

KENT BLAXILL & CO ACHIEVE REDUCTION IN ACCIDENTS WITH SOUTHALLS SUPPORT

Builders' merchant Kent Blaxill is a family owned business with a total of 13 branches right across East Anglia. Established in 1838 it had gained an excellent reputation over the years for quality and service as a leading independent decorating supplier and builders' merchant chain.

In January 2016 the company was fined a significant sum for failing to ensure adequate separation of vehicles and pedestrians at its Colchester branch.

Southalls Engagement

The incident became a major turning point for the company. It approached specialist health and safety consultancy, Southalls, in 2016 to lend its expertise.

Southalls conducted an initial audit of all branches, followed by 6 monthly audits, developed workable risk assessments and H&S policy, implemented Safety Cloud health and safety management software, studied accident statistics, undertook topic based inspections, analysed working methods and made recommendations for company-wide improvements.

Bury St Edmunds Branch

At the chain's Bury St Edmund's branch for example, there had been insufficient segregation of visiting lorries, trade customer vans, and forklift trucks from pedestrians. Customers or staff could have potentially walked out of the warehouse into the path of a moving forklift truck or a reversing lorry.

Visiting lorries or trade vans, many of which were unfamiliar with the site, would reverse into the busy yard

for loading and unloading in close proximity to pedestrians. They also did not have a trained banksman to guide a reversing vehicle into the yard and there were no clear site rules for visiting drivers to follow.

Risk Management

The branch required a full risk assessment and a comprehensive re-design of its yard, which included the following:

- Designated pedestrian walkways and crossings were painted, along with clearly defined painted parking, loading and unloading areas away from customers.
- A one way system was implemented so reversing was significantly reduced. Large lorries can still reverse into the yard but only under the guidance of a trained banksman.
- Clear speed limit signage was introduced.
- Signage warning pedestrians of vehicle movements and site rules were displayed.
- Vegetation around the main entrance to the yard was cut back to improve visibility of the access route.
- Staff wearing high visibility vests in the yard became standard practice.

Alan Ladyman, Company Transport and H&S Manager, Kent Blaxill said:

"We conducted a thorough review and immediately re-designed our yard. Southalls have been a pillar of support with their advice helping me to implement changes through their reporting and input into the layout of the workplace transport."



All Kent Blaxill staff completed a 'Banksman and Workplace Transport' training programme via Southalls Safety Cloud system. Safety Cloud is a simple web-based health and safety management system used to help manage health and safety, including storing driver training records, vehicle maintenance information and links up with the DVLA for periodic licence checks. Automatic e-mail reminders are sent to managers and its head office when any training or maintenance checks are due.

A new experienced manager was also brought in to manage and ensure implementation of new site safety rules. He used Safety Cloud to conduct monthly managers' audits to 'spot check' that the yard safety remained in order. Southalls also provided six monthly safety audits to support the branch.

Alan Ladyman continues: "The changes in the workplace are now starting to bear fruit; there has been a greater focus on health and safety in general and massive improvements since Southalls became our consultants.

"You can certainly feel and see the difference in Bury - both customers and staff are making nothing but positive comments. The new manager, Jason Brightman is implementing significant improvements across the whole site to ensure his staff and customers are entering a safer environment."

Measurable Results

Alan Ladyman, continues: "Since working with Southalls the health and safety in our organisation has improved ten-fold. The new systems and reports

have been met with enthusiasm by every manager and employee. This has empowered managers to take responsibility in their own branches - they are beginning to see tangible results with the improvement of their working environments."

At the end of 2017 Kent Blaxill reported that since they started working with Southalls they have seen a reduction in reported injuries as follows:

OVERALL REDUCTION IN ACCIDENTS REPORTED

approximately

43%

MANUAL HANDLING INJURIES REDUCED

by approximately

32%

SLIPS AND TRIPS REDUCED

by approximately

55%

DAYS LOST

reduced by

78%

For a free on-site consultation call or email us today to find out more

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