

SSE plc – The Safety Family

The Safety Family is an ongoing programme dedicated to improving SSE’s safety performance through the promotion of safe behaviours in all areas and at all levels of the business.

Since the introduction of the Safety Family in 2011, all 20,000 employees across the SSE Group have been introduced to the programme and had the opportunity to have their say.

The programme overlays four sets of behaviours on three interdependent groups of colleagues – Managers, Supervisors and Everyone.

The four sets of behaviours that the Safety Family is built on – Standards, Communication, Risk Management and Involvement – are the key elements of a robust safety culture.

THE SAFETY FAMILY MODEL



The Safety Family is more than “just another initiative”. The Safety Family is a mindset, a new way of thinking and it is underpinned by the Behavioural Safety philosophy. It is fully backed by the Management Board and “it’s the way we do things”. In time, it will help us meet our goal of making SSE the safest place to work.

Behavioural Safety is a way of achieving greater improvements in safety performance by encouraging everyone to challenge unsafe behaviours in the workplace. By opening communications channels it creates an environment in which colleagues share feedback on risk management, creating an early-warning on potentially unsafe incidents.

The Safety Family programme is also available to SSE’s contractors. They will have been invited to take part in the roll-out programme and in situations where they follow their own company’s behavioural safety programme, they are encouraged to take elements of best practice from each scheme and work within the Safety Family framework.

The roll-out to all areas of the business was completed by November 2012, but the journey has just begun, as this was only the first stage in the process:

- The roll-out stage was about making sure that every single person in the company understood what the Safety Family was about and giving everyone an opportunity to have their say about how safety works in their business. Based on feedback from staff surveys and roll-out workshop, the business then draws up action plans to help create and sustain an improved safety culture.
- The next stage is to demonstrate consistent application of the new behaviours underpinning the new culture. Leaders and managers are to set the tone and demonstrate the standards, whilst business teams progress and update their plans. Plans include upskilling staff, streamlining processes and clarifying systems. Everyone works together to improve communications and ensure that everyone can get involved and have the opportunity to make changes for the better.
- The final stage is to embed the culture such that it becomes “business as usual” and “the way we do things”. SSE anticipates the final stage to complete around 2016.

Staff in SSE can already see real meaningful change in the short time since the Safety family has been introduced, with many more changes to come. Two prime examples are:

- Initial feedback suggested that Local Safety Groups (LSGs) were either not visible or appeared to be inactive. An informal guide to LSGs was produced to help LSG members and others understand the importance of their roles and empower LSGs to take more of a lead in managing SHE issues. It has been proven over time that risks are better managed by those that create those risks and this exercise was viewed as pivotal within the Safety Family framework. Three LSG Conferences were held for all members of LSGs in the Power Distribution and Transmission businesses in Autumn 2012, which have delivered visible improvements in LSG effectiveness; and
- Other feedback from the roll-out workshops highlighted that some managers and supervisors needed more coaching and support for managing safety within their teams. In response, a new Supervisor Coaching Programme has been trialled within both Power Distribution and Thermal Generation businesses. Initial delegate feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and it will be delivered to the wider group of operational supervisors over the next two to three years. The programme is delivered across two days; day one is classroom based and introduces delegates to the concept of behavioural based coaching for colleagues in supervisory roles. The use of drama delivers strong messages that powerfully highlight how real life scenarios can happen. On the second day delegates are given the opportunity to try out their new skills on colleagues in their business area. Coaching facilitators accompany them to help and support as required, ensuring the skills are practised while they are fresh in their minds.

Others areas being addressed include changing processes in relation to incident investigation, reporting and recording of incidents, on-site SHE engagement, increasing visibility of leaders and senior managers, giving praise and improving the effectiveness of communications.