



Northern Powergrid - Powering Improvement Case Study

Introduction

The Northern Powergrid Safety and Health Improvement Plan includes a number of behavioural safety programmes and initiatives relating to tasks, individuals and organisation. In Powering Improvement terminology, the improvement programme achieves a balanced approach to the three important principles of leadership, competence and worker involvement. Northern Powergrid has prepared solid foundations over many years as a result of implementing progressive behaviour based programmes as part of the plan. This summary therefore includes reference to some of the important behavioural safety foundations already put into place in the lead-in to the 2013 Powering Improvement focus on this specific health and safety theme.

The Safety and Health Improvement Plan (SHIP)

The plan has served the company well for nearly a decade and focuses on the areas where the risk is deemed to be the greatest. The plan is there to provide a guide to implement procedural, technological and behavioural changes to improve risk management and develop a positive, co-operative and forward thinking health and safety culture. The SHIP is sponsored and monitored by the Company HESAC and contains initiatives designed to assist in injury prevention and health promotion in the following seven areas:

1. Risk Assessment/Human Factors and Behavioural Safety Initiatives
2. Employee Engagement
3. Asset Management and Maintenance
4. Road Risk Management
5. Operational Performance
6. Occupational Health
7. Public Safety

The top three priorities for 2013 are:

Priority #1 - Risk Assessment and Behavioural Safety - Measures to increase participation in the process, improved hazard identification and the reduction of risk through better training, coaching and management oversight.

Priority #2 - Employee Engagement - Employee and contractor engagement in the field via enhanced audit, supervision and management tours and surveys in order to reinforce leadership and a positive and compliant safety culture.

Priority #3 - Asset Management and Maintenance - A significant amount of research, planning and organisation was achieved both nationally and in internally to lay the foundations for enhancing asset management competence and bringing additional operational focus to bear on safely and effectively managing the risks and liabilities associated with the network inspection, maintenance and remedial processes will feature as improvement initiatives in 2013.

The following provide an overview of initiatives that support behavioural safety improvements

Changes to Communication, Auditing and Routine Training

Existing and well established policies and processes are in place to ensure operatives are competent to undertake their activities safely and in line with documented procedures.

Examples include;

- *System authorisation and refresher training - All Northern Powergrid staff must be authorised in writing, and competent to undergo specific tasks (refreshed and renewed every 3 years)*
- *Operations Seminars- providing refresher training to Authorised and Senior Authorised Persons on relevant operational matters, including time to reflect on the behavioural aspect of incident antecedents (twice a year)*
- *Stand-down briefings- provides a two way discussion forum to outline performance and updates on health, safety and operations (quarterly)*

Reducing Error Influencing Behaviour

The setting of clear standards and expectations is essential as is having a clear and transparent process for evaluating why transgressions occur. In terms of achieving procedural consistency and justice, all safety investigations provide clear statements in line with the standards laid down in HSG245. This is significant in any follow-up process where accountability is examined. Northern Powergrid are keen to establish the degree to which human error has played a part in any incident as opposed to violation of rules and procedures – these factors are treated very differently in the follow-up process and the company increasingly shares thoughts on calibration of disciplinary outcomes with trade union colleagues.

Behavioural Coaching to Improve on Site Risk Assessments

Analysis of injury accidents over a period of two years identified in over 70% of cases, poor hazard recognition and/or the lack of an effective risk assessment and risk control process was a common factor. In 2011 Northern Powergrid refreshed, retrained and re-launched a site specific risk assessment process in its third generation format. After a significant period of bedding-in, a formal quality assurance phase was added to evaluate and close the loop on this key process. It allows line management to identify outlying individual and team performance, and to undertake requisite coaching to modify behaviour towards hazard identification and risk control. This process has provided an opportunity for managers and supervisors to recognise and reinforce positive safety behaviours. Improving the competence of operatives by formal training and then subsequently involving them in a coaching process to fine tune their skills appears to have made a significant contribution towards falling incident rates in Northern Powergrid. This is supported by positive feedback given by employees.

