



Interoffice Communication

To VCM Plant Employees
From J. A. DeBernardi
Date April 29, 1977
Subject Advisory Committee Meeting - March 16, 1977

As was indicated in my letter to you of April 18, the continued dedication of each employee to the assurance of safe, as well as efficient, work practices continues to be reflected in the statistical record. Safety statistics in the first quarter of 1977 again showed improvement over the same period in 1976. This accomplishment is the direct result of each employee's effort and awareness in the area of safe job performance. Accomplishment of any undertaking or goal does not just happen--it is caused to happen as a direct result of personal effort. On May 18, your efforts will have lead directly to a very significant accomplishment--three years--without a disabling injury in the VCM Plant. Effort, awareness, and participation will get it done and keep it going.

It appears that the first quarter business slowdown is well behind us at present. Plant rates returned to maximum late in the first quarter. Our Business Area people continue to be optimistic that the remainder of 1977 will call for maximum plant output to match sales opportunities for both VCM and PVC.

The plant incinerator project is moving along well through the mechanical design and procurement phases and remains on schedule. Field work should begin in September with mechanical completion now scheduled for July, 1978. Re-assessment of the long-term business potential for VCM has indicated the need for production capabilities approximately twice what we presently have. Therefore, the small plant expansion project which was being engineered in 1976 has been shelved at present in favor of a full scale plant project to be on-stream in early 1981. Locations other than Lake Charles are being considered for the new plant, however, Lake Charles has not been ruled out as a possibility.

Attached you will find comments related to questions asked at the March 16 Advisory Committee meeting.



J. A. DeBernardi

is
CC + enc:
RDG-REL-DLN
Distribution
Bulletin Boards
Supervisors

CCR 000048392

ADVISORY COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

MARCH 16, 1977

Employees Present

J. Morris
P. Leger
K. Vincent

D. Derouen
L. Ogea
J. Puerta

T. Randolph

- 1) What is the status of the employee coke fund?

Comment

On April 28, the employee coke fund showed a balance of \$1,340.

- 2) Some holdups are being encountered at the Warehouse issue window when delivery trucks are being unloaded. Has the plant policy related to Warehouse window service having preference over truck unloading been changed?

Comment

There has not been a policy change related to Warehouse window service having preference over delivery truck unloading and check-in. It remains our policy that Warehouse issues to plant employees will have priority. The Warehouse Manager will review this policy with his Warehouse personnel to ensure its understanding. Employees coming to the issue window should be sure their presence is known using the devices provided or voice contact, if necessary.

- 3) Recent television advertising has indicated that Travelers has a group dental plan available. Can employees at the VCM Plant contribute to a group dental plan of another company issued by Travelers and get dental insurance on an individual basis?

Comment

The suggestion made in the question is not possible. The group dental plan provided by Travelers to another company has premium requirements based on the insured company's claim experience. To allow individuals who are not employed by the insured company to participate in their group plan would offer a risk of increased premiums for insured people based on experience of employees of another company.

- 4) Can the call-out overtime sheet for Maintenance Department personnel that is used by Shift Supervisors be updated on a daily basis to assure equitable overtime distribution?

CCR 000048383

Comment

The system presently being used related to the call-out overtime order sheet updating is adequate for equalization of overtime in the Maintenance Department. However, it has been our practice in heavy week-end overtime situations to update the sheet occasionally on a Monday in addition to our normal procedure of updating on Friday. Unfortunately, the updated Monday sheet (if it is done to reflect unusual weekend circumstances) has not been distributed to the Shift Supervisors for their use in call-outs during the following week.

Therefore, we will continue our present system of the specifying Friday as the official call-out list updating day. However, if it is necessary to update the call-out list on Monday due to unusual weekend overtime requirements, the Monday updated sheet will be distributed to the Shift Supervisors for their use until the Friday sheet is issued.

- 5) Smoking in the Maintenance conference room during Maintenance Department meetings continues to be a source of annoyance to some employees. What can be done to settle this argument?

