



## Nippon Steel & Sumikin Stainless Steel Corporation (NSSC)

**Award:** Safety  
**Category:** Workplace Improvement

### Voluntary Safety Improvement Activities at Kashima Works

#### Challenge

Safety is essential in order to keep a workplace vibrant.

However, risks that may threaten safety are hidden here and there in workplaces, most of which only operators on the floor can be aware.

It is idealistic to take countermeasures immediately to minimize these risks, though, it tends to take some time in many cases, as an operator who becomes aware of the risk reports to his or her supervisor, who in turn reports to the Equipment Department that is responsible for taking countermeasures.

In addition, there are limits to the effectiveness of countermeasures considered and taken only by the Equipment Department. Therefore, it is necessary to involve the operators, who are exposed to such safety risks in their day to day work, in the risk control processes to promote efficient and effective countermeasures.

Furthermore, allowing the operators to

accumulate experience of pro-actively planning and executing countermeasures against safety risks also helps increase safety awareness of the entire workplace.

#### Action

At NSSC Kashima Works (former Sumitomo Metal Kashima Works), many small group activities to improve workability have been carried out over the past 22 years. Most of these activities have also led to the improvement of safety in the workplaces. These activities are characterised by the fact that they are not based on orders from their supervisors. Instead, the operators examine, design and timely carry out improvements by themselves.

One of the examples is shown in Photo 1 below.

When the canopy for the fall prevention of foreign objects provided over the tension leveller line was removed during the maintenance work, operators needed to be on the canopy with a height of about 3 meters to connect a crane with the canopy by

wires. In addition to the fact that this work may cause a fall from a height, its workability was poor as well.

Through the voluntary safety improvement activity, it was decided to create an exclusive suspending tool that enables operators to do that work from the floor. As a result, it became unnecessary to work on the canopy, which eliminated a falling risk. In addition, the workability was also improved.

#### Outcome

By vigorously implementing activities to eliminate small risks of injury in all the workplaces, the safety culture of the company has been steadily promoted. Additionally, the capability of hazard prediction on individual basis as well as safety awareness of each operator has also been improved.

In order to further encourage the activities, we hold a contest each year to honour excellent improvements.

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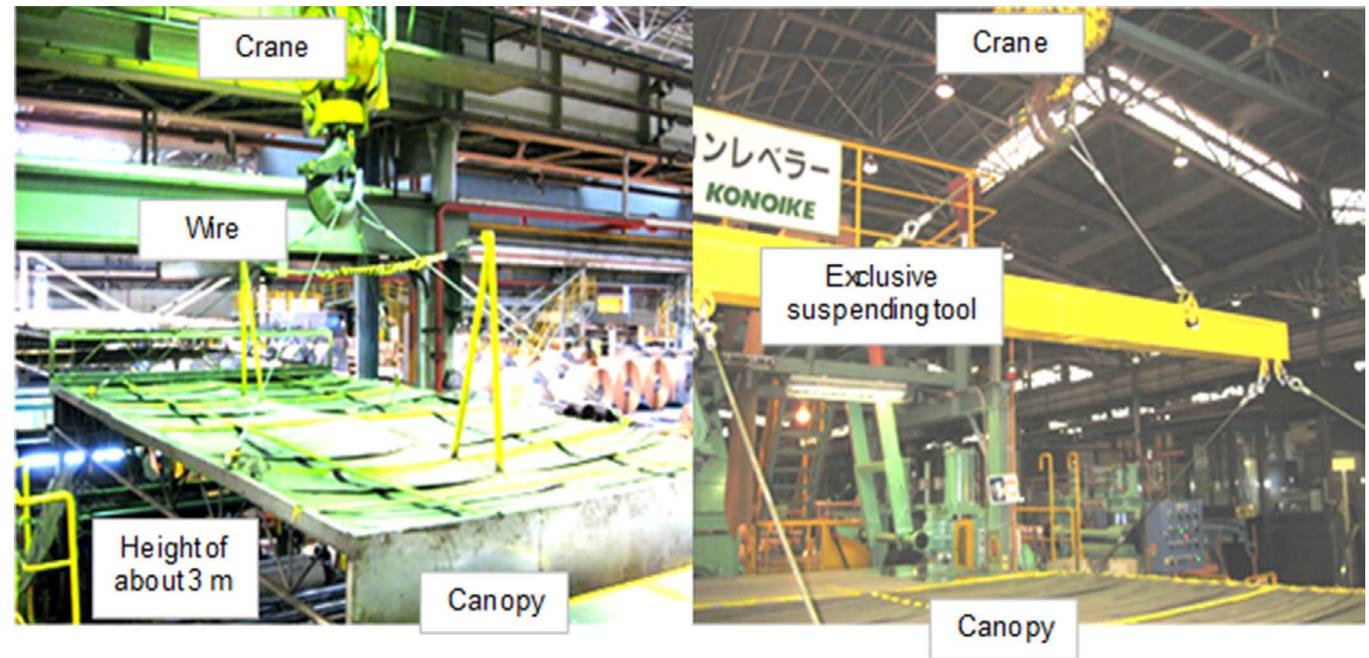
### Voluntary Safety Improvement Activities at Kashima Works

