

Health and safety

The diversity of the Altron group means that its operations have varying degrees of health and safety impacts, the more pronounced being in our manufacturing operations. While safety and health has been managed by Altron operations in various ways, one of our overall targets is the formulation and implementation of a group-level policy to provide guidance and ensure general uniformity.

Management of health and safety

Compliance with safety regulations on all sites across the Altron group is not negotiable, and performance is reported quarterly at board meetings throughout the group. Health and safety committees at all operations use the Occupational Health and Safety Act as a minimum benchmark for

their performance. Management of health and safety risks across the different operations of the group consists of regular audits, identification of material risks and managing these appropriately, quarterly reporting to the board and risk management and audit committees, pursuing accreditation to local and/or internationally recognised standards, and ongoing communication of health and safety matters to all employees.

Health and safety risks

As the nature of the group's operations varies considerably, from factory to office, some work environments inherently pose less of a health and safety risk than others. The following are health and safety risks identified at some of our operations:

- A significant issue raised at **ABB Powertech** is the adherence of contractors to the company's health and safety criteria. To mitigate this risk, health and safety clauses are written into contractors' agreements, stipulating the joint responsibility of the contractor and the company for ensuring a safe and healthy work environment. Contractors also undergo mandatory health and safety training presented by ABB Powertech before any on-site work can commence.



On-site medical facilities at the Aberdare Cables factory in Johannesburg.



Scrap battery cells at the Willard Batteries Port Elizabeth factory being loaded onto a Sutherland Transport company truck, for delivery to Frys Metals, for recycling.

- ▶ **Aberdare** experiences no major health risks, while carefully managing the safety risks involved in moving drums that contain cables and stand steel. Aberdare ensures that all lifting and moving equipment is checked for safety compliance at regular intervals. It provides regular training to certified crane and Hyster operators and ensures that procedures and working instructions for the operating of equipment are maintained. In addition, regular mission-directed work teams and departmental and managerial safety committees focus on compliance with statutory regulations.
- ▶ In the **Battery Group**, hazardous substances such as lead and sulphuric acid are present in varying concentrations. Ensuring that the lead content in the blood levels of at-risk employees is maintained within acceptable limits remains a priority at Willard and Sabat Batteries. For this purpose the company has developed rigorous standards for monitoring blood-lead levels in employees exposed to inorganic lead while working, ranging from annual tests in non-lead areas to monthly monitoring for employees working in lead areas. If an employee's

blood-lead level exceeds the company's prudent limits, explicit mitigation steps are immediately instituted. These include removing the affected worker from the lead area, investigating the possible source and notifying the appropriate co-workers and safety representatives. No employees are returned to the lead area until their blood-lead levels are well below the stipulated threshold. The potential biological effects of lead are constantly monitored, and the company has a range of additional investigations which are conducted when lead is suspected of causing ill health. Education and counselling sessions ensure that employees are thoroughly familiar with the sources of lead in the workplace, the potential dangers of exposure and the importance of biological monitoring and

medical surveillance. Precautionary measures are emphasised, including the use of protective equipment and adherence to environmental, housekeeping and personal hygiene practices. In addition, meticulous training is conducted on disposing of waste material containing lead and cleaning sites at which lead or material containing lead has been used, handled or processed.

OHSAS 18001 certification

ABB Powertech and **Altech NamiTech's** Linbro Park have achieved OHSAS 18001 certification, the international occupational health and safety management system specification.

■ TARGETS

Certification

- Plans are under way at Aberdare to obtain certification at the Standford Road, Pietermaritzburg and Gauteng operations
- At Battery Group, implementation of OHSAS 18001 will commence in the second half of 2007
- Desta Power Matla's Cape Town operation is scheduled for an OHSAS 18001 certification audit in May 2007



Quality inspections take place at Willard Batteries before dispatch.



Derrick Hoshe and Gerald Peter of Willard Batteries discuss performance graphs.

Health and safety audits

All operations are annually audited by the Altron internal audit department with regard to health and safety management, while additional external audits by SABS and other external specialists were conducted at **Bytes SA, ABB Powertech, Battery Group** and **Aberdare**.

At **Altech NamiTech**, an external agency Ergosaf conducted an on-site hearing conservation audit during 2006. Eight noise-affected areas were audited and it was found that one of these areas registered noise levels in excess of the statutory limit, and

one area above the action limit, but below the statutory noise limit. Corrective recommendations were made and actioned accordingly. Altron's internal audit department also conducted a comprehensive health and safety audit during August 2006, when among others, the following issues were identified that required rectification: hazardous chemical substance management, stacking, functioning of health and safety committees, electrical installation compliance certification, noise and use of compressed air. All issues raised have been addressed, with the electrical certification audit completed during February 2007, and certification expected by the end of May 2007.

Fines and non-compliance

During the period under review, no prosecutions were brought against any company of the group for the contravention of any health and safety laws.

Ongoing communication and training

At **ABB Powertech**, the importance of safety is reiterated in weekly talks and regular general safety and health training sessions, including that of SHE representatives and first aid training.

Aberdare also addresses safety and health issues at daily mission-directed work team meetings. At **ABB Powertech**, clearly documented safe work procedures with job observation checklists which identify the hazards in operating each machine are in place in compliance with OHASA. **Altech UEC** conducts monthly safety committee meetings and provides ongoing training in safety, first-aid and fire fighting, in addition to HIV/AIDS awareness training to staff.

