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KHS has a holistic approach to Duty of Care

How SMEs can build Duty of Care into their policies and procedures

KHS GmbH, the winner of the International SOS Foundation's 2017 Duty of Care Award in the category German Mittelstand Duty of Care Programme, created a comprehensive programme for all employees who work and travel abroad.

KHS, a packaging and filling company based in Dortmund, Germany, employs nearly 5,000 people. The business has five facilities in Germany and production facilities in the US, Mexico, Brazil, India and China.

KHS works to provide its mobile workforce with a safe and secure environment at their project sites. Duty of Care starts at a project's bidding phase. KHS assesses the security of project transport and housing. It also conducts a comprehensive site safety audit. The company facilitates an holistic approach to Duty of Care including crisis management and business continuity. KHS provides employees with stress management, personal resilience and wellness programmes. Lastly, travellers receive health and life insurance, as well as medical and security assistance.

As leading manufacturers of innovative filling and packaging systems, KHS serves many different customers in the beverage, food and non-food industries worldwide. This involves employees travelling to different destinations to visit potential and existing clients.

KHS falls within the category of 'mid-sized' organisations, known in Germany as Mittelstand. It has

shown how such organisations are able to promote and implement a Duty of Care agenda, providing advice and assistance to employees during work and travel abroad.

Promoting Safety and Security

Heiko Stötzel, HSSE Manager, KHS GmbH, confirms the company's commitment:

"Duty of Care is essential to the KHS group. Our vision is to provide our mobile workforce with a comfortable, safe and secure environment. We implement safety and security from the earliest stage of a project right through to service completion. We also want to share our experience with others to support safety and security standards."

Duty of Care for KHS starts at the bidding phase of a project. Dedicated personnel scrutinize every project to identify any risks, especially regarding travel and security. It has established a partnership with an external medical and security assistance provider to receive risk assessments for all project destinations.

Identifying Risks

A checklist of safety and security related issues is drawn up for every project and handed over to the selling team for assessment.

This might cover security audits, secure transportation, secure housing etc. The team prepares proposals, including costings, to address each issue.

Once the contract is signed, HSSE personnel take action on each issue, working closely with their customer counterparts.

In high and extreme risk countries, prior to the arrival of KHS personnel on-site, a security audit is conducted by an external party. The results are discussed with the client who takes whatever action is agreed to mitigate risks. No KHS personnel will travel to the project destination until all these outstanding actions are completed.

Training and Preparation

Before they travel, KHS personnel receive a short induction about the project and the place they are going to. Additionally, they are given a travel guidance booklet. This sets out the 24/7 services available from their external medical and security assistance provider, contact numbers and many useful health and safety tips. Emergency contact details are provided on a small card for travellers to carry with them.

KHS Site Managers and Project Managers receive safety and security training to keep them



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Above KHS develops filling systems for the food and beverage industry

updated on the latest tools and procedures. They are specifically trained in the use of the security audit checklists and the pre-site safety checklist. If conditions deteriorate during a project they are able to carry out their own inspections. Any concerns are reported back to KHS HSSE personnel as well as the client.

A crisis management plan is in place in KHS. This ensures at least one contact partner is reachable 24/7. An external assistance company is linked into these crisis management procedures to handle all medical and security issues.

Continuous Improvement

A number of activities are in place to maintain safety and security standards:

- KHS has implemented a standard HSE Manual and a standard Security Manual. These lay down safety and security corporate standards, both for KHS personnel and its clients, and apply to all projects.
- The HSSE Team is in continuous contact with production centres to improve safe-handling of machines during installation and commissioning.
- For service technicians who start work after the initial project is finished, KHS provides online HSSE training. This meets the legal requirement for annual safety inductions.
- The KHS in-house academy delivers voluntary training on stress-management, resilience and strategies to promote wellbeing. Other resources include access to online Q&As about HSSE, and more.
- Engaging employees on risk awareness is a particular priority. KHS is addressing this through ongoing conversations, conferences

and during meetings. All these tools and procedures are frequently updated. KHS is committed to continuous improvement in taking care of employees working abroad. To stay up to date and share experiences, the company attends conferences and events. KHS is a member of the VDMA (Verband Deutscher Maschinen-und Anlagenbau, Mechanical Engineering Industry Association) which has further industry initiatives to promote safety and security at work.

Heiko Stötzel sums up:

"Since this new HSSE system was introduced in 2014 there has been a clear increase in employee feedback and questions about safety. Many workers, especially younger ones, are engaging positively in this area. The tools and procedures we have put in place have been shown to be effective. KHS will try to continuously improve these mechanisms to deliver the best possible Duty of Care to its employees."

KEY ELEMENTS

All activities are guided by a clear set of principles.

Line management responsibility is laid out at all levels, aided by security specialists and the CMT

Detailed documents and checklists offer guidance for a range of scenarios

In-depth training is given prior to missions, and debriefings on return

Special procedures apply to security and medical emergencies

For information on the 2017 Duty of Care Awards winners in all categories, go to www.dutyofcareawards.org.