insight
QRMC NEWSLETTER

Issue 73   **March 2017**

Insight aims to provide useful information, links and tips in the areas of Risk Management, Occupational Health and Safety, Business Continuity Management, and other areas relating to management systems and corporate governance.

This issue:

- Traffic Management Systems
- The Pros and Cons of using an External Auditor
- SNG Meeting Report – March 2017

Traffic Management Systems

The importance of managing the risks associated with traffic is generally recognised within the construction industry, especially when work is undertaken on or adjacent to a road, however many non-construction businesses fail to identify the management of traffic as a risk. Recently, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland (WHSQ) announced a campaign focussing on identifying poor traffic management systems in order to reduce the numbers of people being struck by moving traffic and mobile plant at workplaces.

Most businesses would have some vehicular traffic on their sites, whether it be cars and trucks, or mobile plant such as forklifts, industrial reach trucks, elevating work platforms, mobile cranes etc. As such, the risks associated with these vehicles and the management of their movements, would need to be identified, assessed, evaluated and controlled.

As with all risks, organisations should start by identifying the hazards associated with traffic and the potential points of collision between people and vehicles. This can be done by considering the flows of traffic and people, and by consulting with workers about any problems they may encounter at the workplace. Control measures to eliminate or minimise the risks then need to

be put in place. A number of control measures are generally needed to control the risks effectively.

The most effective way to protect pedestrians from traffic hazards is to eliminate the traffic hazard altogether. A key means of doing this is by designing the layout of the workplace to eliminate interactions between pedestrians and vehicles.

Whilst elimination is the best way to protect pedestrians, this may not always be possible and organisations should look to minimise the traffic risks. This can be done in numerous ways:

- Plan work to avoid or reduce the need for pedestrians and vehicles to be in the same area at the same time.
- Implement exclusion zones such as pedestrian-only areas or forklift-only areas in loading bays.
- Ensure delivery areas are located away from pedestrians or work activities.
- Where there is potential for interaction of vehicles and pedestrians, provide gates or temporary barriers to separate vehicles from people.
- Clearly mark vehicle areas with signs or reflective paint to warn pedestrians.
- Use mirrors and vision panels in pedestrian doors entering vehicle areas.
- Erect signage to indicate hazards such as forklift operating areas and exclusion zones as well as speed limits.
- Ensure workers wear high visibility clothing.
- Ensure traffic areas are well lit.
- Ensure induction and training includes traffic management.

When identifying traffic risks, it is important to look at key delivery or pick up times as well as both day and night operations, as illumination plays a large role in traffic risks.

Once traffic risks have been identified, assessed, evaluated and controlled it is important that the risks are also monitored on an ongoing basis. A useful way of doing this is to undertake inspections, either as standalone exercises or including them in general workplace inspections. Areas to monitor within these inspections include:

- Separation of vehicles and pedestrians
- Suitability and effectiveness of barriers
- Vehicle routes and pathways
- Pedestrian routes

- Vehicle movements – including direction, speed, separation of people and vehicles
- Signage
- Warning devices – such as flashing lights, sensors and reversing alarms installed on powered mobile plant
- Information, training and supervision
- Personal Protective Equipment
- General vehicle condition and safety

Please contact QRMC for more information or for assistance with traffic risk assessments or the development and review of traffic management plans.

The Pros and Cons of using an External Auditor

Most contemporary audit programs advocate a combination of internal and external auditing. There are pros and cons involved in either type of audit, but both play an important role in ensuring best practice, continual improvement and compliance.

Internal auditing should never be undertaken by someone who was involved in authoring the management system or process being audited, nor undertaken by the manager responsible for the area concerned. A new set of eyes and a new perspective are essential.

Some organisations address this issue by having a schedule whereby HSEQ professionals move between audit teams or sites that are not their usual areas. This provides a degree of benefit, but may not be fully effective due to the issue of 'organisational blindness' and an acceptance of problematic issues as being part of the organisation's customs and practice. The internal

HSEQ professional may unknowingly be impacted by a limited exposure to alternate or external practices or the audit process itself.

