



USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69) moves out of dry dock halfway through its three-year refueling and complex overhaul, the ship's one and only refueling in a 50-year life span.

## Staying Safe in the Shipyard

By JO3 Michael Perez,  
USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69)

Sailors aboard USS *Dwight D. Eisenhower* are trying to help SecDef and SecNav get what they want: a 50-percent reduction in the number of mishaps by fiscal year 2005. How? By using the proper safety techniques and applying operational risk management to everything they do.

Safety is especially important in an industrial environment, like the one *Ike* Sailors find themselves in at the moment. During crew move-aboard and while testing equipment that hasn't been used in two years, ORM is a necessity. *Ike* Sailors daily are reminded to follow the planned-maintenance schedule and start-up guides, and they receive pre- and post-briefings.

"Awareness is the key issue," said Chief Aviation Boatswain's Mate (Handler) Terry Aldridge, safety LCPO. "Now isn't the time to deviate."

No matter how many precautions one takes, mishaps still can occur. With increased productivity in the yards, greater risks for injury abound. But aboard *Ike*, the number of mishaps hasn't risen

dramatically, said Cdr. Nathan Nickerson, the ship's safety officer. "...Because we are getting ready for crew move-aboard, we also have increased the number of Sailors working on the ship," he explained. "Comparatively, we have stayed on the same track, with few mishaps."

*Ike* Sailors revel in the fact they have decreased the number of serious mishaps on board by 20 percent from previous carriers during the refueling complex overhaul period. However, safety needs to remain foremost in their minds if they are to continue this track record as they start moving back aboard. "Proper lifting techniques must be used—if at all possible, two people should lift items," Nickerson cautioned, adding, "Safety is a team effort... We rely on everyone to work together."

This teamwork recently helped *Ike* Sailors earn a safety award from the Northrop Grumman, Newport News safety department. The award recognizes the outstanding cooperation between the ship and the shipyard. They formed an environmental health and safety task team to identify and correct hazards for the ship.

While teamwork is the key element to maintaining proper safety awareness aboard *Ike*, it's not the only element tied to the ship's success. "Sailors also have the appropriate information communicated to them," noted Nickerson. "Approximately 90 percent of the crew is aware of the safety rules connected with being in the shipyard. This information is provided through the Plan of the Day, bulletin boards, our 'Gotcha' safety bulletin, and the chain of command."

Work safely, efficiently and without error—that's the goal aboard *Ike*. ■