

VAM

Vakblad Asset Management

#

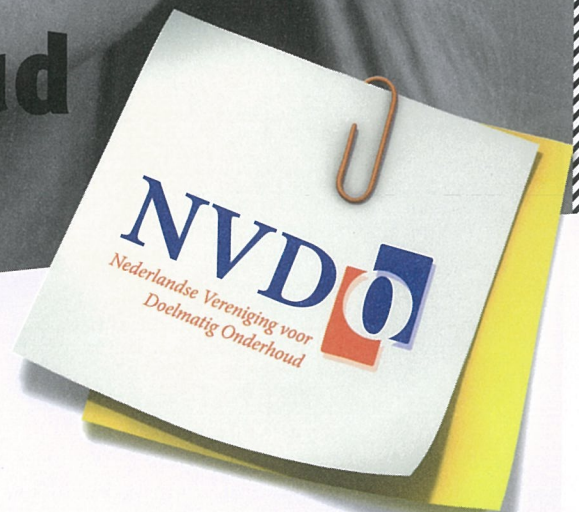
4

nr. 04 / 2019

VEILIG WERKEN

Voor, Door, Met en Dankzij Onderhoud

Veiligheid staat elke dag op één
Gevaarlijke Stoffen
DSP Digital Safety Pasport



Importance of safe work during Maintenance activities

For the contemporary maintenance works, there is not one type of hazard maintenance professionals are not exposed to: technical, ergonomic, hygienic, health, behavioural, psychosocial. As cited in the 2011 NVDO Vision document on Safety in the Dutch maintenance market in 2020, “so much maintenance work, so many risks”. So, it should be of no surprise that the maintenance accident rates are high.

With pleasure I know the Visiondocument very well. It writes for example about the fact that concepts like ‘partnership’, ‘awareness’, ‘safe behaviour’, ‘safe craftsmanship’ and ‘education’ were laid forward to achieve safety is firmly embedded in the profession describing the need to build a safety culture.

Since 2011, the European Occupational Health & Safety Administration (EU-OSHA) has acknowledged maintenance activities as the riskiest among the conventional ones. The causal factors are linked to the core characteristics of the maintenance profession:

- It is by default an “untidy” work involving disassembling, laying out tools, occupying floor space, handling liquids which leads to poor housekeeping
- It is a job comprising physically and mentally demanding activities in combination with specialized knowhow which leads to bodily fatigue and stress occasionally causing lack of focus
- It involves repetitive tasks executed by highly skilled professionals which leads to overconfident safe-deviating behaviours, what we usually call “familiarization with danger”
- It is falsely considered a “non-production” work hence it is performed constantly under time pressure to reduce rundown times which in turn yields unsafe behaviours like hastiness and unsafe improvisation
- It is characterized by task diversity and complexity but also by the lack of sufficient detailed written procedures and safe work method statements (lockout-tagout, line breaking, confined space entry, hot work, work-at-heights, ad hoc specific tasks)
- It involves working indoors as well as outdoors on the vast majority of workplace equipment but also commuting to purchase or select the appropriate materials or spare parts



George Scroubelos' Foto: privécollectie

A strategy that would bring immediate positively escalating results must focus on both technical as well as organizational measures with emphasis in communication.

In my opinion the Maintenance Sector has to upgrade the minimum safety requirements for all maintenance activities. This can be done by adopting a Task Hazard Analysis for all maintenance activities, detailed safe work methods for each maintenance task including the ad-hoc ones and by the adoption of a maintenance 5S system. Do not forget close supervision and enforcement supported by top management.

The Industry 4.0 framework will bring more challenges to the Maintenance Sector with the emergence of new technologies and forms of work that will test both the knowhow as well as the psychosomatic endurance of the involved professionals. The key to facing these challenges lies on a trifold of Access to reliable safety information on key issues, Participation by disseminating this information to interested parties and Knowledge exchange and sharing.

The EFNS H&S Committee, of which I am a proud chairman, is nourishing its relationship with EU-OSHA being an active Campaign Partner for the last 5 years, an effort that has been recognized and awarded in the beginning of 2019. Safety is the most important pillar for maintaining the integrity of the most valuable asset: our health!



Dr George Scroubelos, Mechanical Engineer
Chairman EHSEC