In contrast, an independent, external auditor knows what to look for during interviews and field observations, and can pinpoint root causes, bringing an external point-of-view drawn from their years of experience. However, they may be lacking a full understanding of the operational context, the intricacies of the business and the thought process behind the various risk controls.

There is valuable potential for the organisation to be able to learn from an external auditor, but there is a need to ensure that the external auditor is also open to being educated by the organisation. If the external auditor is 'stuck in their ways', trapped by the belief that they already know the solution, and see their role as promoting the implementation of that preconceived solution, the benefit they bring as an external and objective auditor is undermined.

The most valuable outcome for the organisation is achieved by taking advantage of the benefits of both internal and external audit processes, while taking steps to avoid the pitfalls.

Please contact QRMC for more information or to discuss our approach to auditing face-to-face, obligation free.

SNG Meeting Report – March 2017

The quarterly Safety Networking Group session was hosted by Snapfresh, and explored the health and safety issues surrounding an ageing workforce.

Roslyn Miller, from WHSQ's Workers Initiative, presented some interesting statistics on the current situation in terms of ageing workers in Queensland, showing that one in eight workers is currently older than 65 with an increasing trend over the last 10 years.

The effects of ageing on the body were summarised, together with the impacts on health and safety in the workplace. It was stressed that with a rapidly ageing workforce, there is a need to identify, develop and implement strategies to help older workers maintain good health and productivity.

Peter Gould, the Workplace Health Safety & Wellbeing Service Manager from Redland City Council, shared his experience and highlighted the programs currently implemented at Redlands City Council, which included elements of Psychosocial Safety, Ageing Workforce and Sedentary Workforce management.

Belinda Lamas presented on the Snapfresh 'Strategy for Transition of Ageing and Retiring' (STAR) program which was designed to consider both the business and to support employees as they experience the issues that

come with age. The program commenced with an analysis of data around the ageing workforce and then looked at the business and people impacts, and is supported by 3 pillars:

1. Health and wellbeing changes to accommodate an ageing workforce.
2. Workplace business planning for flexible work arrangements and the transition to retirements.
3. Retirement planning, including education on superannuation and pension planning.

Belinda shared an interesting multimedia on a study at the BMW factory in Germany. BMW had recognised that they had an ageing workforce and further accepted that this mirrored the demographics of society and was unlikely to change. The study involved staffing one production line with 'older' workers with an average age of 47. Workers were then consulted on what they required to work optimally. Changes were made to the workplace totalling less than $50,000. Changes included, larger type font on screens for easier reading, and mounted magnifying glasses to read text on machine components. After the study had run for some time, data reflected that productivity increased beyond that of other production lines at BMW and defects dropped to zero. (View a news item on the program here.)

Members of the Safety Networking Group then shared their experiences with their organisations' approaches to an ageing workforce.

Thanks to Snapfresh for once again hosting the Safety Networking Group

The next Safety Networking Group function will be in May 2017.

SNG
Safety Networking Group

ABOUT THE SNG:

In 2005 QRMC founded the Safety Networking Group for senior safety professionals in SE Qld. QRMC continues to coordinate and arrange for speakers to present at quarterly meetings and discuss information on contemporary WHS issues. Group members also share information from their workplaces or industries, which other members frequently find interesting and useful.

More information on the Safety Networking Group can be found on our website. Senior safety professionals contemplating attending meetings in Brisbane can contact QRMC.

RISK MANAGEMENT
SAFETY MANAGEMENT
BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT
MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

QRMC Risk Management Pty Ltd   ABN 43 119 425 991

PO Box 199,
Brisbane Q 4001

(07) 3229 1744
enquiries@qrmc.com.au
www.qrmc.com.au