

Step 7: Setting Standards

Case Studies

Babcock International Group

Background

This particular case relates to a large operation concerning ship maintenance and related activities. There were 110 Babcock trucks on the site, with a further 40 operated by others.

The Problem

A number of “near misses” were reported at a time when there had been a fork lift truck fatality at another local organisation. This prompted an investigation into lift truck safety at the Babcock site.

Relevant Points

- Babcock held a number of meetings and workshops which led to the setting of 21 standards. These were developed and agreed by the fork lift truck operators themselves, so they knew that solutions were workable. (There was careful steering by management to achieve this, but it was **not** command and control.) Importantly standards are revisited every 3 months to confirm they are current. Babcock have agreed to share these standards and they are available to read [here](#).
- Alongside this they established a structure to support and assist the “FLT community”.
 - **Steering Group** – Directors and Senior Managers.
 - **Standards Review Group** – group of volunteers from operators and controllers.
 - **FLT Controllers** – a focal point for each type of truck. (See Standard 5.)

Additional Comments from Babcock.

- Ownership was crucial to achieving engagement. (Instead of “you do this”, it’s now: “you wanted this, so we’ve done it.”)
- Operators are quicker to get on board if they know why. For example, seatbelts. Operators can view them as a pain, but if they understand why they are there to protect them, they quickly change their tune. Humanising safety is key.
- Rather than going for shades of grey they chose to make rules quite clear. Taking seatbelts again, they must be worn – even on reach trucks. (They had these specially fitted.)
- On site the operators wanted a speed limit of 30 mph. Management wanted 6 mph. They agreed on 12.5 mph. (Why 12.5 mph – because it makes people ask questions and take notice.)

- Cultural change takes two generations. (Apprentices normally pick up bad habits from older colleagues.) Cultural change is an ongoing journey. Some 95% of safe operations is attitude.

Reflecting on cultural change their training advisor from Mentor commented that years ago the operators just scraped by on tests, whereas now they clearly pass on tests. The attitudes have changed.

- Buying in agreement from all stakeholders is challenging. Babcock operate 110 trucks on site and another organisation has 40. Not all operators are Babcock employees. It is important for the approach to safety to be universal on site.
- Industrial and non-industrial unions were engaged in the process. While they don't see eye to eye on everything, from a safety point of view they are all in it together.

Babcock International Group won the FLTA Safe Site Award in 2013.

City of London Corporation

Background

Amongst many other things The City of London Corporation are responsible for the management of New Spitalfields Market. This busy market has some 113 tenants operating more than 220 fork lift trucks over large common user areas.

The Problem

The site had a higher than acceptable accident rate involving fork lift trucks. There was a need to improve the management of the pedestrian/truck interface and to monitor operator performance.

Relevant Points

- A significant part of the problem was the number of different organisations, all operating their own fork lift trucks. There needed to be common standards for the entire site.
- They identified the problems and worked collaboratively to resolve them.
- All operators must have a centrally issued permit in order to operate on the site.
- Enforcement of the agreed standards was an important aspect of success. All incidents that an operator is associated with are recorded on a central file and they are allocated points (endorsements). When a trigger level is reached the common area permit is revoked until a re-test in the use of a fork lift truck has been received by central administration. Only then is a permit re-issued.

City of London Corporation won the FLTA Safe Site Award in 2009.

Nestle York Distribution Centre

Background

Nestle has a fairly traditional warehouse with a large high-bay storage facility. However, the inbound, outbound and picking areas are relatively small and therefore congested.

The Problem

There was a cultural challenge when it came to segregating fork lift trucks and pedestrians. Long serving employees were used to walking close to the trucks (and operators driving close to pedestrians) and as there had not been an accident this was not seen as a problem by the staff concerned. Management did consider that this was a problem.

Relevant Points

In addition to training, site and equipment changes Nestle took the following actions in order to focus on standards in certain areas:

- Where pedestrians could not be eliminated from an area specific procedures were adopted to ensure staff did not come into contact with powered-up trucks.
- Procedures were written for operators who needed to dismount to carry out a task.

Nestle have entered the FLTA Safe Site Award 2015.

Preston Technical Ltd

Background

Preston Technical Ltd was established in 1990 and has quickly become an industry leader in product conversion.

The Problem

For operational and safety reasons it had been decided that the shop floor should be reorganised. This included limiting access of fork lift trucks to certain areas.

Relevant Points

Changes included structural modifications and the movement of manufacturing equipment. With regard to FLT operations there was a change of equipment, traffic routes, operator training and maintenance practices. With regard to standards the following actions were taken:

- Risk assessments have been completed for all areas of the facility, including the use of fork lift trucks.

Safer Site Programme

- Safe working methods have been established for the use of fork lift trucks and battery charging areas.
- The company is subject to weekly housekeeping audits, which include identifying any damage caused by the misuse of fork lift trucks.

Preston Technical Ltd have entered the FLTA Safe Site Award 2015.