



Preserving and improving the safety and health at work: Case of Hamma Bouziane cement plant (Algeria)



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ABSTRACT

Safety and health at work (SHW) has become a public health priority in industrialized countries and a primary concern in the context of human resource management and in particular high risk-industries. Thus, developing a strong safety culture (SC) would be a mean to reduce the number of adverse events related to various activities in the company. Now, the laws and customs interact: when a people have good manners, laws become simple. Unfortunately, habits cannot be modified by setting example. Therefore, regardless of the size and activity of the entity, health and safety at work must be at the heart of its daily management. In the absence of effective management of health and safety at work, it is the entire company that is mismanaged. On the whole, risk management can be defined as a process of prevention and protection allowing a company or an entity, placed in a competitive context, to take all necessary decisions in order to optimize its activity, without affecting its customers as well as the environment. This work is an opportunity to initiate a global approach to prevention in cement plants whose purpose is to improve working conditions by technical, organizational and human solutions to improve the health and safety of employees while engaging in a process of continuous improvement.

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1. Introduction

During work, any employee may be the victim of industrial accident or contract an occupational disease resulting:

- Temporary incapacity for work (TIW).
- Permanent partial disability (PPD).
- Death putting an end to its activity.

In Algeria, health problems are now an enormous burden, both health and economic, on workers, on companies and society in general. The situation is distressing, the least it can be said is the situation is alarming, even catastrophic, given the state of neglect in which the government has left the field of prevention in the workplace. «Only eighteen Algerian companies have integrated into their system, the prevention plan of occupational hazards and safety at work» (Chaïb et al., 2014). Every year, through our companies, thousands of people are victims of accidents or develop serious health problems in the workplace. More than 50,000 accidents a year were recorded resulting for year 2013 social security

coverage of more than 20 billion against 19 billion Algerian dinars for 2012. During this year, the number of deaths has reached 613, 640 cases are occupational diseases in which 27% are due to chemical products. The cost is increasing from one to another and the expense is apparently very heavy, yet it is only an approximate hardly reflects the exact number of victims in the workplace, where the majority of cases occur in the margins of the formal sphere, far from any official statement (Chaïb et al., 2014; Incidents, accidents, catastrophes, 1999). These expenditures reveal serious shortcomings in health and safety that industrialized countries cannot afford prevention.

The tragedy of occupational accidents and expenditure requires a strong response from all stakeholders, both at the state level that companies and workers. The state should play a key role both in the development of the national system in Health and Safety at Work in conjunction with all sectors including the private and should define the strategic directions of the country, vital to companies in the epigraph of their actions and their forecasts (Commissariat Général du Plan, 1994). So, faced with this situation, the established modes of governance in companies should enable the latter to ensure sustainable development (Incidents, accidents, catastrophes, 1999), unfortunately this is not the case of the cement plant in question and the problem of health and

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industrial safety does not seem to be considered seriously by the government. Thereby promoting a culture of safety has now been established as an imperative of reliability and sustainability of organizations. This safety culture is represented by the set of practices developed and implemented by the main stakeholders to manage the risks of their occupation (Chaufef-Bressy, 2002). The aim of this work has been to propose tracks to build a method and a methodological approach that would allow companies in particular the cement plant in question to undertake and succeed almost certainly a dynamic safety culture promotion, scalable and sustainable.

2. Problem

Safety and health at work has become a public health priority in industrialized countries and a primary concern especially for high risk industries. It is a social and societal requirement. Although the country has an important legislative and regulatory framework on which is based the national policy on the prevention of occupational risks. This device was taking its anchoring in International Labor Convention no. 155 on safety and health of workers and Convention no. 167 on safety and health in construction. Unfortunately, without any safety culture or regular monitoring of the state, all work accidents cannot be avoided. Now the policy of health and safety at work is not only a matter of laws and regulations. The latter are essential and should be applied at each company, or even in every workplace and that employers should confirm that prevention is an integral of all their activities. However, as no adequate policy and no appropriate budget have been implemented and with that intensity of human activity, its ever-increasing pace and constant intervention stressed man, the risk is constantly present. In addition, rules and regulations related to the prevention of occupational risks have been only partially implemented, not to say they did not exist on the ground and that

