

'Attacking' risks with safety teams at Tata Steel

At Tata Steel, among the top ten global steel companies, safety has always been a priority. The location in IJmuiden, one of the leading industrial plants worldwide, has given the safety culture an extra impulse with the 'Safety Team' program. The goal of the program is for every team member to become a Safety Ambassador in his working environment.

"Using the motto "Safety first, production follows', we have always seen safety as an important aspect at Tata Steel," Peter Booster, program manager at Tata Steel, says. "With the 'Safety Team' program we wanted to raise the safety awareness even more."

"The program is oriented at changing behavior and giving a boost to an already existing program named 'Partners in Safety'," Peter Booster explains. "We wanted to raise the intrinsic motivation of people to such a level that they ask themselves 'are we doing this safely?' Our aim is to move from reactive to proactive."

Risk assessments

"Many organizations start investigating after incidents," Peter Booster explains. "We wanted to introduce 'Shop floor level risk assessments', with everyone looking at the risks of their own actions before they execute them." In the period 2007-2011, Peter Booster implemented a similar program at NedTrain, a full daughter of the Dutch railway organization NS. "At NedTrain (3.000 fte), we saw a 98% decrease in incidents," he says. "Also, the number of incidents has not increased after the program finished. To me, this means the attitude of people on shop floor level has changed."

The safety teams are a crucial part of the program, influencing people's attitude and making safety a part of the daily operations. "Most of the knowledge needed to solve safety issues is available within the operations itself, by the people working there every day," Peter Booster says. "Often, risk assessments are written down in procedures and known by the safety experts, but not by the people facing the risks every day.'

Combining theory with daily operations

By implementing the 'Partners in Safety' program through the safety teams, Tata Steel invests heavily in safety. "Every employee will take part in the program. During 4 weeks in the Safety Team they are freed up from their normal work in order to learn the necessary knowledge and skills based on the Partners in Safety program," Peter Booster says. "The efforts are serious, we are freeing up 90 people each month for the next years." "During the 4-weeks program the team members learn more about the theory from the 'Partners in Safety' program," Herbert van Willigen from Tata Steel explains. "We combine the theory with the daily impact on each person's own activities. They are given a list of 20-40 high priority risks, from which they can choose. Together, we 'attack' these risks."

'Attacking' more than 200 risks per year

"Every team looks at 2 of these risks, with an ongoing program of 10 safety teams a month, we assess 200 – 250 risks a year. The persons directly involved in the operations come up with the solutions," Herbert van Willigen continues. "Of course, some solutions ask for larger investments. In that case, at least, we have already

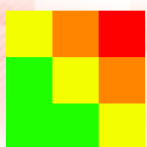
done the risk analysis. However, many situations can be improved immediately, for example, with a clear instruction or by placing a fence. The safety teams then carry out the improvements themselves." The results after one year are positive. "We see a 45% decrease in incidents," Peter Booster says. "Also, we see a change in awareness. People tell us they understand each other better. They have not only improved their safety awareness, but also their communication skills."

"For example, we hear from people that they now realize they need each other, or that they are really proud of being part of the safety team," Herbert van Willigen says. "Some sessions can be emotional, especially the training how to address someone who is not working safely. People really get intrinsically involved."

Industry Award nomination 2012

Tata Steel has been nominated for an Industry Award in the category Best Initiative for compliance & working safely. Organizations nominated in this category have shown positive changes to the way organizations operate.

Established in 1907, Tata Steel is among the top ten global steel companies with an annual crude steel capacity of over 28 million tons per annum. It is now one of the world's most geographically diversified steel producers, with operations in 26 countries and a commercial presence in over 50 countries. The Tata Steel Group, with a turnover of US\$ 22.8 billion in FY '10, has over 80,000 employees across five continents and is a Fortune 500 company. The location at IJmuiden, the Netherlands is one of the leading industrial plants worldwide.



CGE

Risk Management Solutions

lietweg 17v Phone: +31 (0) 88 100 1350
NL-2266 KA Fax: +31 (0) 88 100 1349
Leidschendam Website: www.cgerisk.com
The Netherlands Email: support@cgerisk.com