

Follow up information for MSHAC

Soft Skills

The IQA acknowledges the need for the development of 'soft skills' in the quarrying workforce at all levels, in addition to technical and task-based skills required to carry out work. These skills are being embedded into various programs delivered by the IQA.

As discussed with MSACH, there are no clearly defined "set" of soft skills that will improve safety. Rather a range that are inferred. Good communication is a skill that is referred to continuously in relation to improving safety outcomes.

IQA's Approach

While training on set topics such as communication, emotional intelligence, resilience are important, the IQA has found employers are more likely to train in technical areas (noting this comment is a broad generalisation). As soft skills are developed over time and not immediately gained through a single training course, the IQA has therefore incorporated soft skills into its courses and will continue to do so at all levels.

Examples of Soft Skills in IQA courses

The Supervising for Safety program addresses a range of soft skills required to provide effective supervision. Primary among these skills is communication, which is essential for safe and effective site operation, and principles for conflict resolution and approaching hard conversations which play a vital part in leading teams. The course also explores frameworks for time management, prioritisation and decision making which are crucial for productivity, as well as problem solving and critical thinking.

Built around the framework of risk assessment and hazard identification the workshop takes participants through:

- Self-assessment exercise (their strengths in leading)
- Reflection diary (the role of reflection)
- Resilience
- Considering the time pressures on a supervisor and how this can impact safety
- Having hard conversations.

The Plant & Equipment course applies skills in problem solving and critical thinking to identify and address hazards, and implement control measures pertaining to P&E. The 'Safety' module explores the role of effective supervision skills in maintaining positive safety culture and addressing unsafe attitudes and behaviours, particularly in the context of plant operation. The module challenges the participants to think about safety behaviours. Communication, and the importance of a positive reporting culture, are built into the course.

Also addressed are issues of fitness for work, including recognition and management of personal or non-work factors which impact the productivity and behaviour of staff.

Built around the framework of risk assessment and hazard identification the workshop takes participants through:

- Human behaviour in removing guards. Human behaviour towards safety

- Reflection on safety behaviour
- Understanding the 'human factors' which apply to the design and installation of guarding
- Communication and culture.

Other programs, such as Slope Stability and Emergency Management, also incorporate various soft skills including awareness and critical thinking, leadership, and communication.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Institute of Quarrying Australia (IQA)

02 9484 0577

education@quarry.com.au

www.quarry.com.au