factor of two. The offshore environment will demand highly-skilled labor and advanced O&M tools that can safely maintain this clean energy resource.