



OSH AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AT GRINDEKS PHARMACEUTICALS

1. Organisations involved

Joint Stock Company Grindeks

2. Description of the case

2.1. Introduction

Joint Stock Company Grindeks is the largest drug manufacturer in the Baltic countries. The enterprise has two business structures applying diverse technology. The work requires the handling of various hazardous chemicals, including solvents.

2.2. Aims

The main objectives of the company are to protect the health and safety of its employees, and to become a leader among Latvian employers in the field of OSH.

2.3. What was done, and how?

Since the mid-1990s, risk assessment and elimination has been an important part of general management at Grindeks. The process has been carried out on the basis of EU Directives and seminars arranged by EU institutions, the state labour inspectorate, the Latvian association of testing laboratories, the Baltic environmental forum, the Latvian association of chemical and pharmaceutical employers and other organisations. Significant stages in the process were:

- The identification and evaluation of the company's risk hazards. At this stage, mid-level technological staff and qualified workers were heavily involved in risk evaluation. As a result of this risk assessment, plans were drawn up to improve working conditions.
- Detailed OSH audits to detect faults and disparities that posed serious risks in the workplace. Measures were put in place to eliminate these deficiencies. An 'appraisal coefficient' was introduced to enable the comparison of structural units in terms of their level of risk and the effectiveness of corrective actions.
- Regular inspection of workplaces and systematic evaluation of occupational risks was carried out by the plant's Occupational Health and Safety Group together with site managers and specialists.
- Joining the International Programme of the Chemical Industry, i.e. Responsible Care, which aims to achieve a high level of environmental protection, safety and health for employees, consumers and the public.

Special attention is paid to occupational risk assessment. To minimise the impact of hazardous chemicals on employees, there is a documented procedure for evaluating risks in the work environment, which includes all phases of risk appraisal and recording results, as well as planning protection measures and checking their implementation.

2.4. What was achieved?

- Hazardous chemicals have been replaced with less hazardous ones.
- Equipment has been installed to enable employees to work with hazardous substances without handling them directly when loading chemicals into a dryer.
- The quality and efficiency of ventilation has been improved, so that air flow is in the direction of the source of contamination rather than towards the employees.

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- Employees have been further protected from risks in their working environment by the issue of individual protective equipment and non-standard measures, e.g. special medical examinations.

Grindeks' efforts in OSH were marked when it received the National Good Practice Award in 2003 for the best project for improving working conditions within a company, by eradicating exposure to harmful substances. In 2006 Grindeks received the European Good Practice Award in recognition of its effective management of workplace safety and health care for young workers in particular.

2.5. Further information

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3. References, resources:

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