

SAFETY PROJECT ISSUES

Introduction

Focus on Class 1 Damage

A method of classifying personal damage that seems appropriate is the following-

CLASS 1-Damage that permanently alters a persons life e.g. death, paraplegia, amputation of a leg, severe psychological damage.

CLASS 2- Damage that temporarily alters a person's life e.g. fractured leg that repairs with no lasting impediment, deep laceration that has no underlying tissue damage and repairs without significant scarring

CLASS 3 inconveniences a person's life(Geoff McDonald)

I am told this classification system is about to be introduced by the Australian Federal Government.

The report of the Industry Commission 1995 indicates that safety in Australia is fundamentally a class 1 problem (87% of occurrences were class 2 with 18% of cost, 13% of occurrences were class 1 with 82% of cost. Most safety management systems in Australian industry focus on lost time accidents within the organisation. Better returns for effort will be gained by focusing on relevant Class 1 damage in the companies industry or Australia-wide.

When it comes to safety focusing on Class 1 damage gives you "the biggest bang for your bucks"

General safety project issues

Form a project team and develop a Project Management Plan using appropriate software. The plan will include discussion of required activities, resources and financials. The plan should be reviewed regularly.

Some thought needs to go into the make up of the project team. It helps to have some people with technical knowledge of the area being investigated, people who are influencers, whether that be formal or informal and those receptive to change. Sometimes if you have someone who is not receptive to change it helps to put them on the team to be part of the change process. Having people with a sense of humour is always a good idea.

For the larger project guidance from those specifically trained in Project Management and / or Change Management may be beneficial.

Put a lot of work into defining the scope of the project.

Analysis of past personal damage occurrence ("accident") experience may be appropriate. Frequency, severity and cost is likely to be relevant. It may be appropriate to develop a taxonomy for a major project. The aim being to identify the personal damage occurrences ("accidents") that are resulting in the most severe personal damage. Analysis of personal damage occurrences ("accidents") in smaller organisations may not identify statistically significant experience.

COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE, COMMUNICATE. Face to face communications is preferred, written communication must be succinct. Limit general correspondence to preferably 1 page, 2 pages at the max.

Ergonomic analysis of tasks may be appropriate with some projects. Simple ergonomic analysis can be carried out by most staff after a bit of coaching in the techniques.

A literature search may be appropriate including legislation, Australian Standards, best practice in other organisations etc.

Networking with OHS professionals in other organisations with similar risks may be appropriate

In many cases a Force-Field Analysis process will give needed insight.

Discussions must be held with stakeholders.

Implement the findings of your research if this is within the scope of the project.

It is highly likely learning using Action and Experiential Learning Models will be required.

Physical changes to the work environment may be necessary.

The development of Safe Working Procedures using the Job Safety Analysis technique may be required.

When developing controls use Haddon's 10 countermeasures rather than the Hierarchy of Controls

End of project presentations to stakeholders are often a good idea.

The effectiveness of the project must be evaluated.

Methods that can be used include-

1 Post implementation statistical analysis, frequency, severity, "cost of accidents", reduction in workers compensation premiums, reductions in common law claims etc.

2 OHS audits

3 Discussion with stakeholders

4 Safety climate surveys

5 Task analysis

6 Examination of equipment

An end of project report with recommendations will be required, the report should be succinct and include a management summary.

One example of where I provided leadership and saw a project through to completion was on the Access to Earthmoving Equipment project(a detailed Project Management Plan was prepared).Work required included:

- ❖ Carrying out a literature review;
- ❖ Developing a check-list to assess access systems;
- ❖ Discussing access requirements with maintenance and operational personnel;
- ❖ Designing and installing prototype access modifications;
- ❖ Assessing the adequacy of the prototype modifications;
- ❖ Developing access purchasing specifications and maintenance guidelines; and
- ❖ Providing written guidance on desired characteristics of access systems.
- ❖ Carrying out statistical analysis

I quickly realized the problems being experienced were not unique to my employer. Through the employer association we successfully applied for Federal Government funding to extend the original research work. This work provided significant input into the writing of an Australian Standard for "Access to Earthmoving Equipment" and subsequently most earthmoving equipment in open-cut Australian mines now have hydraulically operated access arrangements.