

SAFETY AND HEALTH CO-ORDINATION ACTIVITY IMPROVED BY GOOD PRACTICES RELATED TO SIGNIFICANT PROJECTS.

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1. PROBLEM DEFINITION

The safety and health co-ordination activity, introduced by the European Directive 92/57, both in design and in execution phase, has as a principal goal the achieving of satisfactory safety performance during the work activities in all the European construction sites.

The safety co-ordinator during the design phase should promote the principles of safe design and he should help the designer in the risk assessment related to the specific project.

During the construction activity, the safety co-ordinator has to co-ordinate and to manage all the contractors and sub-contractors in order to guarantee that the safety plans are really observed during the works.

Unfortunately in most of cases, especially in small construction sites, the safety plan is only a formal document, and it is very difficult for the safety co-ordinator to require to the contractors and to the self-employed workers the compliance with this document.

This situation is common in all the EU countries especially related to small works.

1. 1 Safety and Health perception

We believe that the good practices, related to safety co-ordination activity and management, could help all the subjects involved in the construction, particularly the small private clients and the SMEs, to learn what they have to do, both in term of technical procedures, and in how they could work to achieve safety goals. The good practices make a simple way to adapt standard tools to a specific project.

Dealing with small projects the architect and/or the engineer has to explain to the small private client his duties in field of safety and health; this will be very easy and usefully when good practices' examples are available.

OSHA, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, has gathered a big range of good practices' examples available on its web-site which is possible to download. It is necessary as well that all the subjects involved are aware of their duties, but also of their rights, in order to allow the safety co-ordinator during the execution stage to manage the contractors involved in the site and to have a useful relationship with the client.

The Italian construction sector is characterized by hundred thousand of SMEs which, in most of cases, are not aware of the safety culture. They feel the safety only like a heavy obligation; they don't invest any human and money resource in this field because they are not able to see the coming vantages for themselves and because often the client is not asking for this. The safety is reduced in filling standard safety and health plans to comply with the legislation.

In addition in Italy we have only few construction companies which have the safety management system, as this certification is not compulsory; for this reason the safety management system culture is almost unknown.

1. 2 Importance of the good practices

The specific good practices could help the professionals and the contractors to learn, to train and to work in compliance with safety obligation and in order to achieve real safety goals. This is very important because the general safety culture's level in the construction sector is still poor. The training and the information have to be considered as an essential part of the cycle, from the project to the final operation. But the training is working if the message is simple, clear and interesting.

In the University I (Francesca Ravetta) used to work as a professional trainer regarding European Directive 92/57 and, after almost ten years, I use to show during my lessons study-cases, examples of good practices, procurement documents, inspections' site reports and all of kind of document I have.

I noticed that the professionals become very interested and they ask a lot of questions regarding not only the study-cases, but also referred to their professional activity. Sometimes they ask how they can manage a specific relationship with the client or with the contractor.

In the Italian sector the professionals can play a vital role in field of safety in construction as they are the natural link between the legal requirement and the working sector.

2. AN EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE

We would like to present a specific case-study (selected considering the impact of the project on the community, the role of the client, the speciality of the contractors, etc.) which could become an example of best practices for the construction sector. In particular we'll focus on the execution stage as this is the critical phase of the process.

2. 1 The Safety and Health management in the construction site

Characteristics:

- huge construction site made by several different sites, located in different parts of a city located in north of Italy
- the working activities are specific
- the contractors are specialized in different kind or works and they come from all the country
- the site is subjected to particular controls from the competent authorities

Site visits:

- they are made day by day, or twice a day if it necessary
- the employees, working in the site, are subjected to controls, to prevent the illegal work as well
- the procedures of the Safety Plans are tested and controlled in the site during the working activities

Health and Safety site meetings:

- weekly (planning)
- every two weeks (problem solving)
- every two or three months (different authorities)

Specific procedures:

- they are set up regarding specific high risk working activities
- they constitute operative guide-lines for the workers
- they allow to systematise the workings activities
- they reduce the overlapping risk during the workings activities

Safety co-ordination activity meetings:

- focused on technical aspect: to plan the specific working activities
- focused on behavioural aspect: to discuss about the problems and difficulties raised during the working activities

3. CONCLUSION:

Related to safety and health management, the aim of paper consist in showing how is important for an organisation, a professional, a contractor and worker to improve considering the experience made by other people who had to resolve similar problems. The philosophy of continuous improving, typical of the quality assurance, adapts itself properly to safety as well.