

EuPIA Interview

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What is the role of the Working Group Operational Safety and Risk Assessment at EuPIA?

The OSRA Working Group aims to improve health and safety performance within the printing ink industry. In other words, like the New York Police Department, we are here to protect and serve. We protect our employees so that they may come home tired but healthy in the evening; we serve our industry so that it does not suffer losses due to accidents/incidents and its reputation/trust is not damaged. This is achieved by member companies' health, safety and environmental (HSE) experts working together to share best practices and learn from internal and external accidents in the ink, coatings and chemical industry, and by developing or supporting guidance on HSE issues.

What is the OSRA WG working on now and what can be expected from the group soon, e.g., new guidelines?

There are several topics currently in the pipeline: some guidelines (e.g. on work permits, best practices in the laboratory, etc.); the usual activity on safety alerts (lessons learned from accidents and near misses that have already

happened); and the comparison between safety indicators within EuPIA companies and benchmarking with other sectors. All activities are carried out openly and honestly, in accordance with the EuPIA anti-cartel policy.

From your perspective, what are the key elements that ensure plant and occupational safety? Do you see a trend in this area?

The key elements of HSE are always the same:

- Prevention - A commitment by all companies to promote HSE performance (in line with the chemical industry's Responsible Care initiative) - Our employees are our most important resource and must be protected at all costs - safety first!
- Risk Assessment - Risks are unavoidable in all industries, and at home - they must be managed professionally and in the best way.
- Training - The entire workforce needs to understand the hazard and risk concept and be trained in safe behaviours/practices - creating a safety culture is a priority.
- Learning from what has already happened - Experience must be considered one of the most valuable resources, to avoid accidents happening again.

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What other projects is the committee working on?

The project to provide safety training for diisocyanates, which is required by the European restriction on these substances, has now been completed as a first step, but illustrates the issue very well. In this case, we were approached by isocyanate manufacturers to cover our sector, as our companies use diisocyanate-based monomers/polymers. We have developed our slides, which will now become part of the training provided by the authorities for safe handling of these substances (from August 2023, as required by law).

How does the committee collaborate with other industry partners to ensure safety?

We work together with other associations, and in this case, too, we exchange information and learn from each other. Let's take a practical example: For personal protective equipment (in this case gloves), there is a very good guideline from the industry association of our suppliers (ESIG, the Solvent Manufacturers Association), which we have adopted without developing our own EuPIA guideline. The same applies to other areas: for example, to the handling of plastic and metal IBCs for flammable liquids. We are also in contact with NAPIM, our US counterpart, and exchange information on HSE Issues.