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Interoffice Communication

To VCM Plant Employees
From J. A. DeBernardi
Date March 28, 1980
Subject Advisory Committee Meeting - February 13, 1980

Safety statistics compiled thus far this year do not compare favorably with the record performance attained in 1979. We have recorded five total injuries thus far in 1980 including one medical case. If we are to attain our goal of limiting total injuries in our plant to 20 for the year, substantial improvement will be required the remainder of 1980. The goal can be met, or even bettered, if each of us personally accept the challenge of making safety considerations a part of each of our daily job actions.

Activities related to our plant expansion project are continuing at a rapid pace. The most recent milestone was the signing of a licensing agreement with Stauffer Chemical Company related to the alteration of our existing oxy unit to a pure oxygen feed system rather than the present air feed. The next major step will be licensing of boiling liquid direct chlorination technology to replace our existing R-101 direct chlorination reactor. This technology change is primarily aimed at reducing plant energy requirements. Our present schedule shows that all process decisions are to be completed by May 1, such that process engineering and cost estimating can be finished in time to include the project in the 1981 Division Capital Budget.

Business activity in the VCM and PVC areas has remained surprisingly strong in the face of the housing construction and automotive industry slumps. To this point our sales and marketing people have been able to continue to move our VCM both domestically and internationally and keep our plant production rates at maximum levels. At this time the predicted economic slowdown has not taken place in our business area.

Attached you will find comments related to questions asked at the February 13, 1980 plant Advisory Committee meeting.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J. A. DeBernardi", is written over the typed name.

J. A. DeBernardi

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CCR 000066692

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

FEBRUARY 13, 1980

Employees Attending

T. Barton
L. Thompson
P. Leger

J. Cochran
E. Cooper

- 1) Can something be done to repair the holes in the asphalt roadway at the entrance to the plant?

Comment

At the time of the meeting we had already been in contact with the Westlake Road Department people on repairing both the holes at the plant entrance and in VCM Plant Road just off of Old Spanish Trail. Temporary repair work was accomplished the week of March 3, 1980 with a promise of permanent repair as soon as possible. We'll continue to stay in touch with the Road Department until permanent repairs are made.

- 2) Can the policy related to coverall issues be changed to allow employees to keep coveralls in their lockers rather than turning them in after each issue?

Comment

The purpose of our coverall program is to provide our employees with coveralls to be used for jobs which are expected to present the potential for contamination of their normal work clothes. From a hygiene standpoint it is important that the coveralls be turned in and laundered after each use for employee protection. Although our system does present a limited amount of time utilization inefficiency, it is necessary to assure that cleanliness of the coveralls is maintained.

- 3) Can VCM Plant employees purchase gasoline at the plant gasoline pumps?

Comment

This is not possible. Our plant is neither a retail nor a wholesale outlet for gasoline. Our allocation is based strictly on industrial fuel usage for company vehicles.

- 4) Can VCM Plant employees be included in other Conoco location van-pooling programs?

Comment

This question was considered in 1976 when the Conoco van-pools were started in our area. Due to the administrative difficulties for the employees operating the van-pools, as well as the problem presented by different managements at each Conoco area location, the decision was made not to mix locations. The

overall success of the program in the Lake Charles area, as well as the smoothness with which the program has operated over the years for the participating employees, indicate that the decision was correct. Additional vans are available to the VCM Plant if the requirements for starting a new van-pool route are met. Interested employees can obtain information related to forming a pool from Jim Brunson. Jim will also file the appropriate paper work to obtain another van assuming the basic requirements are satisfied.

5) Can the value of safety prizes be increased each year?

Comment

This question indicates that the purpose of our safety prizes is apparently not understood by all employees. Our safety gifts are intended to commemorate overall plant safety accomplishment in a personal way--not reward us for something each of us is expected to do as part of our normal job performance. The reward for safe job performance is the fact that each of us leaves our job each day in the same condition that we started the day's work, and are not exposed to the suffering both physical and financial that can come from accidents and injuries. The value of the gift, therefore, has nothing to do with commemoration of the accomplishment. Our policy in this regard will remain unchanged.

6) Can the plant policy be changed related to field payroll job bidding to allow office payroll personnel to bid on field payroll job openings?

Comment

The plant policy related to procedures to be used for filling of field payroll openings are listed in the plant Policy Guide. The existing procedures make it possible for office payroll employees to move into the field payroll, however, not by bidding. Movements which are made in field payroll situations normally result in one or more entrance level job openings. Filling of this entrance level position is normally done by new-hire from outside the plant. However, office payroll employees will be considered as candidates for the entrance job opening if their desires are known at the time the search for a new employee is underway. This policy has proven to be very effective in continuing the safe and efficient performance of all plant departments since its adoption in 1974. I continue to believe it is the best policy for our plant related to field payroll job openings.

7) What is the status of the re-evaluation of the 4-day workweek for Maintenance Department employees?

Comment

Little progress has been made on this re-evaluation. Although a number of employees have expressed their opinions and beliefs related to the fact that the problems that stopped the last evaluation will be easily overcome in a 4-day week program to me, the factual documentation to support the opinions is lacking. Until we can provide some documentation, I am unable to support a revision to our present maintenance work schedule.

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- 8) Can something be done related to turnaround pay periods to limit deductions taken out of pay checks during these heavy overtime periods?

Comment

We have again reviewed this situation with Ponca City Payroll. We were informed that there is no legal way that deductions can be altered during high overtime pay situations such as plant turnaround periods. Deductions are based on payroll status; i.e., weekly, semi-monthly, or monthly, and switching from one status to another and back again for the purpose of limiting deductions is not allowed by the Internal Revenue Service. In fact, any payroll actions aimed at limiting deductions as their only basis are not allowed by the IRS. Excessive deductions will be refunded to an individual at the time they file their yearly income tax statement.

- 9) It is rumored that other plants in our area have safety shoe and boot programs that are better than the VCM Plant. Can our program be improved to match other plants, especially for those employees required to wear boots?

Comment

A survey has been taken related to safety shoe and boot programs in effect at all area plants. The results of this survey indicate that our program is equal to or better than any area program related to company contribution, styles available, and number of pairs of shoes allowed per year. The only exception to this was the potential for greater company contribution at one plant dependent on shoes/boots selected. However, at this plant the styles available were chosen by the company.

As the result of this survey, I am convinced that our plant safety shoe program is more than competitive with area practice at this time, and that continuance of our present procedures related to the program will assure it remains competitive.