



## Human Failure Procedures play their part

There are several good reasons for having procedures. Procedures promote consistent and repeatable performance. They provide a reference for how the task is or should be undertaken, and they underpin training and competency measurement. Importantly, they are used as a means to mitigate human and system failure.

This is the intention, but procedures often don't satisfy these requirements. Cases in point include Piper Alpha and Texas City, which are extreme examples, but the failure of procedures is an everyday occurrence.

Procedures often fail because they are difficult to understand or implement. They are inaccurate or incomplete. Often they are poorly written and presented.

Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) recognised the need to tackle 'human failure', especially for safety critical tasks, as part of their risk management programme.

The Keil Centre was asked to deliver a series of training courses about 'Human Factors in Procedure Development' to complement the programme.

Delegates learned the effective use of format, language and visual aids. They also evaluated, re-wrote and significantly improved existing procedures.

One delegate commented that "the course will be of great benefit to all those who write, review and approve procedures and in particular Safety Critical ones (e.g. for plant start up, operation and alarm response)".

For more information regarding human factors in procedure development, contact Janette Edmonds, Principal Consultant Ergonomist, [janette@keilcentre.co.uk](mailto:janette@keilcentre.co.uk).

“ To improve several hundred procedures, we needed to develop our own capability. We trained more than 80 staff at sites across the UK, including operators, engineers, supervisors and managers. The course emphasised that an effective process requires user involvement at each stage and a good understanding of the task



Bruce Holvey, Loss Control Engineer, SSE