

IN 1020 – Safety flashes and alerts – advice for members

Information Note Published on 9 July 2010

IMCA safety flashes disseminate important information on incidents and potential hazards and the lessons learnt from them that can help prevent incidents occurring elsewhere in the industry. In addition to developing safety flashes from the information provided, these safety flashes play an important role in helping to formulate the various committee work programmes.

Any member who has some material that they feel might be used for an effective safety flash can send the relevant details to IMCA. Anyone wishing to contribute to these flashes can submit the relevant details to incidentreports@imca-int.com. All material received is handled in the strictest confidence, and all information is anonymised as needed and checked with contributors before issue. This process includes the following steps:

- Ensuring that the information received is completely anonymous and contains no clues as to its specific origin. IMCA publishes safety flashes from members using phrases such as ‘A member reports an incident in which ...’.
- A careful check is made for any phrases mentioning or even inferring times and dates, geographical locations and any persons or organisations involved. Such phrases are removed or replaced with appropriate non-specific alternatives.
- As far as possible, references to gender and technical job title are also removed or replaced – terms such as generic ‘personnel’ or ‘crew’ are preferred.
- The language of the submitted material may be altered to maintain an impersonal ‘third-person’ style and any references to company-specific procedures, equipment or practices will be altered or removed.
- Once the draft safety flash is developed, IMCA will send a draft copy of the safety flash to the member who submitted the original information, requesting permission to publish.

Care is taken to ensure that none of the above steps removes or obscures information which may be of use to IMCA members. If this is likely, someone from the secretariat technical team will liaise with the member who sent in the original information and agree an appropriate form of words for the safety flash prior to the final request for permission to publish.

Safety flashes are published in groups, normally of between three and five incidents. This is in order to keep down the quantity of email sent to members. Different incidents are grouped together depending on when they were received and when permission was received for final publication. Members should be aware that IMCA will not publish a draft safety flash without clear permission from the originator and that the process of obtaining permission can often be a source of delay in publication.

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Tags:

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IMCA aims for all safety flashes to be succinct, specific, factually correct and written in clear language. Whilst the secretariat will always carefully format and check the material sent in for safety flashes, members can assist in this process by following a number of pointers:

- The title should be concise and should focus the reader's mind on the main issue.
- The focus should be on the lessons learnt and on how to prevent a recurrence, rather than on the incident itself.
- The content should be succinct and specific and, as far as possible, a common theme or pattern should be followed:
 - **What happened?** An incident or an issue will be described.
 - **Why?** What were the immediate causes and, if appropriate, the root causes?
 - **Learning:** What can members learn from this?
 - **Action:** What are the recommendations or actions for members?
- Ideally there should be photographs or illustrations.

A useful safety flash should provide sufficient detail to the right audience, effectively communicating risks, precautions and necessary actions, without releasing detailed information about the persons or organisations involved.