intervention in health is limited to caretaking function. In addition, for the majority of employees, the concept of health and safety at work does no longer mean big thing and a culture of temerity or let settles (Chaib et al., 2013). Henceforth, developing a strong safety culture would be a mean of reducing the number of adverse events related to various activities in the company (Planchette et al., 2002). Henceforth, to meet these expectations, building a culture in health and safety at work, get a measurable improvement in working conditions and a reduction in occupational accidents and disease, the control of occupational hazards inflicts and should be integrated in the company program. To achieve these objectives, two stakeholder groups have to be distinguished: the exposed staff and the management: those closest to the danger and those who supervise. Safety culture is therefore the result of a dynamic based on trust between those stakeholders (Jaubert, 2009). On practices, they are largely dependent on belief systems and rules that govern the usual behavior of employees. Montesquieu, in the spirit of laws, defines a nation by two basic founding elements that interact: the laws and customs. When a people have good manners, laws became simple. Unfortunately, habits cannot be modified by setting example. Therefore, our management is based on a basic principle: we only work well that if one is safe.

In this work, tracks to build a method for practical popularization of a safety culture in the workplace have been proposed.

It can serve to managers and trainers interested in conducting a proactive approach towards sustainability in their section or in their establishment. It can also provide a basis for a company that wanting to get into a process of continuous improvement in health and safety at work. Our interest has been given to the risks generated by industrial activities and likely cause damage to persons and/or legal, to the environment as well to good in companies. The proposed approach is promising, combined with economic incentives and continuous and sustainable improvement process, allowing maintaining an acceptable standard of health and safety

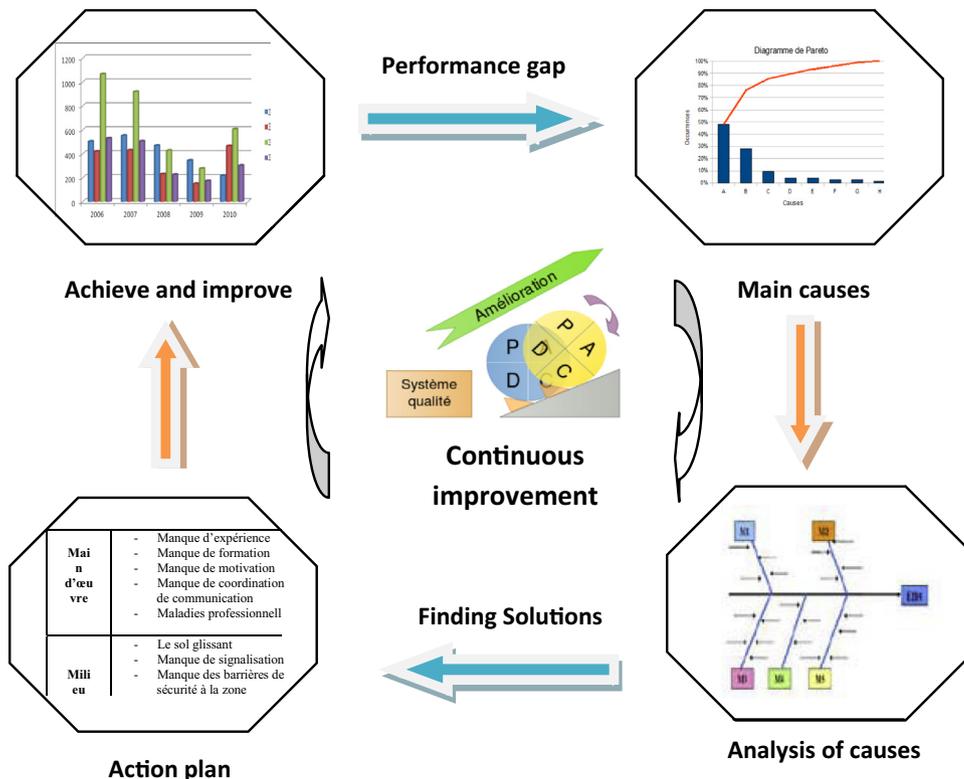


Fig. 1. Working methodology «continuous improvement loop».

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