

2019-11 - November HSE Communication

Hello Everyone,

October was a strong reminder that we still have a ways to go in making Safety just “How we do things in Solvay”. In the month of October, five of our co-workers were injured, two involving chemical contact and two requiring medical intervention. In all cases, I would say that risk awareness played a part – whether it was selection of the right tool for the job, wearing the appropriate PPE, or using good body mechanics.

Also, when I look at the incidents, I am reminded of the fact that almost all incidents are caused by one or more of the 3 “C’s”: **C**omplacency, Lack of **C**ommunication, and **O**ver-**C**onfidence. I see one or more of each of these elements present in each of the injuries sustained in October.

As leaders, we too are human and prone to the 3 C’s as well. The difference for me is that when we have a lapse, it may not be a direct cause of an incident or injury, but rather an indirect cause – after all, it can impact the culture of the site and undermine the expectations we have set for our employees. For example, maybe we are *Complacent* when it comes to ensuring we have up to date operating procedures or ensuring our training is relevant and effective. The unintended message that might be sent is – you don’t need to follow the procedures or training is just a “check the box” exercise. I understand that if you have opportunities to improve, it may not be possible to do it over-night, but you should start.

This brings me to the next “C” – *Communication*. Your approach to communication is very important, depending on your intent. Benjamin Franklin said: “Tell me and I Forget, Teach me and I Remember, *Involve* me and *I Learn*.” When you communicate with your teams, think about what you want – Is it just to share information or is it more than that. While it is easy to send out a memo or an email and say you have communicated, it may not be so impactful. If your intent is for the team to act, consider using an interactive approach – there is a better chance your team will engage with you, offer ideas, and fulfill your expectations.

Finally there is *Over-Confidence*. We all have many things to do, and I know there is a lot of pressure on everyone to deliver results. If your site has not had an MTA in a while, it is natural to assume everything is ok or that you can focus your attention on other more pressing issues. However, it is at these times when your site is more vulnerable. If you are distracted and you feel the pressure, so do your employees. Even if you have not had an incident in a while, it is important to continuously remind and when the opportunity presents itself, to demonstrate to your employees that nothing is more important than their safety – not profits and not production.

I am confident (hopefully not over-confident) that this recent increase in incidents does not indicate a real deterioration in our safety performance but is more part of the normal fluctuations we will encounter on our journey to Create Safety.

I appreciate your support and dedication to Creating Safety and moving from a mindset of “Have to” to “Want to.” Let’s finish the year on a positive note with all our co-workers making it home safe each and every day.

Be Safe,

James