

## Case study No. 1

### Case study - Tamdown Construction

The video case study on the Tamdown Demolition business shows good practice around a very hazardous environment.

Please watch the video carefully and answer the following questions:

#### Questions

1. What good practice in terms of communication did you spot in the video?
2. What good recording practices did you see?
3. How can the good practice around communication and recording be applied to your business?

1)

2)

3)

## **Background information for facilitator [1]**

The Tamdown Group began trading in 1977. Following a management buyout in 1999 it has become one of the UK's leading regional civil engineering contractors, providing state-of-the-art ground work preparation and infrastructure construction (roads, drainage, foundations and concrete frames) on some of the country's largest brownfield development sites. Turnover is now £70m, with nearly 500 employees working on around 45 sites across the South East.

### **The problem**

As the scale of clients and work has developed, Tamdown's health and safety culture has had to keep pace. Before the new management regime, RIDDOR-reportable accidents had been averaging eight per year. The company wished to establish a point of difference when competing for contracts. Senior Management determined that a new work-safe strategy was key to this.

### **The solution**

Group H&S Manager Andrew Denby joined in January 2008, briefed to audit the health and safety record and to introduce a new work safety regime. Andrew wanted to give responsibility to the workforce and create a safer environment through knowledge and empowerment. His solution was "Worksmart", a worker involvement initiative.

Andrew explained: 'I felt it was far better to motivate employees through the message that working safely would lead to a healthier, safer life for them as well as greater efficiencies for Tamdown. Everyone has something to offer this process. It generates camaraderie and creates a 'virtuous circle'. It's an attitude that should grow to touch every part of the business.'

In its continuous drive for health and safety excellence Worksmart includes safety training for site foremen and operatives, the safe provision and maintenance of plant, and systems of work that are safe and without risk to health.

The latest phase of the Worksmart initiative involves a daily 'WiSE' (Worksmart Engagement) briefing in which all operatives ask themselves a crucial question: 'What difference can I make to make this site a safer place to work?'

Wherever a site is operational then WiSE is operational, too, supplemented by a Site Safety Forum which oversees and reviews the programme on site.

Every employee or sub contractor new to the site is required to commit to the Tamdown safety policy, and is shown a safety film which creates awareness of the potential hazards. Sub contractor Joe Harris, who works for Maldon Demolition Ltd., is a keen advocate.

'I've worked with other companies who are adamant that you 'do as they say'. They've not wanted to hear the workers' views and it's often resulted in losing many hours on site. This way we can do our job efficiently and effectively with no time lost due to avoidable problems.'

Mick Bray, Tamdown Health, Safety and Quality Manager, started in the construction industry over 25 years ago as a plant operator. He delivers on-site training via demonstrations, DVDs and workshops. 'I'm talking from experience and that's when people listen. With Worksmart we get people involved and get them to take it on board and look out for each other.'

Each morning at one demolition project in High Wycombe, site workers go through the day's schedule to discuss potential hazards and instigate safety procedures. It's a mini risk-assessment exercise, working within the health and safety team's original guidelines. If site workers are unable to carry out safety measure themselves Andrew and his team offer support and advice. This applies across Tamdown sites around the South East. As one worker explained

'The meeting takes about 10 minutes but can save us hours of working time.'

As part of its effective open-door policy for communication Tamdown also operates a health & safety 'hot-line', should employees wish report any issues or problems anonymously.

This workforce-engagement has led to an increase in minor incident and near miss reporting. In 2006 there were 13 non-RIDDOR-reportable accidents; in 2007 they reached a peak of 50, reducing to 35 in 2008. However, the higher figures are seen as a bonus by the company – they show the workforce's commitment to highlighting hazards, and give Tamdown the data to recognise small problems and prevent them growing into major incidents.

The company monitors all non-reportable accidents, constantly looking for efficient safety improvements. For instance, when the reporting system flagged up a number of hand injuries, Tamdown considered making gloves compulsory for all building-site workers at all times. But further analysis showed that wearing gloves was not always linked to the likelihood of hand injuries. So Tamdown retained its policy of deciding on the need for gloves for individual tasks based on risk assessment, while Andrew and his team continue to monitor the situation.

Actual new implementations include the installation of a new shuttering system for concrete formwork, and improvements made to avoid workers cutting their legs on metal tine wiring.

### **The outcome**

Workers and management are far happier about safety, morale is high and accident figures are down.

As Andrew Denby says: 'We've seen a huge drop in RIDDOR-reportable accidents (from six in 2008 to one in 2009), a rise in near-miss and non-injury incident reporting, and a 25% cut in insurance premiums, more than offsetting the scheme's £20-£25K cost to date.

We've retained our training programme and increased our training grant receipts through a challenging trading period. In short, by genuinely engaging with our workforce we've squeezed far higher performance from a far lower net budget.

The 'Worksmart' programme has matured into a genuine partnership between management and front-line operatives, opening new and exciting channels of communication.'

Tamdown has a culture of CANI (Continuous And Never-Ending Improvement). As the business and its environment evolve, so will the innovative approaches to improving health and safety.

### Reference

[1] Health and Safety Executive. Case Study: Tamdown Group.  
[www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/doyourbit/case-study-tamdown.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/involvement/doyourbit/case-study-tamdown.htm)