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Toyota Boshoku promotes safety in business travel

How to develop a robust system to manage fluctuating risk for expatriate travel and work

Toyota Boshoku America, the winner of the International SOS Foundation's 2017 Duty of Care Award in the category Resilient Care, developed clear procedures to assess and manage the risks faced by its workforce when travelling to Latin America. The process has resulted in a zero-incident record.

Keeping expatriates safe through the identification and mitigation of risk is one of the most difficult challenges that multi-national corporations face. To achieve this Toyota Boshoku America and its Kentucky subsidiary identified several key steps. The features of this robust programme include active risk monitoring; both externally and internally, expatriate training and continuous review of the process, all overseen by senior management. The result is a safer working environment.

Putting Procedures in Place

Jack Patton, Senior Safety Specialist, Toyota Boshoku sets the scene: "At Toyota Boshoku America, keeping all workers safe is our highest priority. As a global corporation, we have a Duty of Care to our workers, wherever their tasks may take them. To achieve success, we must take the initiative and not wait until an incident occurs. Toyota Boshoku America has learned extensively from the expatriate process, and, as a result, we have developed a very successful programme to keep our people safe."

Toyota Boshoku America identified and implemented four key initiatives for success:

External Risk Assessment

Understanding and analysing the potential impact of fluctuating risk issues is crucial. Without accurate and timely information, planning travel and work for staff members is very challenging. Toyota developed a two-way communication tool between the home office and facilities in high-risk regions to compile risk factors. The risk factors are summarised in a Travel Approval Form. This is distributed to all managers who approve travel to the region before any bookings can be made. Travel during high risk periods is evaluated and compared to the business need. Any trips that cannot be justified are denied. When travel during high risk periods is necessary, additional precautions are put in place to reduce the overall risk. The Travel Approval procedure also requires confirmation that travel security training has been completed.

Internal Risk Assessment

Toyota Boshoku America recognises that there is a need for potential risks to be identified and mitigated in all working environments. To address this they have developed a special programme aimed at all staff members who are likely to travel. Each member goes through

extensive hands-on training to provide information on safety at home, at work and while travelling. This programme has won a number of awards.

Leadership Commitment

Total commitment by the management team is a critical part of the process. At the regional level, this starts with Brian Smith, Toyota Boshoku Kentucky Regional Vice President. Before any member of staff travels abroad, Mr. Smith personally ensures they are prepared for their assignment. In addition, he holds a monthly meeting with all assigned expatriates to reinforce the need for safety in their activities and during travel.

Continual Improvement

To ensure the future safety of workers, a monthly executive committee meeting is held, chaired by Executive Vice President, Ikuo Mochizuki. The agenda for the meeting includes (1) Key Performance Indicator Review, (2) Incident Review, (3) Safety News, (4) Requests to Plants, and (5) Requests from Plants. Key events, such as a cholera outbreak in Brazil or unrest in Mexico, are discussed in these meetings, and safety aspects addressed.



Above Toyota Boshoku personnel travel extensively in Latin America

BUSINESS JUSTIFICATION RATING:			Please numerically rate your business justification using the ratings and examples	
RATING	Example Situations	RATING	Dept Rating	
Emergency Need	Disasters (natural or human). Key Equipment Error. Portion of Plant Shut Down or potential. Customer/Union demanding face to face meeting. Union Uprising.	1		
High Need	Program milestone/launch. Customer required meeting. Reschedule options minimal.	2		
Medium Need	Key customer meetings. Union Negotiations. Possible to reschedule options available.	3		
Low Need	Audit trip. Convergence call/video. Review Documents. Quarterly Meeting. Reschedule options available.	4		

Above The Travel Approval Form includes a Business Justification Rating

Safety Equals Success

The results of these efforts are impressive. To date, no expatriate travelling and working on behalf of Toyota Boshoku America has been involved in an incident. Over the past five years, an annual average of 141 expatriates has worked over 1.5 million work hours safely.

As well as safety, the programme delivers other benefits: proactively preventing incidents avoids the reputational damage usually associated with such events; fewer workers needing compensation offers a competitive advantage; plus the successful risk reduction programme can be adopted by other departments, and even other companies.

As Jack Patton concludes:

"Frequent, clear, and two-way communication is very important in the establishment and implementation of a successful risk mitigation programme. The careful and detailed risk assessment process has allowed business to be performed while minimising risks to the traveller and the corporation. We expect this programme to continue delivering value for many years to come."

KEY ELEMENTS

A robust risk mitigation procedure for expatriates contains these key elements:

External risk assessment

Internal risk assessment

Leadership commitment

Continual improvement

Common features at each step in the process are two-way communications and comprehensive training.

For information on the 2017 Duty of Care Awards winners in all categories, go to www.dutyofcareawards.org.