SAFETY STARTS WITH ME!

Over the past five years, the construction industry has had 41* fatalities. So, what does Shell do to keep workers on one of Ireland’s biggest building sites safe?

Shell Exploration & Production Ireland Limited (SEPIL) is the lead developer of the Corrib Gas Project located in Co. Mayo, and for much of the past decade, it has run one of the largest construction sites in the country.

Over the past decade more than 6,000 different workers have been employed on the project. In this context, companies achieving a consistent HSSE (Health, Safety, Security and Environment) culture with safety-focussed workers has been a truly challenging task.

‘Goal Zero’ is a global programme which strives to achieve zero harm and zero leaks on every project and asset worldwide. In February 2013 Corrib underwent a ‘Safety Culture Diagnosis’ and the results demonstrated that while the company had a good record, there was still room for improvement.

While many organisations would be happy to be assessed as ‘proactive’ (at the upper end of the safety ladder) Shell and its main contractors believed they could do even better.

In Spring 2013 a group of 40+ directors and senior management from the main contractor companies who work on Corrib launched a project-wide, ground-up safety campaign with the objective of moving the project’s position on the safety culture ladder to the top spot – ‘Generative’.

SAFETY CAMPAIGN MESSAGES

The resulting SSWM campaign was built on four simple and easily-understood key messages:

- Teamwork is essential to keeping us all safe.
- Everyone must work safely and get home safely.
- Everyone has the right to intervene
- Safety Starts With Me!

* Over the past five years, the construction industry has had 41 fatalities.
Every June, up to half a million staff members and contractors working for Shell globally, participate in an annual Safety Day programme of activities. For Shell’s Project and Technology Executive Director, Matthias Bichsel, who visited the Corrib Project for this year’s event, the reasons for dedicating a specific day to help everyone in the company refocus on safety are clear.

“Safety Day provides an opportunity for everybody in Shell, be they on a construction site, in a plant or in an office to take time out to reflect on what safety really means and to ensure that we all return to work refreshed and re-energised”, said Matthias. “Being safe is not just important for us individually but it’s also essential in looking out for our co-workers and colleagues.”

The theme for this year’s event was ‘Re-energising the Life-Saving Rules (LSR)’. It is a mandatory requirement for everyone working for Shell anywhere in the world to adhere to ‘12 Life Saving Rules’ so that everyone can return home safely at the end of each day.

At the Corrib site in Mayo on 4 June, over 600 workers visited a pop-up marketplace and were able to participate in hands-on demonstrations and lively discussions. Representatives from a number of external agencies, including Mayo Fire Brigade, the Gardaí and the Road Safety Authority, were on hand to give advice and to promote safe driving; this remains a key risk for everyone working on the Corrib project.

Commenting on the Corrib’s pop up LSR marketplace, Shell E&P Ireland’s Managing Director Michael Crothers said: “Safety is vitally important to all of us who work on the Corrib Gas Project and to our families. That is why we strive continually to improve our safety culture and performance. There was a real buzz and energy about the LSR marketplace which impressed everyone who took part in the Safety Day activities.”

“Safety is at the heart of everything we do, so the energy and passion demonstrated on Corrib’s Safety Day gives me the confidence that we can achieve Goal Zero,” Crothers concluded.

SOLID SAFETY CULTURE

Safety ‘nuggets’ were rolled out during tool-box talks and were used to remind workers about the campaign messages. Once people had encountered these messages over and over again in various ways, several mystery visitors were sent to the site to intentionally break the rules. Their job was to test whether workers felt comfortable to intervene with strangers.

At the same time a selection of key workers shared their personal stories, describing their own near misses, in order to inform and educate colleagues about the importance of intervening when something does not look or feel right.

Group discussions were organised for everyone on the project to officially launch the SSWM campaign. The sessions provided opportunities for rich round-table conversations and discussions on safety and the obligations workers have to themselves and to each other.

ANNUAL SAFETY DAY PROGRAMME

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worker influencers, with a track record of advocating the intervention culture on site, were selected to receive specialist training and become ‘Intervention Champions’.

It’s widely recognised that a company’s safety culture must be nourished and encouraged; otherwise it will result in a slide in performance. Shell already had a solid safety culture before it launched the Safety Starts With Me campaign. Goal Zero, the overarching safety philosophy and Shell’s ‘12 Life-Saving Rules’, which have to be adhered to on all sites, were well-known and understood.

The Safety Starts With Me campaign will continue into the operational phase of the Corrib asset. More initiatives are constantly being planned to keep the key messages of working safely so as to go home safely, and to keep proactive intervention, teamwork and management support vibrant and alive.

* HSA figures 2009-2013

REWARDS FOR ROAD SAFETY PERFORMANCE

Shell’s Corrib Project team in Mayo has won two top road safety accolades in the past 12 months. The company’s internal road safety campaign was recognised by the Road Safety Authority (RSA) when its chairman Gay Byrne presented Shell with a ‘Leading Lights’ award in December 2013.

The campaign which is ongoing, provides defensive driving courses for all the Corrib workforce, distributes winter driving kits in the community, delivers a safe driving programme to the four secondary schools in Erris as well as funding a series of Certificate of Professional Competence courses for drivers working on the project.

At the 2014 annual Irish Logistics and Transport Awards (ILTA) in March, the Corrib transport team was recognised for driving 6,500,000 km and safely transferring 1.1 million tonnes of construction equipment, without injury or incident.

The award was accepted by Shell’s Transport Manager, Brendan Moyles who paid tribute to his team of 30 independent transport contractors for their unrelenting commitment to safety and high standards of delivery:

“This award could not have been won without the commitment and professionalism, as well as the determination of all individual drivers, to be best in class for road user behaviour,” Moyles concluded.