

UltraTech Cement: On a journey towards 'Zero'

Protecting and nurturing assets is a critical aspect of sustainability. At UltraTech, our people are our most valued assets and thus it is no surprise that their health and safety is on top of our priority list.

We care for the safety of our people; everyone who touches our brand -- employees, communities, customers or investors.

In 2009, UltraTech embarked on a journey with a clear intent of 'Zero Harm, Zero Excuses.' This strategic initiative, led right from the top, aimed to usher in a transformative difference in the way safety was perceived, practiced and promoted in the organization.

This approach has helped us drive safety as a core philosophy at UltraTech.

Adopting safety as a culture

Our Safety Belief has defined safety standards on how to demonstrate and propagate safety when dealing with our stakeholders including our customers, partners, employees, investors, government bodies, and communities. Expected individual behaviour of employees has been clearly listed for interactions both within the group and with external stakeholders. We are promoting our Safety Belief across the organization with senior leaders sharing their viewpoints on the four pillars of the Belief, with numerous activities and training programmes in the pipeline.

Our leadership is firm on driving the cause of safety. Through their active involvement in every aspect of safety, we were able to progress on our safety excellence journey. One of the most critical success factors has been bringing about line ownership. We

have implemented several safety initiatives which have resulted in marked improvement in our safety performance:

Engaging with stakeholders

Meaningful engagement is important to institutionalize meaningful change. An open and well-directed communication helps identify areas for improvement. The rich experience and operational insights of stakeholders across hierarchy bring forth precise, efficient and implementable ideas and initiatives. But most important of all, a two-way exchange with stakeholders ensures inclusiveness, enhances ownership to the cause, raises morale and transforms employees to powerful advocates.

One of the first things we did was to make safety a responsibility of the senior management and every single employee within the organization.

Safety Board at UltraTech was constituted, led by the Managing Director and involving the leadership team. The objective was to jumpstart the safety journey under expert guidance and to move towards our goal of zero harm.

OUR FOUR PRONGED APPROACH

- Adopting safety as a culture
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Inculcating safety excellence in people
- Embedding safety excellence in processes

OUR FOUR SAFETY PILLARS

- Safety is integral to the way we do business
- Safety is non-negotiable
- Safety is my responsibility
- A safe today is a sustainable tomorrow

The biggest challenge in any organization is the involvement of the ground level employee population. For safety, involvement leads to commitment, which in turn leads to ownership. This was ensured through eight strategic subcommittees formed under the leadership of Unit Heads and involving employees from all units.

Visible Safety Training is carried out for our line managers and front line engineers by leadership teams. 'Employee Actions to Improve Safety (EAIS) training is conducted by front line engineers and workers to raise risk perception as well as promote self and peer corrections amongst the workforce. Our Safety mascot, Zekk continues to share safety learning, tips and slogans across the organisation regularly.

At UltraTech, employees are always encouraged to report incidents, whether near-miss or injury without any inhibition. Incidents and accidents are investigated in order to get to all the root causes, and actions are taken to prevent the same from happening again. All these learnings are shared with across the organization, including employees and contract workforce.

Inculcating safety excellence in people

A competent and willing employee is a key to change. Training & capability building is driven as a separate stream and a team consisting of cross functional representation works at each Unit. This team is led by a senior leader (Functional Head).

Systematic identification of training needs, content preparation, and developing trainers is carried out. Subsequently training is imparted to the target audience.

All new employees joining the organization are put through an induction program before they are ready for work. For our non-manufacturing employee base, several activities are conducted through the year to spread the message of safety. Communication campaigns are conducted across various safety themes.

Embedding safety excellence in processes

At UltraTech, safety is by choice and not by chance. The first step was to have a policy in place, followed by standards and procedures developed by cross-functional teams from Units. These were vetted by the Safety Board Subcommittee – Standards and Procedures and approved by the Safety Board. All the standards and procedures were decided based on the risk evaluation in the plants.

These documents translated into work level instructions which could be easily understood by workers, including contract workforce.

More than 50 critical standards, procedures and guidelines have been developed, and training modules for each of them have been designed for all workers.

An audit process was set up to check implementation levels of these standards. One of the key standards is Incident Reporting and Investigation. This was established in the beginning

SAFETY INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED AT PLANTS

- Enhanced line ownership on safety
- Greater transparency in incident reporting and near-miss reporting
- Better formulation and implementation of process related safety standards
- Efficient capability in building in-line function and contracting partners
- Skill development among front level employees
- Active involvement of employees in terms of safety sharing

and intent was to capture all incidents, get them investigated thoroughly and take actions in order to prevent recurrence. Even the Near Miss reporting has been improving, thus indicating that safety culture has now set in.

Over the years, we have revalidated our SHE policy & guidelines, reestablished the safety systems and standards, and reinforced our focus on industry procedures and benchmarks. Our SHE policy ensures that the employees get a safe working environment. It also mandates us to not only identify, assess and manage safety issues but also monitor, review and report the actions taken.

We are a member of Cement Sustainability Initiative (CSI), part of World Business Council for Sustainable Development. We adhere to its good practice guidelines on various focus areas such as contractor safety management, driver safety, and

measuring and reporting on health and safety.

Our road ahead

We do believe we have still a long way to go on safety, and would certainly maintain our leadership focus, employee and contractors engagement at various levels. For sustained safety, we shall focus on following safety areas apart from our usual core practices:

- **Safety beyond the workplace**
With an increased focus on safety beyond the workplace, we created Off-the-Job Safety Subcommittee to reiterate organizational commitment on safety of our employees and their families beyond the workplace. Social and digital media platforms are being actively used to involve families of our employees in our safety umbrella.
- **Helping contractors own up to safety**
Through various processes we have been actively controlling contract activities from a safety perspective. We realize that it is important for contractors themselves to build internal capabilities, systems and processes in order to imbibe and sustain safety. We reckon this would be next thing across the industry, which would help get safe and quality work done.
With all these activities in line, we are now swiftly moving towards our goal of 'Zero harm, Zero excuses'. **ICR**

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