The number of applications to the contest has been increasing since 2003, reaching a level exceeding 150 applications annually for about 200 workers who are working at Kashima Works (Fig. 1).

We believe that these voluntary safety improvement activities contribute to the fact that there has been no long time injury occurred at Kashima Works for 11 consecutive years since 2005.

These activities also invigorate each workplace, as operators can convey the joy of executing improvements to younger people while acquiring the skills to embody their ideas as well as learning the activities conducted in other workplaces.

Photo 1



Before

After

Example of improvement by voluntary safety improvement activity  
 [creation of suspending tool exclusively for removing canopy of tension leveler]

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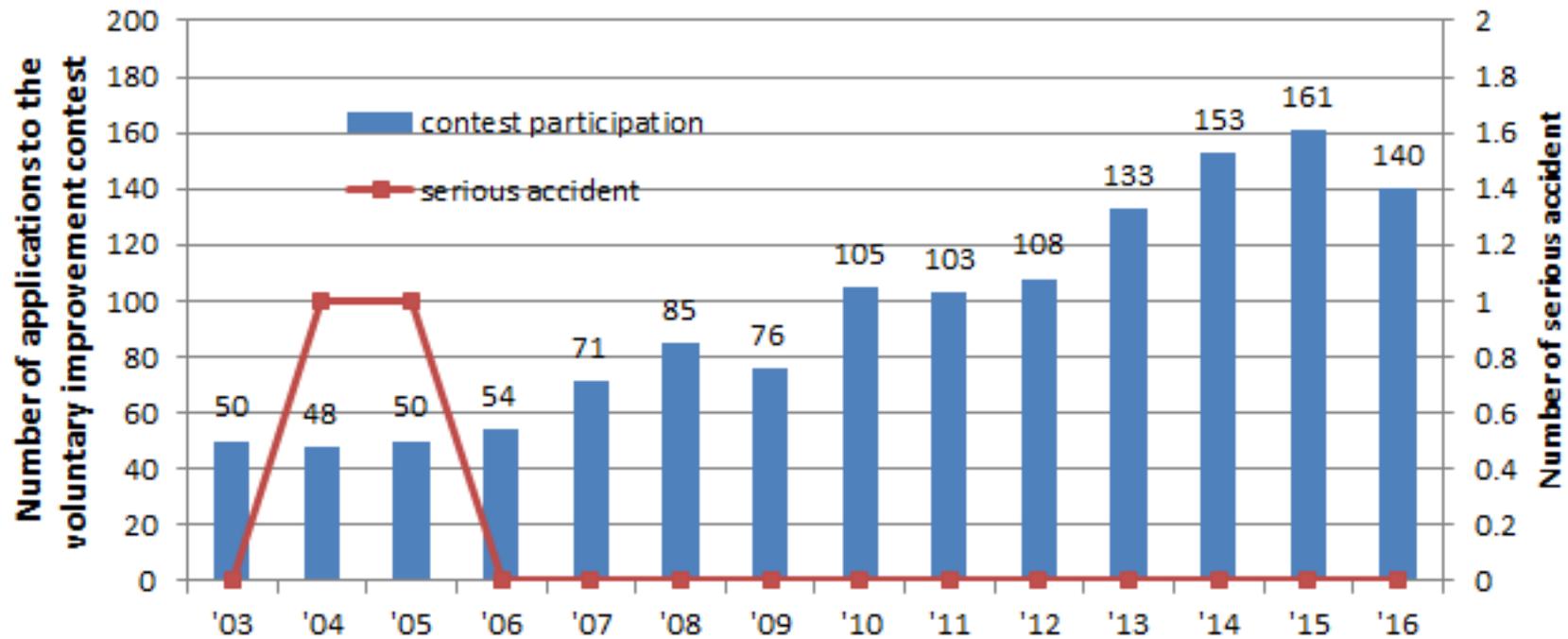


Figure 1: Number of applications to the voluntary improvement contest