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Expanding Contracting Safety: How and Why to Extend Your Safety Management to Onsite Contractors

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Abstract

Our organisation has implemented a successful six step approach to managing contractors that focuses on selecting, engaging, communication, reviewing, training and managing contractors.

Application

What processes need to be put in place to effectively look after this vital section of your workforce? We have found that the best method is to engage and clearly communicate the required objectives and standards of performance. The performance of contractors should be scrutinised not only from a financial and productivity standpoint, but also from a safety perspective. Throughout the project, set the bar high and hold everyone to the same set of standards, from the CEO down to operational and contract workers.

Our method has been proven effective many times for our own engagements with contractors and for our clients. However any approach to contractor safety management is not a stand-alone formula for success. It is important for all approaches to be integrated into the systems, structures and procedures that exist within the operations of every business.

Results, Observations, Conclusions

The Energy Delivery Company of Illinois' Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) worked without experts and in just two years experienced a 70% reduction in contractor injury frequency rate. The Australian construction giant, Grocon this year was awarded 'OHS Management System of the Year' by WorkSafe Victoria, in recognition of its unique approach in including subcontractors as part of its overall safety management system. Partnering with us, Grocon achieved a reduction of 75% in its total injury frequency rate from 2008 to 2011, whilst one of its subcontracting companies achieved a 73% reduction in just 12 months.

Significance of Subject Matter

Of the 3,433 million work hours completed in the international oil and gas industry in 2010, 79% were attributable to contractors whilst just 21% were attributed to permanent employees. It is therefore clear, that the management of contractor safety is a large task that cannot be underestimated. Harmonisation laws will see a more specific definition of employee that includes any contractor working onsite and therefore plant and operations owners need to be aware of their safety.