

## SAFEX INTERNATIONAL

### SAFEX International: What it offers Members

SAFEX exists to help its Members learn from each other's experiences in order to eliminate the harmful impacts of explosives on people, property and the environment. We learn from the explosives related Health, Safety and Environmental (HS&E) **incidents** our members incur as well as the **practices** they develop to prevent such incidents from occurring. Its offering to Members can be summarised as follows:

- Capturing and distributing incident information
- Identifying and sharing good HS&E practices
- Encouraging networking and development of Members HS&E capabilities
- Publishing relevant HS&E material

#### *Capturing and distributing incident information*

Acquiring and distributing incident information has been the major focus of SAFEX throughout the years. This service entails two major elements: Incident Reporting and the Incident Database.

**Incident Reporting** is at the heart of what SAFEX does. It relies on Members to both report HS&E incidents and identify the underlying causes of each incident that highlight the learning points. The incident reporting system consists of three levels of reporting:

- *Incident Notices* - cover explosives incidents that occurred anywhere in the world (not necessary in members companies) and were brought to SAFEX's attention
- *Investigation Reports* - attempt to identify recommendations to prevent a recurrence of the incident as well as extract the learning points from it
- *Official Reports* – are submitted by exception in the case of a formal inquiry and possibly a long time after the event.

The **Incident Database** in which details of each incident is captured is a very important component of our incident information service. After a recent upgrade the Database has the ability to search the SAFEX Incident Notices and Investigation Reports for specific text strings. The Database contains information on more than 800 incidents from SAFEX members that have been accumulated during the 50 years of our existence. We recently augmented the Database with other incidents reported to some of the overseas regulatory authorities. This means the Database now contains more than 17,000 records. The value of this service depends on each member's willingness to report details of their explosives incidents to the SAFEX Secretariat.

#### *Identifying and sharing good HS&E practices*

SAFEX has established two ways of helping members access effective HS&E practices: Technical Workgroups and the Expert Panel.

The **Technical Workgroups** aim to develop and maintain a document of good HS&E practice in the specific focus area for which each Workgroup was established. At present there are six Workgroups:

- *Emulsion manufacturing safety*;
- *Remediation and Decontamination* which examines safe remediation practices for explosives contaminated facilities
- *Explosives Transport safety*
- *Good Explosives Practice (GEP)* Good Explosives Practice is a term used to describe a method of working with explosives that ensures explosives hazards are understood and practical measures applied to reduce the likelihood of initiation as well as reduce the potential consequences of an initiation if it occurs.
- *Traceability of explosives (Track and Trace)* Safety and security are inextricably linked. The objective of this Workgroup is to engage regional and global manufacturers in agreeing a way forward in the light of this EU Directive.
- *Storage of technical grade ammonium nitrate (TGAN)* This Workgroup recently published a Good Practice Guide and is continuously reviewing it to ensure the content in the publication is current and contains the highest quality data.

The Workgroups operate under the auspices of the Board which assigns one of its Governors to convene this activity. The Board has also approved Workgroup Guidelines to assist the Workgroups.

The **Expert Panel** comprises individuals who were nominated by members and approved by the Board. Such an individual must be associated with the explosives industry and acquired expertise in a specific field(s). He must also be willing to make the same available to SAFEX members on a commercial basis which is agreed between the expert and the member. SAFEX merely “connects” the Expert and the Member who has a need and does not get involved in the details of any arrangements. The fields of expertise should: (a) encompass areas where there is the potential for incidents that could result in injury, property damage or negative environmental impact; (b) be directed at any of the activities in an explosive’s life cycle; and (c) entail any of a wide range of technologies.

### ***Encouraging networking and development of Members’ HS&E capabilities***

The SAFEX Intranet, and the Congresses are used to encourage members to network with and learn from each other.

The SAFEX **Website** was commissioned towards the end of 2005 and consists of two areas: a Public site and an Intranet dedicated to SAFEX members and associates who have been issued with the necessary access codes. The access codes can be suspended if a member is in arrears with its fees or abuses its privileges. The Intranet contains the Incident Notices issued every month as well as the Incident Database. The Website is due for refinement to improve its user friendliness.

The **Congresses** which SAFEX organises every three years is the major event at which Members exchange experiences in a personal interaction with other Members. It comprises a number of activities some of which take place before the Congress starts. Congress activities typically include:

- *Training Session.* This is typically a 2-day session which is specially tailored to the needs of our industry and takes place before the Plenary Sessions.
- *Workgroups.* Workgroup members meet on the day before the Plenary Sessions start to consolidate the work they do in between Congresses.
- *Registration for the Plenary Sessions* takes place on the Wednesday afternoon of the Congress and is followed by the official Welcome Reception in the evening.
- *Open Day.* The first day of Plenary Sessions is an Open Day to which we invite representatives from organisations with whom we collaborate. Many of the visitors deliver Papers and as they are specialists in their own right their contribution adds value to the proceedings.
- *Chairman's Programme.* Top executives of member companies are invited by the Chairman to network and discuss HS&E issues of common concern on the first day of the Plenary Sessions – the Open Day.
- *Closed Day.* The second day of the Plenary Sessions is reserved for SAFEX members and associates to review incidents and extract valuable lessons from them.
- *General Assembly.* The Ordinary General Meeting of members as required by our Articles of Association takes place at the end of the Closed Day.

There is also a Social Programme designed to promote networking among delegates (and partners) which includes:

- *Partners' Programme.* In this way SAFEX members recognize the role partners play in supporting our industry. During the two days of Plenary Sessions there are excursions and visits for spouses and partners of delegates to the Congress.
- *Gala Dinner.* This is the climax of the Congress and its official closure. It is held in a venue that reflects the prestige of the occasion.
- *Delegates Excursion.* A full day excursion is organized on the Saturday after the Plenary Sessions for delegates and partners who have stayed on. It typically consists of a bus tour to a tourist attraction in the vicinity of the Congress venue.

The Board has agreed to an interim event between the triennial Congresses. It could comprise an in depth Training course or a Seminar.

### ***Publishing relevant material***

To further facilitate liaison with members and collaborators but also inform them of HS&E developments in the explosives industry, SAFEX publishes material such as Newsletters and Topical Papers.

Four quarterly **Newsletters** are produced each year. Besides the general information which needs to be communicated to Members, the Newsletter also includes regular reports of research work in the area of explosives safety and security. Where possible we include a case study of an actual assignment by one of our Experts. Regulatory developments are also covered in a regular feature.

At least one **Topical Paper** is issued per year. The papers in SAFEX's Topical Paper Series acknowledge the work done by the SAFEX community in promoting better HS&E performance in the explosives industry. The information in these papers should be topical and of interest to other SAFEX members. These monographs are selected from papers submitted by members of the SAFEX community.

