

The Role of the Social Partners in Prevention, Risk-Management, Education and Awareness-Raising - Employers and Employers Associations -

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

let's face it. Accidents do happen every day, all over the world. They cause pain and suffering, not only to those directly involved, but also to their families, friends and colleagues.

Quarries and open pits are among the most dangerous work places - every year hundreds worldwide are injured or even killed while working.

But accidents are generally the result of a chain of events and badly performed activities. Little safety events or incidents here and there can add up to a big accident. But just as there is a chain-reaction of events leading up to an accident, there is a chain of safety events that can help preventing it.

I would like to show you, what a quarry company - standing on its own and accompanied by its association - can do, to establish more health & safety.

Allow me to start with the structure of my presentation (illustration # 2).

Then I would like to introduce the company I have been working.

After that I will present some important measurements to promote and improve H&S

Rheinkalk - A German Lime Producer

Illustration Production Plants-Production Key-Figures: # 3 - 4

1. Motivation for Health and Safety Measures

German **Government** has enacted some regulations and rules in order to fulfil its duty in saving and protecting human life at work. Nowadays, most of these regulations and rules derived from EU-Legislation. Therefore the German Government has established a couple of authorities and further more different kinds of administration bodies.

The **employer** has the primary responsibility for the occupational health and working environment of the employee. The employer shall make appropriate arrangements with due regard to the nature of his activities and size of undertaking, in order to comply with national legislative requirements. Therefore Employers need to know what they must do to keep their workers safe and how to do it.

In case of personnel accidents or damage, the employer could be called into account, if a careless or even wilfully behaviour was on his part. The punishment ranges from high fines to prison.

In questions of safety larger companies are usually advised and supported by internal safety experts. In small and medium sized German companies – in quarries and open pits too – usually the safety-related supervision is done by external bodies, either by the so-called “Berufsgenossenschaft”, the Institution for Accident Insurance and Prevention, or private services. Beyond that, there is often no further involvement by the employer with regard to occupational safety concerns.

Role of an Association in Health & Safety Issues

Health & Safety issues are complex and diverse. Dealing with them effectively and equitably is more than individual Companies can manage alone. During the past 20 years there was a significant increase in specific questions from very different subject fields and subject areas. Consequently hardly anyone is able to acquire the specific know-how to answer all questions completely. Employers associations can take part in Health and Safety issues and therefore can support their members. MIRO – the “German Aggregates Federation” – had established a committee, dealing with those issues. Here experts with specific knowledge meet and work out competent solutions regarding the actual questions and problems.

The purpose of an associations support is not meant to release the employer from his legal responsibilities. To the contrary: the support provided by the German Aggregates Federation as an association’s service is seen as an additional branch-specific and tailor-made solution proposal. The Aggregates Federation’s aims are to enable the employer not only to fulfil his legal responsibilities, but also to put him into a position to apply preventive measures.

Illustration: H&S 3500 years ago: # 5

But first of all keep in mind: We should not claim to invent the wheel over and over again. H&S is a subject occupying mankind since more than 3,500 years ago. The experience gained up to today gives many ideas which can give valuable help to our companies.

Illustration: Safety First: # 6

Motivation and Service Initiatives

Now let me show you some motivation and service concepts which could be done by the Company or by its Association to promote Health and Safety.

2. Risk-Management/Assessment

Risk Management is the process of evaluating risks to workers' safety and health from workplace hazards. It is a systematic examination of all aspects of work that considers

- what could cause injury or harm,
- whether the hazards could be eliminated and, if not,
- what preventive or protective measures are, or should be, in place to control the risks.

Employers have a general duty to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to work and to carry out a risk assessment. The EU framework directive highlights the key role played by risk assessment and sets out basic provisions that must be followed by every employer. Member States, however, have the right to enact more stringent provisions to protect their workers (please check the specific legislation of your country).

Illustration: Five step approach to Risk Management: # 7

For our businesses, a straightforward five-step approach to risk assessment should work well. However, there are other methods that work equally well, particularly for more complex risks and circumstances.

The five-step approach to Risk Management

Step 1: Identifying hazards and those at risk

Here are some tips to help identify the hazards that matter:

- walk around the workplace and looking at what could cause harm,
- consult workers and/or their representatives about problems they have encountered,
- look at company accident and ill-health records,
- seek information from other sources such as:
 - manufacturers' and suppliers' instruction manuals or data sheets,
 - occupational safety and health websites,
 - national bodies, trade associations or trade unions,
 - legal regulations and technical standards.

Step 2: Evaluating and prioritising risks; e.g. mechanical risks, electrical risks, a.s.o.

Step 3: Deciding on preventive action; e.g. installation of a safety barrier, elimination of harmful/dangerous substance, etc.

Step 4: Taking action

Step 5: Monitoring and reviewing

3. Education: Information and Training Courses

Illustration: Information and Training Courses: # 8 - 9

Safety training is a good thing. But the training should be an ongoing process rather than a single event. It should also be conducted in a number of ways.

