

Cogne Acciai Speciali Spa

Foremen and supervisors play key role in safety challenge

Category: People
Sub-category: Safety training

Challenge

Cogne Acciai Speciali (CAS) considers that the commitment of foremen and shift supervisors to safety plays a key role in ensuring a safe workplace. However, an assessment of 2012 safety data revealed that CAS personnel who have responsibility for enforcing strict health and safety regulations were the weakest links in the safety chain.

Supervisors at CAS are usually chosen according to their capacities as technicians. Their ability to manage a team and to promote good safety habits are rarely taken into account. The 2012 safety data revealed that supervisors themselves required further training so they could deal with their new responsibilities and act as real leaders in safety management.

Data from 2012 showed that 66% of all injury cases are work-related. Further analysis showed that behaviour was the largest single contributor to injuries, accounting for 42% of all incidents. Within this category, most injuries were caused by:

- Failure to use personal protective equipment
- Failure to respect procedures
- Incorrect use of machines, equipment or facilities
- Inexperience of the operator.

More than 80% of injuries affected new employees or staff that had recently changed functions within the company. During their trial periods, these employees are coached by the supervisor who may have little or no awareness of the importance of promoting safety behaviour. In many cases, the supervisors lack of vigilance or negligent attitude played a crucial role in the incident.

Cogne Acciai Speciali's safety campaign uses the slogan 'Lo Faresti?' - Would you do it?



Action

A new training programme for supervisors was developed. Supervisors were given a questionnaire to ascertain their safety awareness and weak spots before beginning the training. Two important questions were asked:

1. In 2012, 60% of injuries were caused by a lack of vigilance by the supervisor in charge. What is your reaction to this finding?
2. What do you expect from this course?

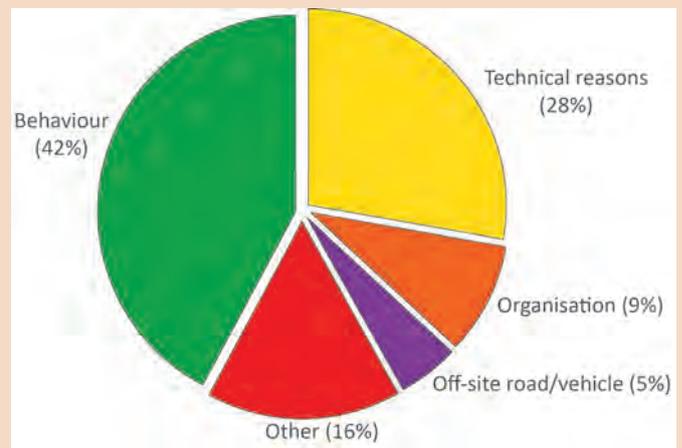
In response to the first question, 60% of the supervisors disagreed that the injuries were as a result of their own behaviour while the remainder admitted their failings.

The second question revealed that 67% of the supervisors thought they needed specific training on safety. Many feared possible criminal sanctions in the event of an incident.

In response, CAS developed a structured training programme which aimed to strengthen the strategic role and managerial skills of each supervisor. In collaboration with the University of Brescia, a training course for supervisors was launched in 2013. The training had the following goals:

- Instil in supervisors the effectiveness of creating a safety culture by developing good practices.

- Support the supervisor as the leader of safety improvements and the promoter of shared practices and safe behaviour in employees.
- Encourage the development of strategies and methods by actively involving the team.
- Enable supervisors to acquire the skills they need to inform, educate and train their employees.
- Create tools to constantly monitor activities and create an ongoing dialogue about experiences and skills.



Outcome

The training is being constructed around shared values which need to be constantly supported and encouraged. CAS believes this is a huge commitment and cannot be achieved in a short time.

Initially CAS did not expect to see noticeable results for about three years. However, this proved to be pessimistic as significant results have already been achieved in the first months since the training started.

For example, the injury frequency rate for the plant fell from 69.2 in 2010-2012 to 47.6 in 2013. In the period 2010-12 there was one incident for every 14,500 hours worked. In 2013 this fell to one injury per 21,000 hours worked.

	Injury frequency rate	Hours worked/injury
2010-12	69.2	14,500
2013-14	47.6	21,000

Part of the improvement is down to the active participation of supervisors themselves in injury prevention. In terms of activities under the sole responsibility of the supervisor, the following improvements have been noted:

- Among new employees and those changing function, the injury rate decreased from 81% in 2012 to 70% in 2013.
- Injuries related to a failure to use protective equipment decreased sharply from 12% in 2010-2012 to 6.6% in 2013.
- Injuries related to non-compliance with procedures and work instructions fell from 25% in 2010-2012 to 12.5% in 2013.

In a company where production activities are inherently dangerous such as CAS, the achievement of high health and safety standards is not impossible. However, it depends on economic investments to finance the modernisation of equipment, facilities and plants. It also requires a training strategy which develops a safety culture based on shared values among all employees at all levels of responsibility.