

Culture change in the Foundry Industry

Case Study 8



Rationale

The foundry industry is undoubtedly one of the higher risk industries for musculoskeletal injuries and in particular the strain and sprain type injury from the heavy manual input that many employees are exposed to on a daily basis. Despite the reliance on mechanical lifting devices a significant human input is still prevalent in the foundry environment.

Initial analysis by the QBE Risk Manager upon inception, observed that the manual handling aspect of the various roles within the foundry and machine shop resulted in:

- 32 strain and sprain injuries on average per year over the previous 3 years
- An average of 10 Riddor reportable accidents per year during the same period
- 50% of Riddor accidents arising from manual handling activities
- Over 40% of all reported injuries involved strains and sprains from manual handling tasks
- Over 25% of all employers liability claims in previous 5 years involved manual handling.



Approach

When developing an improvement strategy in conjunction with the client and broker, QBE concluded that it was not reasonably practicable to eliminate the majority of problematic tasks or to introduce further engineering controls. Therefore the focus was to address the manual handling techniques employed by the workforce by way of an anatomical assessment of the tasks, coupled with a new best practise training programme for manual handling.

Culture change

The three main functions of the organisation, the foundry, machine shop and maintenance were targeted. It was recognised by all concerned, from management, employees and unions that a new approach to manual handling was required to engage the workforce, change old habits and reduce the incidence of strain and sprain injuries.

QBE chose to work with a leading manual handling solutions provider who we felt were able to deliver the behavioural changes required. Their proven experience in introducing new techniques to industries where employees are embedded in operations because "It's always been done this way" has successfully changed established working practices.

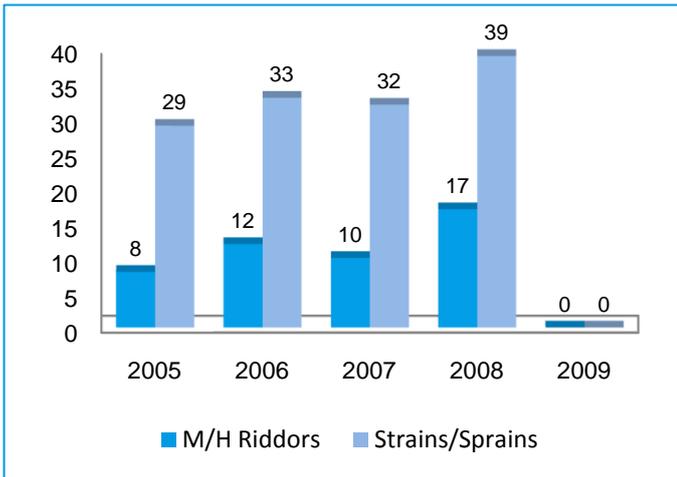
The programme

Following consultations with all the stakeholders, the following was introduced.

- A best practise, task-focused training programme covering all employees
- Training which took account of shift patterns, ensuring total capture of the workforce
- Bespoke task specific and anatomical risk assessment and safe systems of work
- Training delivered via an e-learning package as well as on the job
- Ongoing support and audit of functions, including root cause analysis of incidents
- High profile approach to monitoring, checking and supporting of the new techniques.

Impact

The impact over the last 12 months has been nothing short of remarkable in terms of accident reduction, injury severity and absence reduction. The client and indeed the workforce have expressed their appreciation of the change of approach and delivery of training together with the exceptional quality of the supporting literature.



The programme commenced part way through 2008 and the impact was immediate, confirmed by the 2009 statistics shown.

- 0 strains and sprain injuries in 2009
- 0 Riddor reportable accidents from manual handling activities in 2009
- Total reduction in all accidents from 95 in 2007 to 56 in 2009.

For further information:

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