



# Keeping it simple boosts on-site reporting

“My health and safety philosophy is to keep it as simple as possible,” says Marianne Archer, Director with responsibility for health and safety for civil contracting firm Goodmans.

This approach is paying off for the family-owned and operated earthmoving business, with innovative ways to get workers’ participation, providing significant business and personnel benefits.

These include the introduction of increased safety measures suggested by staff, much more visible reporting from construction sites, reduced repair costs and the ability to provide clear evidence of rigorous risk management processes to prospective clients.

Goodmans employs 170 people, as well as sub-contractors and agency workers. Their administration and machine maintenance teams are based in Waikanae, while others work across a variety of construction sites throughout the Lower North Island.

The company, which has grown rapidly to meet demand from major road-building projects, reviewed

its health and safety practices two years ago and found it needed more visible site reporting.

**“People don’t have to include their name, you just jot down a short note.”**

“We had forms for people to report incidents, hazards or opportunities for improvement (OFI) but people found them off-putting. It was a barrier to getting information.

“So we replaced them with simple OFI green cards which workers keep in their pockets. People don’t

have to include their name, you just jot down a short note. If you don’t read or write well you can ask your supervisor to help.

“It’s increased reporting from the field dramatically – last month we had 11 OFIs. Some suggestions don’t come to fruition but we consider all of them and, where there’s a name, we contact that person to discuss the issue and the outcome. I run an audit of OFIs every month and none are closed off until we have done all of that. One of our major clients has



adopted our green card system for all their onsite reporting too.”

Goodmans encourages workers to nominate someone who has gone that extra mile for a monthly GOOD Buggers award.

“We average 10 nominations a month and the winner gets a prize and a GOOD Bugger shirt – people take a lot of pride in that.

“Nominations are often H&S related. One guy noticed a truck’s tow bar wasn’t rated for the appropriate load. Another did an additional check on his dumper and found an unusual fault that hadn’t been picked up in routine checks. This averted both a potential accident and a much bigger repair bill.

“Another noticed a crack in the ‘haul road’ roading system for dumpers on site. He notified the supervisor and they worked a single lane procedure to get everyone off site safely.”

Goodmans has acted on a number of green card suggestions for permanent change.

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“Someone in the maintenance workshop pointed out that overalls weren’t sufficient protection when grinding with a wire brush, and suggested leather aprons. We’re now trialling these and will consult workers on whether to introduce them permanently.”

Another suggestion resulted in laminated printouts outlining the controls for each particular model of dump truck.

“We have a lot of different types of dumpers. Operators are trained but if they haven’t driven that type of dumper before, they can familiarise themselves with the controls very swiftly.”

A number of other initiatives are also underway. Marianne says that ‘keeping it simple’ means the new system has not been onerous to introduce or operate, and has many benefits.

“We are an open door family company but we have grown fast and people might have thought the directors were not as available any more. Now everyone knows that the directors see their suggestions. It’s opened up a channel of communication that might not have been there before.

## **WORKER ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION**

The best outcomes are achieved when a business and its workers work together on health and safety. Worker Engagement and Participation is about having planned ways for:

- > workers to give input on issues which will (or are likely to) affect their health or safety. This includes asking for and taking into account their views and
- > workers to improve work health and safety on an ongoing basis (eg by raising concerns or suggesting improvements).

This will help you and your business to make better decisions – and keep your people and productivity thriving.

## **KEY POINTS**

Worker participation means:

- > increased incident reporting
- > innovative ideas for H&S improvements
- > rigorous, yet simple, risk management processes
- > lower repair bills as issues are spotted early.

**For more examples and information visit [worksafe.govt.nz](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz)**

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