



IMPROVING SAFETY MANAGEMENT AT HELSINKI WATER

1. Organisations involved

Helsinki Water

2. Description of the case

2.1. Introduction

Helsinki Water provides drinking water and processes the waste water for over 1 million residents in Helsinki and district. The average age of the employees is relatively high: 47.4 years in 2006. The number of staff has fallen by 50% in the last 20 years.

2.2. Aims

The company wanted to reduce the number of accidents faced by its staff, and at the same time to raise the competence level of employees.

2.3. What was done, and how?

Helsinki Water's health and safety committee was reorganised in 2004: the committee now consists of eight members, and both the employer and employees are represented. The personnel manager and occupational health specialists also take part in meetings when needed. The company's various departments have also nominated a total of 20 representatives, so that the official OHS team comprises some 30 members. Each department's own health and safety group meets once a month to discuss reported accidents, near-misses, etc.

- A systematic risk assessment was carried out at all sites throughout the organisation, in conjunction with the employees, to identify all risks associated with the work.
- Training was planned and organised to raise safety awareness and OSH skills throughout the organisation.
- Top management is highly committed to the project.
- The project was supported with communications: safety is now one of the most prominent topics on the company's intranet and every issue of the employee magazine 'Pikaliitin' includes OHS issues.
- Near-misses are systematically reported and evaluated.

2.4. What was achieved?

The number of occupational accidents more than halved from 2002 to 2006. In 2005 direct OHS training made up 28% of all training carried out in the company (the comparable figure was 21% in 2004). Training therefore appears to have had a direct effect on the accident rate.

Table 1. Figures demonstrating the reduction of occupational accidents at Helsinki Water

Social Performance	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001
Number of personnel	316	307	326	331	328	345
Regular/temporary	299/17	293/14	309/17	313/18	310/10	318/20
Average personnel age (yr.)	47.4	48.4	47.5	47.1	47.0	46.5
Training days/reg. personnel	6.0	3.8	3.9	2.4		
Occupational accidents per 100 employees	6.0	8.5	7.4	11.5	12.2	
Occupational accident total, including travelling	17	26	24	38	39	41(5)



2.5. Further information

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3. References, resources:

- http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/reports/mainstreaming_osh_business