



SAFETY STAR RATING PILOT CASE STUDY

Sanitarium

Sanitarium™
health  wellbeing

The Safety Star Rating (SSR) is proposed to be an injury prevention initiative to help lift the performance of workplace health and safety in New Zealand. Between November 2015 and June 2016, the SSR pilot checked how well businesses performed against 15 best practice health and safety standards and provided businesses with guidance and advice on how to improve.

SANITARIUM HEALTH AND WELLBEING COMPANY

Sanitarium is a leader in producing foods of the highest nutritional value and appeal. With factories in a number of locations across New Zealand and Australia, Sanitarium manufactures breakfast cereal foods, soymilks, spreads and healthy vegetarian foods.

Sanitarium signed up to the SSR Pilot with the aim of assessing its health and safety performance in relation to the management of three risks: dust, fire and manual handling. There was also a strong desire to check whether their approach to employee participation and engagement in health and safety could be improved.

The SSR assessors visited Sanitarium's New Zealand Regional Office and factory in Auckland.

Interviews were conducted across the organisation to get the views of the New Zealand Manufacturing Director, Site Managers, engineers, permanent and temporary production workers and contractors on how the business is performing in relation to the fifteen different SSR standards.

One of the key differences between SSR and other health and safety management schemes is that SSR focuses on workplace behaviours and practices.

“We wanted to know what our staff really think at the different levels of the business to see if there were any gaps in perceptions and actions. The staff really liked the idea of someone who is a third party to the business coming in and talking to them about what they think..It's a process that

does drive improvements internally, rather than top heavy management driven improvement initiatives,” says Sanitarium's Karen Daniels.

“We wanted a third party with a fresh set of eyes to come in and tell us whether our approach to employee participation and engagement in health and safety is working well at different levels of the business and to give us some ideas on how we can improve.”

Karen Daniels - Health and Safety Wellness Manager, Sanitarium

AREAS OF STRENGTH IDENTIFIED BY SSR

The SSR onsite assessment highlighted that one of Sanitarium's particular strengths is its **senior leaders' commitment to health and safety**. This is reflected in the high visibility of the New Zealand Manufacturing Manager who is regularly seen in the factory asking workers for their ideas regarding safety, actively encouraging workers to report any concerns and to stop unsafe work when it is observed.

"She is very supportive of health and safety and will talk a lot about it at all of the different communication forums that we have. She leads by example as well. You'll see her walk through the factory every day and she has her "health and safety hat" on, as well as her "production hat" and "food safety hat". She leads from the front as well as the back," says Karen Daniels.

The SSR assessment process also identified that Sanitarium was performing well in relation to **reintegrating employees when they return to work after an injury**.

"We are very, very particular about making sure that staff return to work safely and gradually. We know that you lose your fitness after a few weeks off work, so we don't just throw them back into their role. We are always supporting our staff to make sure they return to their pre-injury duties safely. We want to gradually build them up to their pre-injury duties and conditioning," explains Karen Daniels.

DRIVING IMPROVEMENTS IN HEALTH AND SAFETY

The SSR process provides businesses with advice on where improvements

can be made and guidance on how to implement them.

"When we received the report, I communicated the results to the whole site and made it available for everyone to read. We then put all the recommendations into a spreadsheet and prioritised where we need to improve from lowest to highest, based on severity of risk. Obviously, we can't do everything at once. So the ones that are the highest priority, we've put them at the top and those are the ones that we are targeting at the moment," says Karen Daniels.

One of the SSR Pilot recommendations was to better manage the risks associated with the use of compressed air during manufacturing shifts.

"The compressed air project is the first project where we've engaged the health and safety reps from all three shifts. What we've found is it's just amazing the insight they are able to share. There are some things that one shift is doing, but that the other shifts aren't doing. The information sharing is really important for the managers to understand why people behave the way they do, why they are using compressed air," says Karen Daniels adding that they are looking at root cause analysis of why people are using compressed air.

"This is completely new to a lot of our factory staff. They don't necessarily understand the whole root cause analysis / fishbone process, but we're pointing them in the right direction where they need to look at the root causes as to why there is so much dust, and where the dust leakage points are. So we're doing things with a broader cross-functional team a lot more now than we used to. It really gets people thinking."

BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN THE SSR PILOT

One of the key outcomes of Sanitarium's participation in the SSR pilot was the impact on worker engagement and increasing worker participation in driving improvements across the organisation.

"So we're engaging with our health and safety reps a lot more, so that they are actually contributing to as many health and safety related activities and opportunities as possible," says Karen Daniels.

"Staff are feeling a lot more empowered. They are feeling like their views and input are being respected, because they are the experts in their area. The SSR process allows people's voices to be heard. It gives them that confidence that they are being listened to and that they are being taken seriously."

Karen Daniels - Health and Safety Wellness Manager, Sanitarium

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.worksafe.govt.nz/worksafe/about/what-we-do/the-safety-star-rating-scheme

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