20 years ago MIRO in co-operation with Steinbruchs-Berufsgenossenschaft has drawn up training courses for "Occupational and Health Seminar (OHS)" for employees in management positions. Superordinate aims of these courses are training and motivation of the participants to become a good example to their co-workers in observing safety measures. They should act as disseminators in their companies and motivate their co-workers. The maximum is 20 participants in each course. The courses are led by an expert from Steinbruchs-Berufsgenossenschaft and an expert from the industry. Especially the practical contents of the courses attested by the participants have resulted in a great demand for these courses.

MIRO's annual management seminar contains since many years one subject with priority from OHS area. By the choice of competent experts from the minerals extraction and processing industries, but also from related industrial branches as well as from supervising authorities OHS is moved into the focus of interest. The often still widely spread opinion, that OHS can be dealt with "on the side", is also opposed by the association by positioning OHS subjects generally on the first or second place in the seminar programme.

4. Awareness-Raising: Safety in Pocket Size

Illustration: Safety in Pocket Size: # 10 - 11

Safety regulations which have to be observed by the employees when carrying out their work are based on various legal facts. Often several documents have to be looked at in order to register and observe the safety aspects for a certain activity at work. Therefore MIRO in co-operation with BG RCI developed safety rules as an instrument for the member companies. Their employees are each equipped with one set of these safety rules. The safety rules are divided into 29 different subject groups and give instructions for the correct conduct in a compact manner. These instructions derive from legal provisions, regulations of the institution for statutory accident insurance and prevention, operating instructions, and from the analytical results of accidents happened in these industrial branches. For reasons of easier handling these safety rules are produced in card format so that the employees can carry these cards with them.

The safety rules represent an additional measure for improvement of OHS which goes beyond legal provisions and regulations.

For example:

- ❑ General Safety-Rules
- ❑ Safety-Rules for belt-conveyor
- ❑ Safety-Rules for forklift-driver

The safety rules can be used in practice for the following application areas:

- **Safety information for work to be carried out**

The division into 29 subject groups enables the employee to get information for the specific safety provisions regarding the job to be carried out.

- **Guidance for Safety Instructions**

The safety rules serve supervisors as a guideline when giving instructions and safety advice regarding possible hazards. Due to the concept the safety rules form the basis of short discussions in small groups at work, whereby the subject to be focussed on may change.

- **Tools to fulfil the responsibilities required by the law for OHS**

OHS law was deliberately kept abstract in order to let the employer decide himself how the legal requirements can be observed. Often, however, the removal of strict regulations for occupational safety and health lead to a lack of instructions to observe legal responsibilities. The safety rules can be consulted in order to observe the basic provisions of the law for occupational safety and health. Here the assessment of working conditions, derivation and implementation of measures, control of their effectiveness as well as documentation of the results are to be quoted. The employer receives a “catalogue for preventive action” which serves the observance of responsibility as well as the preventive safety work.

Yellow Cards

Illustration: Yellow Cards: # 12

German men are fond of soccer. So why not use similar “punishment methods”? MIRO develops yellow cards for the works manager to give them to employees who do any failure (foul) in observing the safety rules. (e.g. The safety guard is absent on the belt conveyor). On the back of those cards the works manager should write down the foul which was made.

At the first moment receiving a yellow card seems like a joke, but at the second moment the employee reflects on what will happen when receiving a red one. Maybe the attitude in the mind of this employee changes.

Safety at Work Award

Illustration: Safety at Work Award: # 13

Concerning safety regulations, the grade of perfection of machinery and plants as well as the tight net of occupational safety and health regulations can hardly be improved any further. As in addition almost 90% of the accidents occurred are caused by incorrect conduct of the employees, MIRO - German Aggregates Federation has taken up this aspect and tries to motivate the employees in the member companies to more safety at work by various measures. Since some years both federal associations carry through a Safety at Work Competition in order to award companies with very few accidents. In this competition the first six companies are awarded a certificate in gold, silver or bronze colour every year.

It is deemed necessary that in particular the responsible works manager of the winner company receives the award personally on the occasion of the annual member company's general meeting. The removal of the anonymity by e.g. publication of the award ceremony in specialist journals supports additionally the motivation thought.

Relevant for the Safety at Work Competition is an especially developed "safety index", which measures the accident-free hours between two notifiable accidents. If no accident at all occurred the working hours are transferred into the following calendar year as accident-free hours. Thus smaller member companies which often work without accident for years also get the chance to receive an award. Another important point is that the data collection means no extra work for the companies, as these figures have to be reported to the Quarry Insurance Associations at the beginning of the year, anyway.

5. Conclusion

Illustration: # 14

The Occupational Health and Safety risk management, training courses and awareness raising measures, represents an important support for the employer to

- meeting legal obligations at viable expense,
- improve occupational health organisation,
- identify existing deficits and put a stop to them,
- create awareness regarding occupational health and safety.