Comment

A vote was taken by closed ballot among the Maintenance Department employees the week of April 11. The results of this vote have been posted on the department bulletin board, and indicate an almost two to one majority to continue smoking during Maintenance Department meetings. Therefore, the Maintenance conference room will remain an unrestricted smoking area in the plant.

- 6) Tank car loading rack personnel buildings are in need of maintenance work. Also, heating in the buildings is inadequate during winter weather. Can something be done to correct these problems?

Comment

Necessary maintenance on the loading rack buildings will be accomplished as part of our normal maintenance effort. As problems are noted in the buildings, please submit work orders describing work necessary as you would with any other maintenance job to be performed in the plant. The heating problem will also be investigated and appropriate changes made prior to the coming winter season.

- 7) Can the plant speed limit be lowered from 15 MPH?

The existing 15 MPH speed limit in the plant is considered a safe speed if observed by those operating motorized vehicles within the plant area. From the conversation generated at the meeting related to this item, it is my opinion

that the speed limit is not being observed. If I am correct, the problem does not lie with the speed limit, but drops on each of our shoulders for ignoring a potentially hazardous condition.

Those of us who operate a motor vehicle inside the plant must observe posted speed limits and traffic signs. To do less than this is to knowingly break a plant safety rule. Such actions cannot and will not be tolerated. Each of us must take action in this regard when a violation is noted by pointing it out to those involved and/or reporting such violations to the appropriate supervisor. This comment on violators refers to not only plant employees, but contractors, visitors, etc.

As I've indicated on many occasions, safe and accident-free operation at our plant is the responsibility of each employee and cannot be placed solely in the lap of the Safety Director. Safety is a state of mind, and will only occur when each of us is convinced it can happen and uses our mind to direct the efforts that will make it happen.

8) Can bottled water be provided at the loading rack for the Pumper/Loaders?

Comment

A bottled water cooler will be provided at the loading rack for Pumper/Loader usage replacing the plant water cooler presently installed. It will be the Pumper/Loader's responsibility to replace water bottles in the cooler as well as transport the empty bottles back to the control room for pick up by the water supplier.

9) Can a 4-day workweek schedule be established in the Maintenance Department only? The last review of this work schedule change was made looking at it for both Operations and Maintenance and was not possible because of Operation Department scheduling problems.

Comment

A review has been made of the work done in 1974 related to a 4-day workweek schedule for plant employees. This review indicates that the Operations Department was not included as part of the study. The problems that could not be resolved related to a 4-day workweek schedule for Maintenance personnel involved supervisory coverage, Warehouse coverage, and toolroom coverage. It was concluded that additions to plant payroll was the only means possible to overcome these problems, with the basic premise advanced at the beginning of the study being no additional costs being added if such a schedule was undertaken. I am unaware of any new ideas related to this coverage problem solution at this time and am, therefore, unwilling to reopen the discussions related to a 4-day workweek in the Maintenance Department.

10) When is the next plant picnic scheduled for?

Comment

No planning is presently underway for a plant picnic. Information related to a picnic will be posted on plant bulletin boards as has been done in the past.

11) Can a program be established to reward employees for suggestions made that save the plant money? We understand Firestone has such a program for their employees.

Comment

We have been in contact with Firestone related to their Suggestion Reward Plan and found out that they do have such a program as a matter of corporate policy at all their plant locations. The policy is not as clear cut as might be expected at first glance, however. We have requested Firestone to send us further information on their plan. The establishment of a plan of this nature is outside of the authority limitations of local plant management. It would have to be established on a corporate-wide basis as is the Firestone system.

As I'm sure you are aware, CONOCO has a corporate policy related to employee reward for patentable suggestions under this plan. I am unable to make any commitments related to reward policy that are outside of our existing corporate policy.

12) The existing practice of stretching fire hoses across roadways as water sources for light-ends column washing present a potential safety hazard related to tripping and lift truck steering control. Can permanent water sources be installed for this purpose?

Comment

A method for elimination of hoses across roadways during light-ends column washing will be investigated. Employee suggestions as to how this problem can be eliminated will be greatly appreciated.