

# CONTRACTOR SAFETY ON CONSTRUCTION SITES: CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

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Dr. sc. ETH Mark Fülleemann

# Construction sites are more dangerous than plant sites

The difference lays in the two strategic challenges of construction sites:

- **Unclear roles:** The organizational structure is composed of a client, main contractors and many levels of subcontractors – roles and responsibilities for safety are not clearly assigned.
- **Change:** Every day a construction site is a different site

# Who is responsible for the safety of contractor employees?

Client companies should be involved keeping employees of contractors from harm. There are four main reasons:

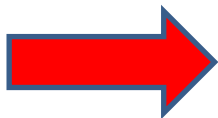
- One business view
- Territorial view
- Growing legal risk
- Reputation

# Contractor Safety Mission Statement of the «Cement Sustainability Initiative»

“CSI member companies are committed to giving contractor safety equal priority as employee safety. *While our contractors are always responsible for their own safety*, we now commit to setting an example for their safety management through our own activities and contract management. We believe that this can be achieved by implementing this Good Practice, which has proven effective in reducing contractor incidents within our and other industries. In turn we require our contractors to achieve good safety performance in carrying out their contracts. “

# A construction site is a new site every day

- Changing the physical form
- Changing accesses
- Different activities
- Different personnel
- Different suppliers
- Different climate
- etc



The hazard map changes every day

# Response to the strategic challenges

- Unclear roles:



The client must accept safety leadership

- Change:

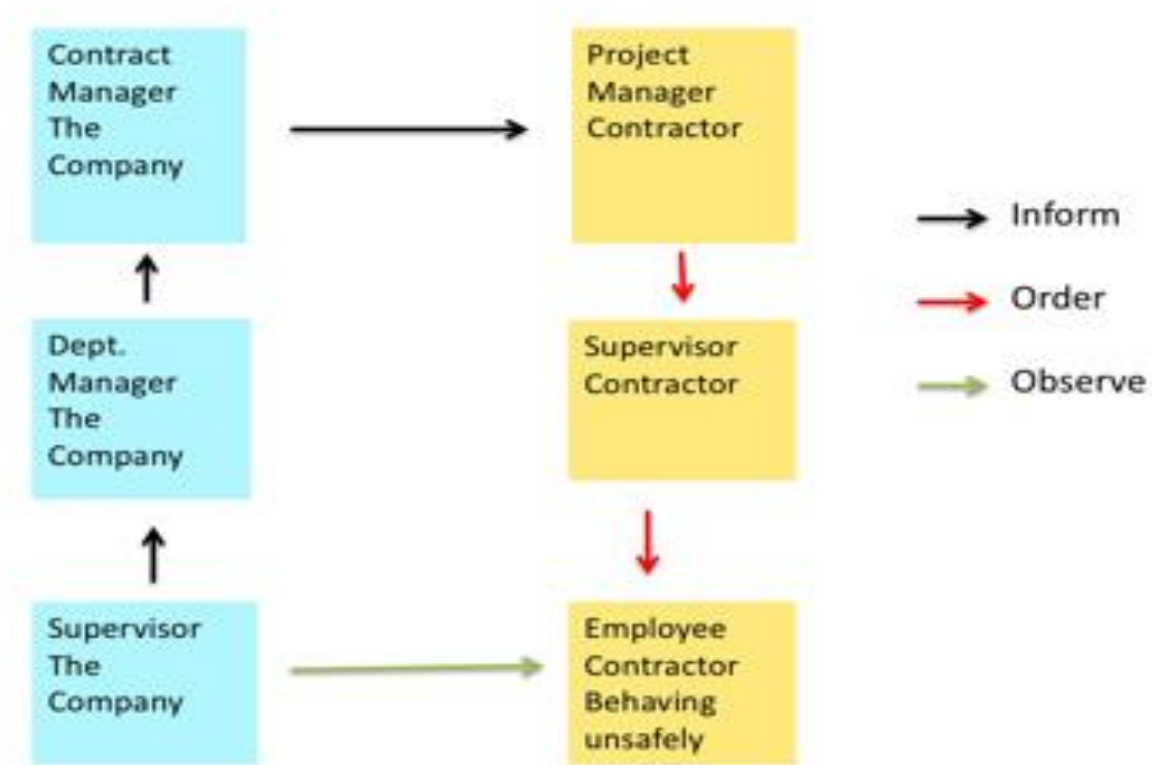


Plan monthly, weekly, daily

# Working with contractors pose seven «operational» challenges

- The contractor is a different entity
- Different activities
- Overlapping processes
- The language issue
- Changing personnel
- Cost issues
- Purpose

# The contractor is a different company (I)





# The contractor is a different company (II)

This process is neither effective nor efficient for two reasons:

- it takes too much time: until the employee who had shown an unsafe behavior receives an order (or at least a feedback) he most probably does not remember the situation
- the content of the information is apt to change when going through that many intermediaries.

# Responding to «the contractor is a different company»

**Partnering:** From the beginning the Client Safety Officer should be “married” to the safety responsible of each contractor. Safety Inspections and especially Safety Observation Tours should always be done in pairs, allowing the Client Safety Officer to get agreement from his colleague from the contractor side whereupon this one then issued the order or engaged in a constructive feedback session with the contractor worker.

# Different activities

Contractors mostly perform activities, which their clients do not do themselves: the client company would not have specific experience with that activity and as a consequence would not have developed an insight into the common hazards inherent to this activity. Developing an insight leads to developing a kind of 6<sup>th</sup> sense for those hazards.

# Responding to «Different activities»

**Partnering:** Do the daily review of the risk map jointly.

# Overlapping processes

Overlapping processes can have two root causes:

- If the project is an expansion project of an existing plant, then the processes of the contractor are executed while the existing production processes keep working.
- Within the project itself there are frequently different contractors at work with again overlapping processes.

# Responding to «overlapping processes»

## Plan ahead

Prepare the detailed planning always a few weeks ahead of execution which allows recognizing potential hazards from overlap. Such hazards must then be discussed at the joint weekly Safety Meeting.

# The language issue

Speaking and understanding the same technical language is essential for communication. This can be a substantial problem in three different ways:

- Different languages
- Different interpretations
- Different background

# Responding to “the language issue”

## Train, test and start the day with a Safety Event

- Every worker has to undergo safety training, ending with a test, before issued an entry pass.
- Run a daily Safety Event before starting any work and make it mandatory for everybody working on site that day



# Cost issues

Medium and large sized projects have to go through a competitive bidding process. Contractors could “save” money by applying lower safety standards.

# Responding to «cost issues»

## Request safety as an explicit part of an offer

- Specify the safety requirements in a request for proposal
- Request a detailed section explaining the safety procedures proposed by the contractor including a separate listing of the cost for safety

# Changing personnel

- Personnel changes are a basic challenge for occupational safety because new people do not yet have a subconscious sense for the hazards in their new activity.
- It is even more so when contractors change personnel because these changes tend to happen more frequently, one of the reasons being that contractors usually handle several projects in parallel and need to balance labor requirements.

# Responding to «changing personnel»

## Train and track

- The client company must set up effective induction and training facilities
- The client company must set up a tracking system of all personnel on a project site.

# Purpose

In a project carried out by contractors,

- the management of the customer company focuses on the upcoming operation, asking how production and logistics will function in a safe way once the operations started. Their focus is on the future and on their personnel, part of which will have to be hired.
- the management of the contractor focuses on finishing the project and handing it over. This can create lack of management attention in the final phases of a project.

# Responding to «purpose»

Explicit handover procedures

Plan and execute the handover jointly

# Summary: 3Ps to keep a construction site a safe site

- Partner
- Plan
- Prepare