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## Safety culture

As it routinely deals with hazardous materials and dangerous processes, the civil nuclear power industry has developed an excellent safety culture, perhaps world leading. It makes sure that every worker understands the safety significance of what they do. That means cultivating a culture of work that is questioning, sceptical, and continuously improving: is it safe? How do we know? How could we do it better? (More information on <https://is.gd/ahemud>.)

Just those kinds of questions came up in conversation with Allan Eyre, one of the first recipients of the IRTE fleet engineer of the year award, at the IRTE's annual conference in September (a full conference review is included in the bag this month). Here's a transport operator who said that facing a public inquiry in front of a traffic commissioner was the best thing that could have happened to him, despite the process being a painful one for the company, and for him personally; it forced him to challenge what he thought he knew, and to start again.

But, being a thorough engineer, he learned from that, and hasn't stopped there. For example, before every O licence renewal every five years, he makes time to attend a two-day refresher course (as well as a number of conferences and seminars in between, of course). Dedicating the time is no easy task for the busy fleet manager of liquefied petroleum gas logistics company Calor Gas. But he says it's worth it, because every time - and he's done it three times - he learns something new, and maybe remembers something old, too. The courses help him keep up to date with an industry, and legal system, that is rapidly changing. According to Eyre, this is so important to transport managers' competence that he believes every O licence renewal should require a minimum amount of CPD (continuous professional development) credits, for example 25 hours/year.

Eyre also knows that the risk isn't limited to himself. As a manager, Eyre is aware that he's ultimately responsible for the work of his staff, too. Or, as he said to me, when he asks a member of his team if they've done something, and they say 'yes', he needs to know not only they've done it, but how he can be sure about that. (IRTE's irtec technician and workshop accreditation schemes have helped him answer those questions.)

His is not necessarily a comfortable existence, systematically deploying a sense of doubt. But this is what excellence in transport engineering looks like.

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