

HAS SAFETY COMPLIANCE BECOME “GROUNDHOG DAY?”

BY ALAN ROOKS, EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

It the hit movie “Groundhog Day,” Bill Murray plays a character doomed to repeat the same day over and over again. Safety compliance for suppliers to the paper industry follows much the same script. Service providers that visit different pulp and paper mills must go through safety training sessions at each mill they visit, and these sessions are often repetitive and time consuming. While safety is a vital issue for everyone, is there a better way?

WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

- The problems associated with safety compliance in pulp and paper mills.
- Why suppliers must complete repetitive, multiple tasks to meet safety requirements at different mills.
- How certified industrywide programs could help reduce the cost of multiple site safety compliance.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- “Process Safety Management and how it is relevant to pulp and paper,” by Thomas Boughner, *Solutions!*, September 2005. To access this article, type in the following product code in the search field on www.tappi.org: 33237. Or call TAPPI Member Connection at 1 800 332-8686 (US); 1 800 446-9431 (Canada); +1 770 446 1400 (International).
- “The discipline of process safety management,” by Thomas Boughner, *Solutions!*, Online Exclusives, September 2005. This article is an extended version of the article above, and is published online. To access this article, enter the following Product Code in the search field on www.tappi.org : 33240

be a significant percentage of the service call. Second, the repetitiveness of these safety orientations lessens their effectiveness. Imagine a service engineer who week after week must listen to a well-intentioned mill

To find out, *Solutions!* interviewed several members of the Association of Suppliers to the Paper Industry (ASPI), based in Norcross, Georgia, USA. First, we examined how to define the problem of safety compliance by supplier companies working in pulp and paper mills.

According to Ray Masse, president, OASIS Alignment Services, Rochester, New Hampshire, USA, most mills require safety orientations that can take one to two hours to complete—and some are even longer. “For the most part, these orientations are much the same from mill to mill,” he says. “This raises two concerns. First, these repetitive safety training sessions consume costly man-hours. In the case of service providers who might only be at a mill for a one to two day outage, the time for safety orientation can



safety representative or, worse still, review yet another safety video. Eventually these individuals block out most if not all of what is being said.”

John Ollech, president of Johnson Foils, Springfield, Massachusetts, USA, agrees that a great deal of time is spent by service providers and paper mill workers reviewing similar information. “Each mill or paper company is spending a great deal of money designing a safety program that is slightly different from the mill down the road,” he said. “The cost of implementation and monitoring has to be enormous.”

David Peschell, director of international marketing for ITT Goulds Pumps, Seneca Falls, New York, USA, notes that even mills within the same company often have slightly different safety compliance programs. “Our representatives want to comply, but various programs create confusion. For example, some of the

same alarms mean different things at various mills. Trying to remember what a particular alarm means in a particular mill can be difficult—especially under the pressure of a potentially dangerous situation.”

David Withers, president, Coldwater Group, Atlanta, Georgia, USA, says that in addition to being enormously repetitive and time-consuming, safety training standards are widely divergent and some are inappropriate for service personnel. “For example, we have salesmen who have had to attend eight-hour contractor training sessions just to walk by the paper machine. We estimated that some of our sales people spend nearly 40 hours in safety training each year, just in their territory. When that is multiplied across the paper industry, it represents a significant supply chain inefficiency.”

MULTIPLE TASKS

Suppliers typically have to complete multiple tasks to meet safety requirements—particularly when going to multiple sites. According to Masse, suppliers often must review a contractor safety manual and/or attend a safety orientation prior to entering the mill site. “Several mills have begun placing the burden on suppliers to complete mill-specific safety training online prior to arrival at the mill site,” he says. “There are both logistical and cost concerns with this approach.”

Peschell notes that his company’s representatives face different safety requirements depending on the nature of the mill visit. “We have people visiting the mill in a sales role and others doing physical work as contractors. The safety program for people doing physical work such as construction or maintenance is more detailed, including topics such as lock out/tag out, fire safety, and other topics.

According to Withers, mill safety requirements range from almost nothing at some mills to watching a video in the lobby once a year to attending an offsite eight-

ASPI EVOLVES TO MEET CHANGING NEEDS

The Association of Suppliers to the Paper Industry (ASPI), based in Norcross, Georgia, USA, is in the process of implementing a strategy to improve the relevance and value of ASPI. The organization has a long history of providing a forum for supplier executives to communicate on the evolving opportunities and challenges facing their common customers. However, recent industry changes have required similar changes in ASPI, the only forum available to companies supplying to the global pulp and paper industry.

ASPI was formed in the mid 1930s by a small group of supplier executives. For many years, the association’s members were primarily North American manufacturers of custom engineered pulp and paper process machinery. The association evolved through its original charter as the Pulp & Paper Machinery Manufacturing Association (PPMMA) to the American Paper Machinery Association (APMA). Leadership of the association evolved through the executive management of such companies as Beloit Corp., Black Clawson Co., Thermo Electron, IMPCO, Sprout Waldron, Bird Machinery, The Johnson Corp., and others.

