The well-being of our staff is something we take very seriously. Health and Safety comes as the most material topic that Smurfit Kappa has in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Health and Safety Policy

We are committed to continuously reviewing and improving our Health and Safety practices and performance, to progress towards our vision: We know that doing the right things in the right way, with integrity and respect, is necessary to engage our employees and make a successful business on trust.

Smurfit Kappa has a structured approach to Health and Safety, through which we continually improve our safety performance. It is our policy to:

- promote a culture of openness, involvement and dignity in the workplace; we are all responsible for each other’s Health and Safety;
- provide constructive feedback to success and setbacks in equal measure. We care for our employees and expect them to care for each other by speaking up when noticing anything they feel is unsafe;
- review workplace incidents so there is consistent reporting, investigation and, where appropriate, identification of improvement opportunities that strengthen our Health and Safety management systems;
- comply with all applicable legal requirements and implement good Health and Safety practice by effective deployment of our Health and Safety Management Systems;
- ensure that all operational managers take responsibility for Health and Safety implementation, communication and compliance;
- foster a work environment where every member of the workforce understands their role in Health and Safety, and deliver on the right individual responsibilities;
- ensure that our employees and contractors are trained to work safely, and have processes in place to identify Health and Safety hazards so that risks are assessed and minimized to acceptable levels, to prevent the occurrence of injury and ill health to our employees, contractors, partners and visitors.

Safety Conversations

We at Smurfit Kappa take employee safety very seriously – our workplace initiative, Safety for Life, demonstrates that,” says Greg Maroso, Health, Safety and Environment Director, North America, “but some incident types keep repeating – for example, contact with moving machines.

The strategy was launched in April 2019 and has contributed to our cluster’s 44% drop in lost time injuries in North America. “Our mission is to be ahead of the curve – monitor, manage and mitigate risks,” says Greg. “We find creative ways of displaying and communicating to our employees, giving them still further ownership of the message.”

Lifeline – Communicating Health and Safety // North America

Lifeline is an interactive, two-way communication tool that takes ideas and concerns from workers at sites.

“Smurfit Kappa takes employee safety very seriously – our workplace initiative, Safety for Life, demonstrates that,” says Greg Maroso, Health, Safety and Environment Director, North America, “but some incident types keep repeating – for example, contact with moving machines.”

The initiative is already benefitting more people – and is much more memorable than a four-page report.”

“Because the plant-level implementation is so site-specific, the tools take a more enthusiastic,” explains Greg. “They find creative ways of displaying and communicating to their employees, giving them still further ownership of the message.”

Lifeline gives us a minimum of four times a year, our mission is to be ahead of the curve – get the message out before it happens,” says Greg. “For the reason we like Lifeline to be more frequent. Many requests come in from plants and regions that help us inform the bulletins – we get much more feedback in that way.”

“Lifeline is one of many SKNA initiatives that has contributed to our cluster’s 44% drop in safety-related incidents from 2018 to 2019. Our cluster is on the right path, but there’s always more work to do to achieve a zero-incident culture.”

Mental Health and Safety // UK

“Most of us know of someone with a mental health issue and are aware it can happen to anyone,” says Jackie McDermott, Head of Engagement and Communication at Smurfit Kappa UK, “We all want to support, but often aren’t sure how to.”

Back in 2018, SK UK’s Human Resources and Health and Safety teams worked together to form the UK Mental Health and Well-being Strategy. They developed a series of confidential feedback sessions from the Employee Assistance Programme (‘Lifeline’) was needed to provide in-house support. Nigel Elias, UK Health and Safety Environment Manager, says: “It was clear there was a genuine need. Managers can face with a serious mental health issue and be unable to help, because we tend to focus on safety, not health.”

The strategy was launched in April 2019 with the full backing of senior SK UK managers. “People believed in it and wanted to be involved,” says Jackie. “Almost 200 colleagues volunteered to be Mental Health First-Aiders and were taught how to spot early problems, approach people, create a safe space, and support to appropriate services. The volunteers chose the green ribbon logo, and were supported with information posters, identifying them.”

“As a confidential service, our first-aiders need support,” adds Nigel. “So we set up a community site, and quarterly support calls to talk about issues.” The Mental Health First-Aiders also set up ‘Let’s Talk’ rooms on site where people can talk about their problems in confidence.

The training, provided by ‘Everyday People’, started on International Labour Day 2019 and there are now 195 Mental Health First-Aiders, covering 90% of UK sites with 10 sites having active Well-being Committees. Over 350 managers are now Mental Health First-Aiders, or feel that a more detailed message requires formal training. Typical topics include hand safety, accident reporting, lockout-tagout procedures and the SKNA Maroso knife initiative.

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