

# SELEX Sensors and Airborne Systems UK case study

## Company profile

SELEX Sensors & Airborne Systems UK, a Finmeccanica company, is one of Europe's leading defence electronics companies, providing world class capabilities in surveillance, protection, tracking, targeting, navigation and control and imaging systems. It is the UK's foremost supplier of electronic systems for military platforms in the air, at sea and on land. With its head office in Basildon, SELEX S&AS has major sites in southern England, as well as Edinburgh in Scotland. In total there are some 4500 employees, with 1100 working from the headquarters in Basildon.

The Basildon site won the East and South East region HSE Health and Safety Award at the 2005 Orange National Business Awards. In winning the award the company demonstrated their approach to health and safety management, including how they communicate their policy and apply controls to hazards and risks. Key areas presented covered the management's commitment and overall worker involvement.

**SELEX**  
Sensors and Airborne Systems

## The problem

The company had always recognised the importance of health and safety but wanted to improve overall workplace integration, ownership and understanding of good health and safety practice. To facilitate this step to the next level of health and safety awareness, the company embarked upon a programme to further strengthen the link between health and safety and successful business practice.

## The solution

Dave John, Operations and Group Services Director, took on the role of SHE (Safety, Health and Environment) Director three years ago working alongside the company's SHE Manager, Maggie Lovett. They set about tackling the lack of health and safety ownership at the top with an educational campaign targeting company directors and senior managers. The aim was to inform directors and managers of their health and safety responsibilities, and educate them on the requirement for established health and safety management



*Live working area - tool box talk. From left to right: Andy Gunn, Dave John, Maggie Lovett and Ron Morris*

systems within the company, in order to provide a safe working environment for its employees.

As a further step to enforce these responsibilities, managers and supervisors were set health and safety objectives in their annual personal development reviews.

The next step was to introduce worker involvement. Employees were encouraged to take on responsibility for the health and safety management of their own work areas. Health and safety co-ordinators in assembly areas and worker representatives in all other areas of the business were appointed and given specific health and safety training. Health and safety awareness, guidance and training were provided to employees at all levels, and this was supported by improvements to the incident and near miss reporting. This had a major impact in removing the 'I knew it would happen' culture.

Dave John said: 'The important key to making this happen and making it successful was people involvement. We simply had to have our teams involved in both the planning and operation of good health and safety practice. Without their support and involvement this simply could not have happened.'

Communication with the workforce and management was an important factor in the improvements undertaken, and key to the success of the scheme. Regular communication was established through safety committees, trade unions, safety representatives, and the company's Joint Consultative



*Risk assessment review - environmental screening  
From left to right: Lee Bird, Maggie Lovett and Spencer Tilbrook*

Committee. Furthermore, the company also used their Intranet, formal documentation, posters and toolbox talks in the communication process.

Representatives in each of the manufacturing and assembly cells on the shop floor became responsible for health and safety in their area. The machine shop cells carry out audits on all cells in turn. The audits are undertaken to ensure compliance with best practice and act as a measure of performance. The audits include checks on vital health and safety practices such as risk assessments, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) assessments, workplace inspections and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Innovative computer solutions were developed for the clean rooms. This allowed the workforce to have full access to all health and safety information in an area where paper copies

were prohibited. This interactive approach encouraged employee involvement and has become a best practice feature recognised by many external customers.

### **The result**

Health and safety has become an integral part of the job for each and every employee. It is now very rare for a serious accident to occur on site and employees' lost-time accident rates are low.

### *Current health and safety activity includes:*

- *awareness campaigns and training in relation to the reporting of near-miss incidents and accidents;*
- *all employees are encouraged to use Safety Investigation forms to raise concerns;*
- *awareness campaigns are carried out to show the possible risk of injuries in the event of the incorrect use and application of personal protective equipment.*

Dave John added: 'Everyone at this site is a safety adviser. **Workers show far more interest and enthusiasm for health and safety when they are empowered**, as they are able to make changes and stop the job if they consider it to be unsafe. The establishment of this empowerment supports the company's zero tolerance approach to working in unsafe environments.'

Each department now holds its own health and safety meetings. In addition, weekly production meetings with managers also have health and safety on the agenda.

A visible process is used across the site including posters, which are changed on a regular basis to provide more impact.



*Health and safety meeting From left to right: Ken Green, Diane Nastri, Linda Shields, Kevin Brooks, John Inglis, Chris Hatchard and Maggie Lovett*



Machining cell - Darren Perry

Photographs of all the members of staff within the machining cells identify their roles, whether they are a first-aider or a health and safety representative, etc. Machining cells measure health and safety competence using a skills matrix, which is displayed in all cells, providing a comprehensive view of the possible risks specific to that area.

As a further encouragement to health and safety awareness, the company has introduced award elements. During European Health and Safety Awareness Week in October this year, Maggie ran a competition with a prize of £250.



Risk assessment. From left to right: Maggie Lovett and Ken Grant, shop steward for Basildon site

Said Maggie, 'It was well supported. We put up posters about European Health and Safety Awareness Week in the canteen and organised a quiz, which had questions on noise at work and road safety. In addition, the local police force displayed road safety awareness information.

The Basildon site also gives Excellence Award vouchers for health and safety suggestions made by employees.'

### The future

There is an ongoing review and improvement of management processes. A new visual screen and database linked to the SHE Intranet site will show staff who is responsible and accountable for each area. It will also list members of personnel who are trained to carry out risk assessments and detailed risk assessment procedures. The annual health and safety auditing plan for the site will be visible within this new process improvement. This upgrade will further encourage ownership and communication in maintaining the standards now established.



Cell hazard risk assessment. From left to right: Kristian Brown, Apprentice of the Year with Brian Kendall, manufacturing controller

Dave John and Maggie Lovett believe that winning the 2005 Regional National Business Award for Health and Safety has provided both internal and external recognition for the Basildon team. This has encouraged everyone at the site to keep focused and maintain standards.