

NORTH STAFFS AND SOUTH CHESHIRE DISTRICT (NSSC)

NSSC District Branch Meeting Minutes

April 3rd 2017

Handson Safety Services

The Training Centre
Wistaston Road Business Centre
Wistaston Road
Crewe
CW2 7RP

CPD/IPD session – To get the full benefit out of these sessions, members are reminded to bring their own laptop and will be guided by Committee members through the requirements.

Apologies: None received.

Our Chairman, Douglas Leech welcomed the branch members and recapped on the 2017 agenda thus far. Everything is on track for the year including, Asbestos in June, Mock Trial end of June, Legal Update in July, Stress at work in October, and Root Cause Analysis in December.

Douglas introduced our presenter for the evening, Darren Collinswood. Darren is the QSE Manager for Freyssinet Ltd, an International company which is part of the Vinci Group and is essentially a specialist civil engineering company who undertake many highly skilled, multi versatile disciplines, for example, Hydro-demolition. Freyssinet has been involved in some more unusual projects such as the Anish Kapoor Middlesborough artwork which is constructed of stainless steel tensioned wire.

Darren played a video showing the types of activities Freyssinet carries out such as; work on oil platforms and bridge strengthening. They tackle day to day safety issues focusing on employee and contractor feedback with team work being an essential part of understanding. Freyssinet originally started with 230 employees and has now doubled in size. One of its biggest markets is dedicated to the repair of structures e.g. motorways, bridges and tunnel lining refurbishment. Darren explained that work involving bearing replacement on bridges is highly complex due to many aspects such as, the need for the bridge to move, expand and contract with heat and cold and naturally the ability to weight bear.

When it comes to looking at human factors and behavior's, emphasis on training and competence is a key player. Interestingly, Darren pointed out that social media is now becoming a growing problem within the industry and can be a distraction amongst workers. Drink and drugs are also changing these days with cocaine being prevalent as one of the drugs of choice. This drug doesn't show up as easily as other substances and Freyssinet has brought drug testing in house and trains its own staff in saliva testing. By working closely in conjunction with the Occupational Health department and Policy, Freyssinet are leading the way with regards to drug testing and are applying emphasis on its employee's mental health by tackling and recognising the signs of stress at an early stage. Intervention as well as rehabilitation is one of the crucial elements of maintaining a fit and healthy workforce.

Another area Freyssinet is pushing is 2-way communication including worker involvement, inductions and pre-start briefings. Engagement with the workforce is having a positive impact and emphasis on feedback and a no blame culture improves morale and productivity. Pre-start meetings take place every day and are geared towards the length and complexity of projects being carried out. Whether they're 5 minutes long or a multi-staged briefing, they are integral to the success of promoting 2-way communication and bringing any safety concerns to the forefront. Darren then showed us another video about pre-start meetings which highlighted their importance as an intrinsic part of safety culture.

In order to understand the issues behind Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS), Freyssinet carries out health surveillance and encourages the use of the online Hilti tool selector, but the most efficient way of reducing HAVS was to work with the tool suppliers and although costly, the benefits prove to outweigh the losses in terms of productivity and turnover. Hydro-demolition is a specialty discipline and it takes away the risk of Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS) for operators but, it introduces other dangers such as people, equipment, anti-jet clothing, controls and robotics. Freyssinet were integral in the development of a hydro-demolition visor and they invest heavily in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all their workers.

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Freyssinet put a lot of emphasis of the hierarchy of controls for activities involving work at height and operate a strictly no ladders policy which can make the choice of access equipment challenging at times but by establishing close relationships with their sub-contractors it has allowed them to engineer out the need to use them.

As with HAVS, construction dusts for example silica cause harm to health and again by establishing a good relationship with Hilti, both parties work hard to control dusts at source. Hilti assist Freyssinet by attending site to train supervisors in fit testing masks. One of the common problems affecting efficient use of masks is ensuring males are clean shaven for the operation, those persons involved are briefed the day before the works takes place and if they fail the face test the following day due to stubble or beard growth, the individual is then taken off that activity.

We were then presented with a few case studies which were fascinating; “Dong Siri” (offshore oil and gas platform), “Hammersmith Flyover” and Elevarch (innovation in bridge elevation) whereby a 161 year old bridge weighing 220 tons was lifted by 500mm in order to accommodate the new height for rail electrification. All these projects worked on hazard analysis, new methods and team work at all levels.

We were left with a few closing thoughts and they were to; never forget the day to day generic hazards, technology affects and changes the risks, communication is key, never say never and when it comes to getting the maximum business benefit, integration of safety personnel is integral to success

Douglas thanked Darren for a most factual, insightful presentation and presented him with the IOSH cut glass tumbler as a token of our appreciation.

The District then held its Annual General meeting (AGM) for which separate minutes are available.

Minutes compiled and prepared by: Liz Jackson (Committee Member / Branch Secretary) End of NSSC District Branch Meeting 3rd April 2017