Creating a world-class risk management system

BY DAVID BERECZKY, HSEQ MANAGER, ACTION DRILL & BLAST

The concept of understanding risk in the workplace and making commitments to reduce that risk is nothing new. What's challenging is creating something that achieves complete employee buy-in. As we all know, when the wellbeing of workers is prioritised, optimal productivity follows.

In our view, there are four critical components of a world-class safety system:

1. A culture of participation

For a safety system to succeed, its development must be prioritised and driven by management and experienced safety professionals.

Just as important is complete employee buy-in. To achieve this, staff must also be heavily involved in the process. Establishing a culture of listening, feedback, participation and good reporting practices from the outset is essential. Crews must understand that reporting hazards and incidents won't result in blaming, but learning and improving.

2. Continuous monitoring

A company's workplace health and safety performance is measured by the lead and lag results delivered to stakeholders in relation to key performance indicators.

Monitoring the weekly, monthly and yearly results continuously enables management to keep tabs on how well the company is keeping workers injury and incident free. More important than the lag results are the proactive activities which prevent injury or incidents occurring in the first place.

3. A quality cycle for continuous improvement

A safety system is never finished or complete. It is a continuous journey requiring constant attention.

Developing and implementing a quality cycle establishes a method for continuous improvement. A cycle can be summarised into six steps:

1. Create policy and set objectives

Recruit the right personnel and ensure they understand the health and safety expectations from day one.

Align safety with clients' requirements without compromising your own standards. This can be achieved through site-specific risk assessment workshops to facilitate better planning, procedures and site practices.

2. Implement advanced risk management

Mining operations have inherent risks, some of which are more prevalent than others. Understanding and identifying high risk energies signals where extra focus is required.

3. Educate and set responsibilities

As part of the on-boarding process, new employees should take a suitability for job analysis followed by an introduction to the safety system.

Provide a job specific position description which identifies what the company vision and values are, the position accountabilities and safety obligations.

4. Establish scheduled and unscheduled activities

Naturally, the mining environment can throw up challenges in risk management which have not been identified in the advanced risk management process.

To combat ad hoc risk, scheduled and unscheduled risk minimisation activities should be established.

5. Embed a reporting system

Proactively monitor the performance of workplace health and safety through an embedded reporting system and a culture of open communication.

These mechanisms may include weekly safety teleconferences between management, monthly reporting of project KPIs, HSE committee meetings and performance review reports and a comprehensive database to manage safety and training input and output requirements.

6. Revitalise

To keep the system current and effective, at least one comprehensive review per year where all key stakeholders participate in the improvement and renewal process should be conducted.

4. Recognise and reinforce

Recognising safety performance is the final step to engaging employees.

In-house initiatives that recognise and reinforce good safety practices and exemplify other company values are an important function for keeping safety front of mind.

Action Drill & Blast is a leading integrated drill and blast contractor to mining, coal and civil projects.

The company's safety system, ActionSAFE, is the product of five years of ongoing development to create a program that would lead the industry in professionalism and safety.

ActionSAFE exceeds Australian industry safety benchmarks and to date has achieved more than 1600 continuous LTI-free days across ADB's operations. **NMC**

Flawed OH&S equipment puts lives at risk

Because safety is paramount on minesites, mining companies are seeking alternative solutions to outdated, flawed and dangerous equipment to avoid injury for their staff and contractors.

In one particular instance, engineering company Downer had a person sustain an injury to their eye when immense pressure from a grease fitting dislodged their safety glasses and hard hat.

To keep a fleet running smoothly onsite, service vehicles provide lubricants to all mobile equipment. One of the supplied lubricants, grease, can be supplied at very high pressure, up to 5000 psi.

A high-pressure injection injury often results in a serious medical emergency and can be common on mining sites, sometimes resulting in the amputation of limbs.

Downer saw this as a major risk for the company and as a result proactively asked Australian Diversified Engineering (ADE) to create a solution that would eliminate the hazard without adding any additional steps to the greasing task.

The solution had to be simple, cost effective and be fitted to the existing fleet of service equipment.

To design an effective solution, ADE researched all aspects of the task at hand, including understanding the actions of the workers, the existing safety controls and the greasing hardware.

The research revealed the usual protective equipment, still currently being used on mine sites, was not protecting the workers and the standard process of removing the hose from a greasing nipple in the case of a blockage was intrinsically flawed and dangerous.

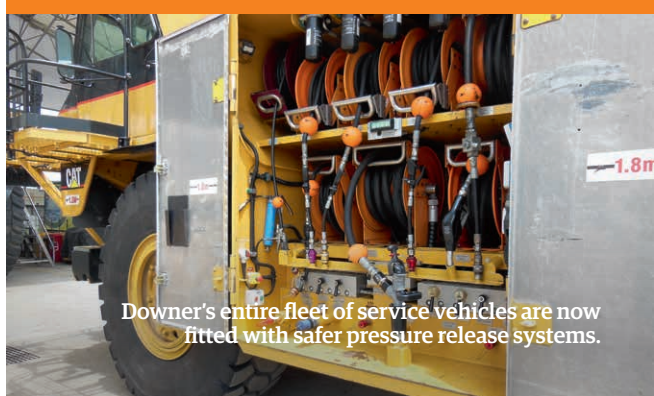
"ADE undertook a thorough research of the protective equipment currently in use and found it to be inadequate offering very little protection to service persons," ADE Sales Manager Eric Tomicek said. "Not only is this a big risk for service persons, but also highlighted a massive risk for mining companies who need to provide safety for their staff."

The solution ADE provided is an easy-to-use device that removes the pressure from the hose, removing the hazard.

ADE Manufacturing Manager Daniel Kirk said the device design means it was retrofitted to existing systems and was compatible with most industry standard components.

"We engineered a very easy to use grease pressure release device which is remote operated using a garage door style remote with a green lamp indicating when the system is active," he said.

Since completion, Downer has installed the remote grease pressure release system to their entire fleet of service vehicles. NMC



Downer's entire fleet of service vehicles are now fitted with safer pressure release systems.