

# A stress-free workplace = a zero-injury workplace in steel manufacturing



U. S. Steel Košice, s.r.o., Slovakia

[www.usske.sk](http://www.usske.sk)

## The issue

In the steel manufacturing sector, hazards and dangerous conditions are common. The objective of U. S. Steel Košice (USSK) is zero injury. It provides training allowing employees to feel secure and to believe in their abilities and skills. In addition, the company believes that completely eliminating stress in the workplace will allow employees to fully concentrate on their work and better control and respond to hazards that they may encounter.

## Action taken

USSK employs several organisational strategies to reduce stress in the workplace. The Stop & Act programme provides employees with a procedure to follow if risks are encountered, allowing them to stop their activities and seek advice from a supervisor or colleagues, thereby reducing stress levels in these situations.

In addition, an IT application allows employees to submit risks they have encountered in the workplace, as well as ideas for preventive measures. Managers and the safety and health department then consider these proposals and implement interventions based on the suggestions. The most active employees in this system are rewarded for their proactive attitude. Finally, 'safety huddles' are meetings conducted by a supervisor which take place at the start of each shift and highlight specific hazards that workers should be wary of, including psychosocial hazards.

Furthermore, the company believes that, for its success, it is necessary that each team member achieves a balance between their work, family and private lives. Free

counselling is provided as part of the Work Life Coaching programme, in which both employees and their family members have access to unrestricted 24/7 phone and e-mail consultations. In addition, employees are able to see a psychologist at the USSK premises, where advice is given on both work and personal matters. In fact, the most common matter dealt with in these consultations is interpersonal relationships in the workplace. As part of this programme, lectures are also given on topics such as burnout prevention, assertiveness in working and personal lives and healthy lifestyles.

Events out of working hours are organised, including sports events, such as the USSK Soccer Championship and the Family Are Sporting project, which encourage employees and their family members to be active as well as sociable. In addition, the Family Safety Day helps to raise awareness of the importance of safety and health while employees relax in a friendly atmosphere with their families.





## Results achieved

- Since 2006, the injury rate has reduced by 79%.
- In the same period, injury resulting in days away from work has reduced by 95%.
- Employees report higher personal satisfaction, a better work-life balance and better mental 'comfort'.
- Knowledge, skills and abilities, professional efficiency and work performance have all been reported to be improved.

*Managing stress contributed to reducing injury rates, as well as better wellbeing, job satisfaction and performance.*