Combatting the ‘Silly Season’

Health and Safety Petra’s core safety objective is to work towards a Zero Harm environment, which is fully aligned with the industry objectives as outlined in South Africa’s MOSH initiative (refer ‘What is “MOSH”?’ below).

An analysis of historical safety information has revealed that the period at the end/beginning of the calendar year, the so-called ‘Silly Season’ over Christmas and the New Year, will typically see a much higher accident rate. This is because this period has the highest number of public holidays, with most employees taking annual leave, and is when the majority of our operations shut down for a period and focus on doing preventative maintenance. This holiday season environment can therefore encourage negligence and a general laxity of standards.

To combat this issue, Petra launched the ‘Silly Season Campaign’ to improve safety performance during these periods. This campaign, which ran from December 2012 until the end of January 2013, consisted of a number of initiatives, including:

- increasing the visibility of senior officials in the workplace (‘Management by Walking Around’) by conducting management team walk-abouts weekly at all operations;
- management visiting underground working areas at any time of the day and not only during normal shift hours;
- management being visible in the workplace at all times, even on public holidays;
- changing the working arrangements of SHE Officers so that they would be at work during all shifts, not only on the day shift as was traditionally the case;
- introducing 100% selection for alcohol testing at all operations;
- increasing the focus on mini risk assessments before work commences;
- ensuring that people who do standby or overtime work in a section different to their own are duly trained for the work they need to perform;
- introduction of start-up procedures, after periods of shut-down, that would improve the safety of working conditions; and
- taking all employees returning to work after a shutdown period or annual leave through a refresher induction.

Due to the positive impact of this campaign, there were no LTIs recorded at any Petra operation during the Silly Season period, which is a considerable achievement.

The measures introduced during this campaign are therefore being incorporated into our daily safety approach. This is further strengthened by continuous awareness campaigns to reinforce the culture of safety created.

The success of the campaign is regarded as an important contributor to the 33% improvement in the Group LTI rate for the Year from 81 LTIs in FY 2012 to 54 LTIs in FY 2013 and the resultant drop in the Group’s LTIFR from 1.13 in FY 2012 to 0.67 in FY 2013.

What is “MOSH”? The Mining Industry Occupational Safety and Health (“MOSH”) initiative was launched by the South African Chamber of Mines to identify leading practices in health and safety within the industry, and assist with the widespread adoption thereof across industry. It primarily focuses on the ‘People’ issues that help to overcome resistance to adoption.

Read more about MOSH here: petradiamonds.com/sustainability/health-and-safety/mosh