Provide safety training and encourage overall wellness.

Get management and line supervisor commitment.

Conduct safety audits and injury/accident investigations.

Consistently communicate with employees.

Involve employees in safety training.
Training and communication improve safety

Integrate safety into the plant

Use of apps and other technology to collect data in the field and report safety issues can help plan managers and an operation’s safety team gain a better understanding of what is happening in the field. It helps them track serious issues and provides a method for employees to document unsafe behavior and equipment. This information can be used to develop a plant safety improvement plan and to provide a linear explanation of what is taking place at each level of the business.

Leverage technology

Document any issues concerning safety within the plant. These may include problems with equipment, such as a conveyor belt that needs to be replaced or a truck that experienced a parking brake failure. Examine what could have caused the problem and how to prevent it in the future. Any near-misses should be communicated to all employees, and an archive or database should be kept of all incidents to use in future safety meetings, to serve as reminders to be proactive and to create awareness.

Stand-Down for Safety

Each year, LafargeHolcim sends out a company-wide survey to use in an annual meeting with its executive committee in December. From the survey, platform topics are chosen to implement into the company’s Health and Safety Improvement Plan. Each topic is assigned to two committee managers to ensure training is done and that employees understand expectations and how to comply with the rules. This year, the company is focusing on transportation safety as one of the safety platforms. Drive camera systems are being installed to provide information on harsh braking, hard turns, and sudden and extreme acceleration. The camera only records footage when a severe incident occurs.

Communication concerns

Each year, Rogers Group holds ‘Stand-Down for Safety’ — a company-wide event where operations completely shut down for two hours to focus exclusively on safety. In the past, all plants held the event at the same time. This year, however, a corporate safety committee, comprised of a combination of hourly employees, front-line supervisors, and the committee chair, decided to host the events throughout the month of July rather than at the same time. This allows more executive-level employees and managers of multiple plants to participate in multiple ‘Stand-Down’ events.

Build safety into company culture

Rogers Group, Inc. promotes its commitment to achieving a ‘Zero-Injury’ safety culture by implementing all of its core values without compromise. These safety principles include management commitment, line responsibility for safety, safety training, incident and injury investigation, and necessary corresponding action, an audit process, employee involvement, job safety analysis, and consistent and detailed employee communications, among others. Rogers Group also expects contractors to adhere to its safety culture.

Integrate safety into any plant upgrades or modifications by integrating it into the engineering process. If new steps are installed within the operation, for example, it is important to ensure the right materials are being used, proper grading is done, the steps are on the right angle, handrails are at the appropriate height, and there is the correct distance between steps. Safety should be incorporated directly into a plant design or redesign instead of being an afterthought or added at a later time.

Communicate concerns

Each year, LafargeHolcim begins the process of identifying problems with equipment. It will have developed apps to take into the field that have a variety of interactions. The ‘SHEILD’ app, developed in-house, allows employees to perform work in the field, highlight what work has been done, and where it has been done. “We can decide whether something requires an action,” Hall says. “The more interaction we have, the better effect we will have on reducing the incidents.”

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Anne Kelhart

A healthy worker is a safer worker. From good nutrition to proper rest, it all correlates back to safety, says Anne Kelhart, director of safety and human resources for Martin Stone Quarries.

“My first career was as a nurse, so I understand physiology and the importance of how it relates back to safety,” Kelhart explains. “Proper nutrition and rest is so important for acute thinking.”

When employees are working in very hot weather, the quarry manager sends someone at the operation to the local store to buy popsicles, iced tea, and water to distribute to the employees. “Hydration and nutrition is so important,” Kelhart says. “We also encourage employees to take breaks when needed. We mostly run air-conditioned equipment, but there are ‘boots-on-the-ground’ people out in the elements in long pants and boots.”

Employees also must take mandatory lunches, although many would avoid lunch breaks, if it means they were able to get home earlier. “We tell them they don’t have to eat, but I rarely see any of them without a fork in their hand,” Kelhart says.

Along with mandatory lunch breaks are limited hours. “If driving 60 hours on the road is the limit, then we try to do that for our miners,” Kelhart says. “Some quarries will work miners 70 to 80 hours per week. They love it because it is time and a half, but it doesn’t keep them healthy or safe.”

These site safety rules may seem stringent, but Martin Stone has an average employee tenure of 15+ years, with one employee recently retiring after 43 years at the operation.

“I attribute a lot of our success to the environment we create,” Kelhart says. “When they talk, we listen. Keeping a group of miners happy, healthy, and safe is complex, but the employee is the most important resource. If you protect your employee, you protect your braintrust. This makes good sense from a business perspective.”

Alex Hall

For a multinational company with more than 100,000 employees and a diverse portfolio, ensuring site safety means understanding all hazards, how to address them, and applying appropriate controls.

“It’s really about risk management,” says Alex Hall, U.S. head of health and safety for aggregate and construction material for LafargeHolcim. “We have different hazard profiles for different sides of the business. We maintain some global standards, but they are pretty generic and don’t take into account what is required from a local perspective. You can’t look at them in isolation.”

LafargeHolcim has a U.S. health and safety committee comprised of people across the company. Together, this team develops standards for the country. Once the general company-wide standards are met, regulatory requirements must be reviewed and complied with.

“Take lock-out/tag-out or energy isolation: We develop a standard and then present it to the team,” Hall says. “The committee reviews it to see how applicable it is in the different segments of the business and then ensures that all the regulatory requirements are met, at a minimum.”

When the standards are implemented, LafargeHolcim provides the knowledge and skills needed to adhere to them through a training program that validates its competency. “The training vehicle we use is ‘Convergence,’ a very robust video,” Hall says. “If employees will be engaged in certain activities, such as working at heights or handling, we put them through training for that and maintain training records.”

A minimum of eight hours of training is required per year, not including specialty training. If an employee doesn’t pass the post-training test, he must continue to retake the test until passing it.

“It is important that the people we have trained not only have knowledge but know how to apply it in a working environment,” Hall says. “They need to have practical know-how, as well as the theoretical knowledge to be competent.”

Marty Tubbs

At Rogers Group, Inc., safety is non-negotiable. Its core values — unwavering integrity, excellence in every undertaking, and placing the highest value on people — means that all employees, at every level, are held accountable for their actions, particularly when it comes to safety.

Safety is implemented through these core values with the following steps: management commitment, safety training, audits, injury and accident investigation, employee involvement, line responsibility for safety, safety committees, job safety analysis, and local safety communications, among others.

“Starting with management commitment, leaders are directly involved in everything from daily safety meetings to monthly safety audits,” says Marty Tubbs, director of safety and health for Rogers Group, Inc. “Our audits are designed to focus on behaviors and not necessarily conditions. We look for unsafe behaviors, but we also focus on safe behaviors to confirm our training efforts are effective.”

For example, if a supervisor notices proper use of personal protective equipment, the safe behavior is acknowledged and praised. Alternately, employees are responsible for bringing safety concerns to line supervisors.

“How quickly the supervisors respond or follow-up sends a message about the commitment and responsiveness to employee needs,” Tubbs says. “Front-line supervisors must be supported by all levels of management.”

At a minimum, Rogers Group provides safety training required by state and federal laws. However, it also conducts additional safety training that goes above and beyond the minimum.

“One training program, in particular, is the ‘Safety Systems Training,’” Tubbs says. “This training is designed to train current and future leaders of the company in all of Rogers Group’s core values and reinforces our commitment to creating a Zero Injury safety culture without compromise.”