Bytes provides training for fire wardens and first-aid practitioners at business units and subsidiaries, and through its health and safety representatives, creates ongoing awareness of health and safety issues and its health and safety policy.

At **Altech Autopage**, health and safety training over the past year included the training of six employees in level two first aid training, five employees in health and safety representative training, while another attended OHSAS 18001 training.

Each department also ensures ongoing communication to all employees through trained health and safety committee members.

All **Battery Group** employees are subject to safety, health and environment induction training annually. Safety and health awareness talks are conducted on a daily basis before each shift, and a health and safety suggestion scheme is in place. Battery Group also has a trained medical sister and a qualified medical officer on site, providing counselling as required.

Desta Power Matla ensures pre-medical screening, OHASA training as well as training of all employees with regard to hazardous chemicals and equipment. An occupational health practitioner visits Desta Power Matla on a weekly basis, providing additional counselling to staff.

Fatalities, injuries and occupational diseases

No fatalities occurred across the group operations during the year under review.

Recorded lost-time injury frequency rates (LTIFR) in our manufacturing operations were, 1.04 in **ABB Powertech**, 2.04 in **Battery Group**, while **Altech NamITech** reported two lost-time injuries during 2007 and **Aberdare** had no lost-time due to injury. Due to the nature of other operations in the group lost-time injuries are experienced very rarely.

In **ABB Powertech**, noise is managed as an occupational hazard, through the provision of suitable ear protection, and all employees are subject to annual hearing tests. One incident of occupational dermatitis was recorded in the **Battery Group** during the year under review.

Employee wellness programmes

Aberdare will be implementing its wellness programme in July 2007, in an effort to consolidate and coordinate existing wellness-related initiatives across the company, including HIV/AIDS, TB and occupational health. Aberdare will be piloting the integrated wellness programme at one of its operations, initially focusing on primary health (including HIV/AIDS and other dread diseases), occupational health and psycho-social services. Once these elements have been successfully embedded, Aberdare will aim to implement further elements of its wellness model including the provision of legal services and personal wellness, with a focus on lifestyle information and fitness across the rest of the company.

Altech Autopage's employee wellness programme (through the Careways group) assists with training and counselling around serious diseases on an individual basis, while its internal employee wellness committee conducts awareness campaigns around HIV/AIDS, providing training aimed at infection prevention. **Altech NamITech** employees have access to an employee

assistance programme linked call centre where trained social workers are on hand to assist.

Bytes recognises that, although few actual HIV/AIDS cases have been recorded, its demographics and risk profile may well be changing, particularly in its call centre operations where younger people are increasingly employed. Consequently the group has implemented various communication and direct care strategies. For example, **Bytes Managed Services** runs a Careways programme, a full healthcare and employment wellness programme including HIV/AIDS counselling, impacting on over 1 000 employees presently.

Battery Group employees on Sizwe Medical Aid can enrol with Yebolife for HIV/AIDS management, and the company has a direct observation of treatment (D.O.T.) system in place for TB, monitored by its occupational health clinic, which also monitors chronic illnesses and refers these to relevant specialists for further management. Through an employee assistance programme, provided by FAMSA, a counsellor visits the site on a weekly basis.

HIV/AIDS

Altron has a well-defined HIV/AIDS policy that provides guidelines on managing the disease, together with other life-threatening diseases, in the workplace, protecting the

legal rights of employees, creating awareness and supporting appropriate behavioural changes, among other issues. The ongoing implementation of this policy is the responsibility of management together with human resources.

The diversity of Altron's operations means differing potential risks and concerns regarding the impact of HIV/AIDS on the business. Our operations have for many years had in place policies and programmes focusing on HIV/AIDS, such as the wellness programmes described above, and other initiatives including the **Altech NamITech** programme involving peer educators and VCT and **ABB Powertech's** ongoing awareness programme. In addition, the group has embarked on a major study of the impact of HIV/AIDS across all its operations.

Altron is currently working in conjunction with Aurum Institute of Health Research, a not-for-profit public benefit organisation that conducts research and supports companies in assessing and mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS. Together we are developing a phased approach to managing this impact, that will consist of both a study of the actual prevalence and impact of HIV and AIDS on its business, and assessing the effect of HIV/AIDS on key suppliers and market groups. This project commenced in March 2007 and Altron will be in a position to report on the results in the 2008 annual report.

■ ALTRON'S OVERARCHING STRATEGY FOR HIV/AIDS IS TO:

- make investments where the greatest reduction in infection can be gained
- implement the most effective interventions
- focus our available resources such as CSI on HIV/AIDS, particularly where it affects our markets, future employees and potential suppliers
- provide guidance at Altron group level to operations in terms of policy and practices for addressing HIV/AIDS



Battery Technologies assisted the Limpopo Province with their community HIV/AIDS programme.



HIV/AIDS Peer Educators at Willard Batteries.

■ TARGETS

Health and safety

- The formulation and implementation of a group-level health and safety policy to provide guidance and ensure uniformity
- Pursue OHSAS 18001 accreditation of operations, specifically Aberdare, Battery Group and Desta Power Matla
- Report results of HIV/AIDS prevalence study across the Altron group, as well as its key suppliers and market groups
- Measuring and benchmarking lost-time injury frequencies rates