In 2003, the name of the association was changed to the Association of Suppliers to the Paper Industry. This name change more accurately describes the changing nature of the industry and today’s supplier community. These changes and ASPI’s focus on providing a forum for its member companies to embrace and facilitate industry changes involve the following key facets:

- Suppliers and their customers are global enterprises.
- Suppliers must sell and provide economic benefits to their customers through supplies varying from a single niche specialized product up to a wide range of goods and/or services that can materially impact business unit competitiveness.
- Even the simplest “commodity” supply must ultimately provide differentiated value to its customers in order for its supplier to prosper.
- Supplier economic success must be preceded by customer economic success.
- Customer purchases will continue to be based on increasingly quantitative financial evaluations of alternatives.

Currently, ASPI recognizes that there are literally hundreds of various generic and industry-specific organizations that are seeking the involvement of its member and prospective member companies. This is the case at a time in which the industry is and will remain under serious financial and time pressure. As such, ASPI has had to distill the value and benefits that it brings to its member companies and especially to the senior executives who personally participate in the association. ASPI sponsors several association initiatives to include:

- Customer characterization surveys
- Benchmarking surveys
- Development of terms and conditions guidelines
- Development and implementation of mill field personnel safety training standards
- Periodic newsletters
- Membership meetings that present unique insight for personal and/or business development, improving revenue and/or controlling business risks

The ASPI 2006 Spring Meeting will be held March 15-17 at the Amelia Island Plantation, Amelia Island, Florida. For more information on ASPI and its meetings, phone +1 770-209-7521, email info@aspinet.org, or visit www.aspinet.org.



hour training class that includes providing urine samples for drug screening. “No one mill has a requirement that by itself would be viewed as unreasonable for that site,” he says. “The challenge comes from trying to meet so many different standards when so much of the information is repetitive. There is a clear need for some standardization.

INDUSTRYWIDE PROGRAMS

Certified industrywide programs or concepts could help reduce the cost of multiple site safety compliance while still maintaining standards acceptable to mills and suppliers. How would such programs be developed and maintained?

According to OASIS’s Masse, a small number of Southeastern U.S. mills owned by a large integrated paper supplier have begun standardizing by requiring service providers to pass the 10-hour OSHA General Industry Safety Course in lieu of a mill site safety orientation. “There are several vendors who provide this course online for a reasonable fee,” he states. “We think this is an excellent approach that controls costs yet provides effective training. We would propose that all U.S. mills adopt this standard.”

Ollech notes that a common themed safety program would cover 80–90% of the needs and reduce costs associated with these programs for both mills and suppliers. “This potential program probably would not cover everything,” he says. “For example, recovery boilers and bleach plants require special training. However, the basic paper mill training that everyone requires could be covered by a certified, industrywide program.”

Peschell of ITT Goulds agrees and notes that such a program would reduce the chance of errors caused by confusion over multiple programs and lead to better on-site safety. “There are examples where the industry is attempting to do this,” he says.

“For example, in Wisconsin the OSHA 10+ program was designed to help alleviate redundancy while ensuring the supplier/contractor has received instruction. The program was developed by safety professionals in the paper industry along with contractors. The training must be presented by any OSHA 500 certified trainer to qualify for an identification card. Refresher classes are required periodically.”

Peschell adds that some mills in Alberta, Canada, offer a “Pulp and Paper Safety Orientation” program. At any of the participating mills, suppliers can attend a four-hour training session developed by all participating paper companies. Once completed, this certification is recognized at all participating mills and requires only a short site-specific orientation at each location.

Withers states that suppliers and mills need to standardize most safety training and clarify training that is appropriate for different types of visitors. “This standardized training should come from a credible source, be it OSHA or TAPPI, and it needs to be endorsed by the relevant associations, including TAPPI, AF&PA, PIMA, and ASPI,” he says. “It could be done in modules and each site would select which modules apply to them. Once a person is trained and certified, they should be able to enter most U.S. mills for at least one year. Training in site-

specific information will still be needed, but this could be greatly simplified.

MUTUAL BENEFIT

The suppliers interviewed for this article agree that time spent in highly repetitive safety training could nearly be eliminated through industrywide safety training, thus saving an enormous number of man hours. Other benefits would include:

- The cost of producing videos or other training materials unique to each mill would be reduced, if not eliminated.
- Mills could use the same training for their own employees, supplemented with site-specific requirements.
- Mill insurance would be easier to administer with insurance companies accepting accredited safety programs that are extensive and standardized.
- Supply chain efficiency would be improved by lowering the time and cost of compliance, and improving training quality.

Concluded Withers, “Our competitors in China, Indonesia, and Brazil are not paying for this cost, and we have to look for every opportunity to reduce our cost of doing business as an industry, while maintaining our high safety standards.” **SI**