

Background and Problem

The client company were engaged in operations that included a number of high risk areas related to warehousing, delivery and on-site production operations. The MD was concerned on two fronts:

1. That they had no written systems for health and safety and that they were therefore vulnerable to both HSE visits (known to be 'in the area') and 'claims' against them for any accidents and injuries to their employees.
2. That whilst he was keen to have a safe workplace, he had difficulty in both knowing where to start and how to involve his staff, and all this in spite of the fact that he had access to various health and safety information and publications from the HSE.

Actions Taken

After spending time visiting the client and listening to the issues and concerns expressed, a proposal was presented (and accepted) that would initially audit the operations, identify the key issues (rather than merely trying to find numerous major and minor non-conformances) and put together an action plan to enable the company to make the all important start, have 'tailor-made' systems suitable to their purposes, and be in a position to carry the health and safety banner forward themselves with only the minimum of external support.

Time was spent with the MD and key members of staff putting together a meaningful health and safety policy that contained the main arrangements that were to be put into place. Simultaneously, risk assessments were carried out in two major areas of the company, utilising the knowledge and expertise of relevant managers, supervisors and operators.

The assessments identified a number of issues and better still, a number of good ideas that staff had for bringing about improvements. However, in the case of one particularly hazardous operation, a more detailed analysis with the MD was carried out that revealed the operation to be barely profitable (if at all) and involved a 'key' member of staff. Improvements to the operation would be expensive and so not cost-effective. The result was that the operation was closed down, the work sub-contracted, the resultant space usefully re-assigned and the key member of staff now redeployed in areas that better utilised his skills.

Together with the MD, a safety committee was set up involving volunteers from key areas of the company. The health and safety policy was introduced to all present, comments invited and a final version produced and presented to all other staff.

The Result

The external involvement was gradually withdrawn as the company took up the reigns. An experienced warehouse manager, with good health and safety training, was employed and given the role of health and safety officer. A subsequent 'flying visit' by the HSE resulted in a clean bill of health with no concerns expressed.

**If you want to find out more about any of the areas covered in this case study
and how we can support your business – contact us today.**