

BEFORE YOU DO... THINK IT THROUGH!

Safety in tug operations is the ultimate goal of any work that needs to be done. Sometimes, it seems to be done on “remote control” because the task has been done so many times before—and all without any incident. That’s a trap for the unwary. Treat every routine job as one that requires conscious thought just like the first time it was done. That way you’ll more likely to be alert to any challenges rather than being surprised.

There is little doubt that mariners skillfully perform their jobs very well. However, the risks involved come with serious consequences. Imagine that if things go wrong and those problems can’t be mitigated because of the surprise. Being prepared is the key to keeping that risk minimized. Clearly, unplanned events or unforeseen circumstances can arise during the job. Being aware of the surroundings, the traffic in the area, the situation on the assisted vessel as best as can be known by the tug and the ability of the tug crew to respond to what is needed to be done are all are part of the planning and execution process.

Keeping these factors in mind during the job helps reduce the risks. That is the goal of safe operations – keeping your head in the game and being prepared for the potential problems before they arise. As you know, there are many variables that can affect the outcome of a routine job. Some things can’t be predicted or even planned for. Being alert to those unpredictable problems in case they do occur will increase the safety margins of your work.

Otherwise, the odds are that the lack of awareness will create a situation that could be very difficult to overcome even for the best operators. The pithy platitude that “it is better to use your superior judgment than to rely upon your superior skill” to avoid an accident is right on point. Thinking it through ... before you do the work using best practices is one sure way to have safer operations.