



Building a Safety-Conscious Culture: Grohe's Journey with SafeStart in Hemer

GROHE is a leading global brand for complete bathroom solutions and kitchen fittings. Since 2014 GROHE has been part of the strong brand portfolio of LIXIL, a manufacturer of pioneering water and housing products. Drawing on its Japanese heritage, LIXIL creates world-leading.

technology and innovates to make high quality products that transform homes. It is doing so through meaningful design, an entrepreneurial spirit, a dedication to improving accessibility for all, and responsible business growth. LIXIL's approach comes to life through industry leading brands, including GROHE, INAX, American Standard and Tostem. Approximately 53,000 colleagues operate in more than 150 countries.

Overview

Despite the company's strong commitment to workplace safety and for implementing advanced technical and organisational safety measures, it faced persistent challenges in reducing workplace incidents at its Hemer manufacturing site, revealing a need for deeper engagement with the human factors influencing safety.

Like many industrial settings, the site experienced limited improvement in workplace accidents despite robust safety protocols. Human error, limited risk perception, and a lack of situational awareness were significant contributors. To address these challenges, site management turned to SafeStart, a proactive, human-centred safety process that focuses on cultivating safer behaviours. By helping employees recognise and manage states such as rushing, frustration, fatigue, and complacency, SafeStart empowers individuals to reduce critical errors and drive sustainable improvements in safety culture.

Implementing SafeStart: A Step-by-Step Process

The local implementation of SafeStart in Hemer began with careful planning and the establishment of a steering committee to guide the rollout. Key steps included:

1. Training Management and Frontline Employees
o Initial training sessions introduced SafeStart's principles to management and frontline teams, ensuring organisation-wide understanding and buy-in.
2. Integration into Daily Operations
o SafeStart principles were embedded into daily topics, both thematically and graphically.
3. Workshops and Reinforcement Activities
o Dedicated workshops for shift leaders and the use of RYS-Conversations (Rate Your State) ensured ongoing reinforcement of SafeStart concepts.

This structured approach helped create a sustainable framework for embedding SafeStart principles into organisational culture.

Outcomes: Measurable Improvements and Milestones

The impact of SafeStart became evident over time. Among the key achievements:

- **Record-Breaking Safety Metrics:** After three years of implementation, Hemer recorded the lowest number of accidents in the plant's history.
- **Reduced Incidents and Injuries:** Significant decreases in work-related incidents, near-misses, and injuries were observed.

However, the company has identified opportunities for further improvement, particularly in employees' risk assessment skills, especially during conscious decision-making.



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Impact on Safety Culture and Behaviour

SafeStart fundamentally transformed the plant's safety culture. Key highlights include:

- **Widespread Adoption** Employees now apply SafeStart concepts in both their personal and professional lives.

- **Enhanced Focus on Safety** Safety became a top priority, bolstered by additional safety campaigns, contests, and competitions based on SafeStart principles.

These initiatives heightened awareness and engagement, fostering a culture where safety is everyone's responsibility.

Lessons Learned and the Road Ahead

Grohe's journey with SafeStart underscores several valuable lessons for organisations considering the programme:

- **Leadership Commitment: is Crucial:** Active involvement and reinforcement from all organisational levels are essential for success.
- **Integration Drives Sustainability:** Embedding SafeStart into daily processes and engaging employees in ongoing dialogue ensures lasting impact.

Looking ahead, the manufacturing site in Hemer plans to integrate SafeStart as a permanent component of its safety culture. Upcoming initiatives will focus on risk perception and decision-making, further enhancing their journey toward a safer workplace.

“SafeStart is not magic. It helps, guides, and nurtures an organisation to build a safety conscience across all levels,”

- Markus Ebner-Maibaum
Leader Plant Hemer

Grohe's experience demonstrates the transformative potential of SafeStart in addressing human factors, improving safety outcomes, and creating a culture of continuous improvement.