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Much to learn from the oil industry

Within the fishing industry, we have gotten used to this being a dangerous occupation and have accepted this more or less. Within the oil industry, they know it is dangerous and have elected to do something about it. Even if this is very expensive the oil industry thinks they will save money in the long run by spending money on safety issues, says Mr Pál Weihe, who is the Faroe Islands Director in charge of national health and safety issues. He recently visited the drilling platform chartered to drill in the Faroes in 2012. Demands Included among the demands the Faroes impose upon oil companies, which drill here, are those from the health authorities, represented by Mr Weihe, the Chief Medical Officer for the Faroes and the institution for Vocational- and National Health. The institute for Vocational- and National Health has been tasked with the responsibility for the medical service onboard the drilling platforms, which have operated here over the years. According to Faroe regulations, these state that when a drilling platform reaches its drill-site, it changes status from formerly having being classed as a vessel and it becomes a fixed entity. Thereby it falls under the normal regulations, which govern all land-based activities. Subsection no. 72 contained in the decree governing Health, Safety and the Environment has very clear rules regarding all this. Mr Weihe told oljan.fo, that he has previously accepted responsibility for health issues onboard drilling platforms. One of these demands states that a nurse carrying Danish authorisation must be present at all times, during operations. Inspect the hospital The objective of the trip to Norway was to inspect the hospital facilities onboard, i.e. determine what equipment- and what medication was available. The supervision of the hospital falls under the jurisdiction of the Chief Medical Officer for the Faroes, as is the case with all the other hospitals in the Faroes. The National Pharmacist

Officer supervises all medication in the Faroes and this implies that only medication approved by him may be used in Faroe territory and all medication onboard the platform brought from other countries may be used. My task was to evaluate all the health equipment/medication onboard and report back to the Chief Medical Officer and Pharmacist on the state of affairs according to our rules and regulations, says Mr Weihe and adds - In general terms I must say that the safety culture onboard a platform is considerably higher compared to our fishing vessels. I think that a trawl deck is considerably more dangerous than the deck of a drilling platform. The safety on a drilling platform is organised down to the smallest detail and the health service standard is very high. I think it is interesting to compare an ancient industry (fishing) with a new one, such as the oil industry. Within the fishing industry we have gotten used to the dangers and these are accepted more or less. Within the oil industry they know it is dangerous and have elected to do something about it, even if this is expensive. The oil industry estimates it is less expensive in the long run to spend money on safety issues, concludes Mr Weihe.