

QUT Digital Repository:  
<http://eprints.qut.edu.au/28307>



Fint, Miranda (2008) John Holland stamps safety passport. Inside OHS(59).

© Copyright 2008 Icon.Net Pty Ltd

## John Holland stamps safety passport

by *Miranda Flint*

The Certificate IV in Safety Leadership (OHS) is the first training of its kind to have been specifically tailored for the high-risk sector. It had its genesis in the John Holland Group's (JHG) in-house Passport to Safety Excellence Program (PSEP), which was developed after JHG recognised it needed to change its entrenched compliance culture.

"In 2003, when I joined JHG, the culture was about 'if you comply and you've got accreditation (AS4801) you must be doing well,'" JHG group safety manager Dean Cipolla told a Workplace Safety Summit in Melb. "Our stats supported this belief. To be honest, the construction industry is fantastic at having good stats and all we were doing was believing our own advertising."

Cipolla said when JHG started reporting "more robustly and more honestly with ourselves" it saw the situation wasn't as good as the stats showed. "Incidents occurred regularly because the accredited system either wasn't followed, wasn't implemented effectively or didn't address the activity that led to the incident," he said. "That was a huge issue."

### 'One conversation at a time'

JHG recognised changing its safety culture was "not just following a paperwork trail that takes you in circles". "For us to get ownership at all levels of the workforce required knowledge and understanding," Cipolla said. "If you have knowledge then you have more chance of owning it

and ownership drives behaviour and behaviour drives culture. It's changing the culture one conversation at a time."

Cipolla said workers could tell when managers weren't "fair dinkum, when it's just rhetoric, when you're actions don't back up what you're saying. I could smell it a mile off when I was on the tools".

### 'Simplified' SMS

Simplifying the safety management system (SMS) was a first step in the safety culture overhaul. "We had a robust, third-party accredited SMS," Cipolla said. "To be honest, I could start a company and get a system accredited in two weeks' time. Would it mean the company was safe? No." Cipolla spent six months talking to workers and supervisors. "The one thing they were screaming out for was guidance on what they needed to do and the training and support they needed to do it. We ripped our manual up and started from scratch."

JHG's SMS is now based on a matrix of "what has to be done, who has to do it, when it needs to be done and where to get more information if you need it". "A lot of companies buy systems off the shelf, but if they're not owned and driven from the top, they're not sustainable," Cipolla said.

### Safety critical roles identified

The first step was identifying all the safety critical positions across JHG. To be considered safety critical the position had to have a direct or indirect impact on safety.

## Board attends training 'like everyone else'

by **Miranda Flint**

"A tenderer has a direct and indirect impact on safety in the way they include information about price and safety in their bid," Cipolla said. "A simple example is whether or not they allowed for cherry pickers and scaffolding."

JHG identified 14 safety critical roles, from leading hand to the MD and board.

"When I first did the list I left off the board and we set up a board safety ctee to help drive it," Cipolla said. "They politely kicked my backside and said 'if the rest of the business has to do it and we don't what sort of message does that send?' So they asked me to put them on the list. Now they're attending the program like everyone else."

### Safety critical activities

The next step was identifying the OHS activities to be done by each safety critical position.

"When we changed our manual we consolidated our matrix into the main management activities and tasks that influenced and delivered good safety," Cipolla said. "We summarised them into 39 activities. They're not rocket science. They're the things every company does every day. But do we do them well and effectively? Do we involve and consult the workforce effectively? Hand on heart, we'd probably say not consistently yet."

The tasks included project risk assessments, identifying and resolving hazards, developing project safety management plans, planning and delivering toolbox talks and informal workplace inspections.

JHG then developed the skill and behavioural competencies needed for the OHS activities.

### Multi-million dollar investment

"Once we did all that we put it together in a 16-module training package called the Passport to Safety Excellence Program," Cipolla said. "It is now accredited nationally as the Certificate IV in Safety Leadership (OHS). We spent \$3m producing the program and we've now given the Cert IV away to industry. We've taken our logo off it and made it available via the national training register." But JHG hasn't given the Cert IV to the open market "because we don't want the integrity of it damaged and the market to change it", Cipolla said. "No disrespect to TAFEs, but if it ends up in that market it will become just another training package. So we've kept the licence, but we don't charge for it. Organisations have to prove they will maintain the integrity of the program before we license them."

### Accreditation 'based on activities'

The Cert IV means for the first time people in safety critical roles are being recognised for their learning. "A lot of people out there have got years of experience, but have never been recognised for their skill and learning from a safety point of view," Cipolla said. "Accreditation and assessment are based on activities, not just on what they do in the classroom." (Cont'd on p8)

## 2,000 workers undergoing Cert IV training

by Miranda Flint

(Cont'd from p7) The foundation module of the Cert IV is a three-day program, which is a pre-requisite to continuing with the Cert IV. "It's based on providing supervisors and those in safety critical roles with the skills, tools and knowledge they need to communicate safety leadership, keep people involved and really be confident in front of people."

For those in safety roles, the Cert IV involves 16 days' training. For other roles there's an average of 11 contact days per position.

"We've got about 2,000 people going through it progressively. So it's a huge investment," Cipolla said.

### Competency framework for whole of industry

After JHG developed the competency framework suited to its business, the Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) approached them and suggested it be done for the broader industry.

"When the CRC approached us we had already developed the framework and the Cert IV was in its early stages," Cipolla told *Inside OHS*. "We developed a competency matrix similar to the PSEP, but for the whole of the construction industry." The research team included JHG, Bovis Lend Lease, the Fed Safety Cnr, QUT and the University of Western Syd. "We went to anyone who wanted be part of the program. So there were no barriers and we tried to make it a true industry initiative," Cipolla said. "We interviewed people from all the construction unions and

numerous organisations. We ran focus groups and surveys to gather an industry matrix that listed all the safety critical positions industry thought were safety critical, management tasks industry thought were critical to deliver safety effectively. They came up with 39." In 2006, the CRC launched the Construction Safety Competency Framework: improving OHS performance by creating and maintaining a safety culture. It provides a guide for companies to develop their own framework.

### Measuring effectiveness

The next project undertaken by the CRC and lead by Cipolla involved measuring the effectiveness of each of the 39 activities. "We're starting with 13 and are halfway through," Cipolla said. "We ran the initial pilot across a few businesses last month and are ramping up field trials by the end of this month. We're going to launch a full field trial in the next two weeks and it will run for the next three months. Hopefully, what we'll have is a framework the industry can use to train and skill people in a consistent way and tools that can be used to measure if it is working and what effect it's having."

### 'Long way to go'

Cipolla said the construction industry "hadn't got it right yet". "Compliance to legislation will not prevent injuries," he said. "It's just a licence to operate that allows you to get on the field. Until companies like ours believe in that and not just parrot it we're going to keep on hurting and killing people. There's a long way to go in our industry."

Inside OHS Editor: Miranda Flint. Managing Editor: Peter Schwab.

Inside OHS is published bi-monthly by Thomson Reuters (Professional) Australia Limited as part of your Occupational Health News subscription. Editorial Enquiries: PO Box 6000, Kew Vic 3101 phone 03 9205 0681 fax 03 9853 0478 Subscription Enquiries: phone 1300 304 197 fax 1300 304 198 email

LTA.Service@thomsonreuters.com website www.thomsonreuters.com.au

©Thomson Reuters (Professional) Australia Limited (ABN 64 058 914 668)

ISSN 1441-8886 Printed by On Demand Pty Ltd, Southbank Melbourne Vic. Product Code: 5042059

Copyright. Reproduction prohibited. Private and confidential information for subscribers only.