Recognition of Good Safety Behaviour (Safety Champions Scheme)

In 2012 a Safety Champions scheme was introduced to recognise the highest safety performers. It is essential to acknowledge the worthwhile and valuable contributions from staff and contractors towards improving health and safety, not only as individuals, but also

working together in their teams. In both cases, this initiative recognises, reinforces and encourages attitudes and behaviours that directly contribute to success in improving health and safety performance. Individual awards are given (of a token and non-monetary nature) to members of staff who consistently demonstrate the highest level of safety performance when being inspected on site by the safety audit team; these people are formally recognised as safety champions.

Northern Powergrid is also keen to acknowledge the contribution made by individuals working with their colleagues as part of larger teams. Field based craft staff are placed in "Safety Champion Teams" and their team performance during the year is measured based on accident performance, near miss events, driving incidents and driving incidents and field audit outcomes. A donation is made totalling £10,000 to the charity or charities nominated by the top three Safety Champion teams. Awards are presented at the Annual Health and Safety Conference, alongside those awards presented to contractors, recognising their contribution to safety performance.

New Arc Flash Work Wear

This is a specific personal protective multi layer work wear that is proven to provide sufficient protection against the effects of electric arc flash from the network. It is issued in the report as, although it is not strictly a behavioural safety initiative, Northern Powergrid say that the project has shown a behavioural safety approach at an organisational level. At an individual level the clothing has given employees a sense of care and enhanced security from their employer which has resulted in changes to safety attitudes and behaviours.

Engagement Programme

In 2013 a field engagement programme was implemented involving all members of the leadership team from CEO and directors to operational and non-operational managers. Leaders undertake a site based field safety tour every three months. The executive, heads of department and management group will form the backbone of this programme, supplemented by supervisors and trade union safety representatives. The tours are not an audit but an opportunity to "engage" on a personal face to face level, in the field, and promote two way discussions relating to safety matters. The programme seeks to:

- Encourage management, employees and contractors talking safety on the same level
- Provide an opportunity to look, listen and respond to H&S matters
- Discover, commend & positively reinforce good practice
- Detect, confront & remediate the weaknesses in H&S practice/performance

Bespoke Behavioural Safety Training Solution

In 2011 the company HESAC debated the notion of having trade union safety representatives, HESAC members, managers and senior executives all around the same table to receive joint health and safety training. A scope was developed with senior trade union representatives and a specification prepared for the delivery of the training. A bespoke training course entitled '*Using Behavioural Aspects to Influence Health and Safety Performance in the Workplace*' was delivered via an external training provider and was subsequently registered with IOSH as a certificated course.

As well as the course content itself, the key to the success of this bespoke approach is that it is delivered to groups of delegates consisting of a mix of management at various levels and trade union safety representatives. The course material is specifically designed to prompt discussion and debate as well as impart knowledge and understanding. Importantly, case studies enable perspectives to be taken, analysed and evaluated from both a management

and trade union perspective. Importantly, each course has a director or head of department as course sponsor and delegates are encouraged to carry on their training in the work place with a piece of project work relating to behavioural safety. This successful joint training approach is to be extended to further risk assessment training and accident investigation and root cause analysis training in 2014.

Concentration Skills Training

As a result of investigations of operational incidents pointing towards distraction, fatigue and concentration issues being contributory factors, Northern Powergrid in cooperation with an external consultant have developed a concentration skills training course for delivery to HV authorised operational staff.

The course was specifically targeted to improve operational staff awareness regarding concentration and distraction issues as well as providing techniques for managing and improving an individual's performance in this area. The training is also given to HV authorised staff who have been directly involved in an operational incident, where distraction or concentration may have been a factor. A computer based eLearning concentration skills training package is to be launched in Q1, 2014 to complement the face to face training.

For further information on these initiatives please contact:

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