

Health and safety

Material issue

Internal Health and Safety

Altron takes the Health and Safety (H&S) of all its employees very seriously, with the CEO of each of the operations taking ultimate responsibility for this issue. It is guided by an internal H&S policy that covers the entire Altron group. Each operation within the Altron group complies with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHASA).

Management of H&S at Altron

Altron's H&S systems include comprehensive training, targets, risk identification, monitoring of performance indicators, employee representation and access to counselling. H&S is integrated into line management responsibility as part of their key performance areas. Line and senior managers are appointed in terms of section 16 of the OHASA Act.

Staff receive H&S training which includes representation training, hazard identification and incident investigation. A safety induction programme is targeted at new employees and the company conducts ongoing general safety awareness training. Each year, first-aiders and fire fighters are trained and Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) representatives appointed and trained. Selected employees have been trained as auditors in preparation for the implementation of the ISO 18001 System. The entire Powertech Batteries operation will be assessed prior to the implementation of ISO 18001 in October 2007.

The Altron group conducts regular monitoring of key H&S performance indicators (KPIs) which include frequency rate, reportable injury-free frequency rate and an occupational clinic report. The engineering manager monitors the SHE manager's KPIs bi-annually and all safety

aspects are monitored during monthly safety inspections.

Employees play an active role in H&S in the Altron group and SHE is an indicator on every employee scorecard. H&S representatives are appointed from the workforce and all employees participate in risk assessment via safety meetings and mission-directed work-team meetings, which form part of a monthly SHE committee meeting. Security personnel are contracted to guard access to the Altron group premises and provide protection of personnel and assets. There is also security on all manufacturing operations which includes CCTV monitoring.

In addition, employees and their family members who have been affected by crime have access to counselling, where required, through the employee assistance programme. Powertech Transformers has introduced the Employee Wellness Programme run by Procure which provides a service to employees including those affected by crime, while clinics and healthcare departments are on hand at Aberdare Cables to assist employees and refer them to specialist support agencies where necessary.

Altron's internal audit department, in conjunction with independent consultants, MS Alexander & Associates, reports back to the relevant risk management committees on H&S risks throughout the Altron group.

POWERTECH

During 2007, Powertech Transformers achieved one million man-hours without a single lost-time injury. This company (including DPM) has ISO 18001 certification and all operations have H&S committees in place, which champion the broad spectrum of internal H&S matters.

Issues within this section

- ▶ Internal health and safety
- ▶ HIV/Aids

Performance data for OHASA

Company	Annual DIFR	Annual sick rate	No of fatalities
Bytes Communication Systems	Zero	±15%	1 (heat attack – not at work)
Bytes Corporate Services	None	29 man days	None
Bytes Document Solutions	None	4 563.5 man days (Jan to Dec 2007)	None
Bytes Healthcare Solutions	None	963 man days	None
Bytes Managed Services	None	3 637.5 man days (Jan to Dec 2007)	5 (4 car accidents and 1 heart attack)
Bytes Systems Integration	None	31%	None

Targets for H&S improvements

Maintain compliance through safety audits and periodic safety inspections.

Internal and external audits, SHE meetings and inspections.

A target of October / November 2008 has been set for full certification of the OHASA 18001 H&S System (Powertech Batteries).

Incident rate, body part injuries, implementing ISO 18001 by March 2006 (Aberdare Cables).

Performance**H&S performance at Aberdare Cables**

	Disability injury frequency rate	Sick rate
PMB	1.5%	3%
PE	3.03%	3.3%
Gauteng	0%	3.21%
Greenhills	0%	—
Edenvale	0%	.014%

H&S performance at Powertech

Per- formance data	Total No of workers	2006/ 2007	2005/ 2006
Annual disabling injury rate	3 294 (Powertech factory workers)	0.9	1.2
Annual sickness rate	3 294 (Powertech factory workers)	4.2	3.6
No of fatalities		0	0

During the year, SABS conducted H&S audits and no significant issues were raised.

At DPM, internal safety auditors and the Altron internal audit department carried out H&S audits. These highlighted the fact that the Booyens plant is conducting shot blasting, zinc spraying and painting activities in areas not conducive for these processes, an issue that will be rectified with the relocation to new premises.

DPM communicates to employees regularly on SHE matters through briefing sessions given by supervisors, various training sessions given by the SHEQ department and general communication by plant general managers during business briefing sessions.

Crabtree has identified certain areas where noise levels are over 85dB. These are clearly demarcated and Crabtree enforces the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) in all such areas to protect employees from damage to hearing and hearing loss.

At Powertech Batteries, hazardous substances such as lead and sulphuric acid are present in varying concentrations. Powertech Batteries has developed rigorous procedures for monitoring blood-lead levels in those employees who are exposed to lead while working. These include annual tests in non-lead areas to monthly monitoring of employees working in lead areas. If an employee's blood-lead level exceeds legal 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 Powertech Batteries 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 personal 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. Powertech Batteries' SHE manager conducts regular rotational visits and assists in the upgrading of any non-compliant operations.

ALTECH

Apart from Altech UEC and Altech NamiTech, most of Altech's other operations pose a relatively low H&S risk due to the fact that they are not manufacturing in nature. However, Altech still lists employee H&S as a key priority. H&S committees with nominated representatives and trained on-site first-aiders champion employee H&S issues. Altron conducts regular H&S audits on Altech and the Altech group companies receive regular visits from the Altech Risk Manager. All new employees receive induction training which includes an H&S component.

During the year Altech UEC trained five new first-aid practitioners, using externally accredited training contractors. This increases the number of qualified first-



Employee educational and counselling sessions form part of induction processes.

Health and safety *continued*

aiders to 25 and there are plans to increase the number of employees trained in fire-fighting to 47. At Altech NamlTech, an occupational doctor and nursing sister have been contracted to provide on-site services to employees, including HIV and Aids support services.

At Altech Netstar, the key occupational H&S risk area is the helicopter recovery service. In June 2007, a helicopter crashed on take-off and the air tracker sustained severe injuries that required more than 60 days off duty. In all such incidents a full enquiry is carried out in accordance with flight safety legislation to establish the cause of the accident and counselling provided for affected employees. In November 2007, there was an accident in which two people were injured but no deaths were reported.

In April 2008, an accident occurred at the Rand Airport in which both the pilot and air tracker were killed. Investigations into the cause of the accident are still under way. While the responsibility for these incidents lies with the subcontracted company, National Airways Corporation (NAC), Altech Netstar nonetheless views these incidents and ongoing safety with utmost concern. All pilots are currently undergoing competency tests administered by an independent authority.

Altech Autopage Cellular uses external suppliers to train and provide information sessions to staff on H&S issues. Audits are carried out on a regular basis, the most recent of which was conducted on the company's older building. While the results of this audit are still pending, Altech Autopage Cellular has embarked on a revamp of the building and the completion of a new building has gone a long way to rectifying staff overcrowding issues at the old site.

Altech's operations subscribe to all OHASA H&S requirements and have monthly safety committee meetings where all issues are discussed, minutes taken and decisions acted upon.

Material issue

HIV/Aids

Addressing direct impacts of HIV/Aids

While previously relying on government published HIV/Aids statistics to gauge the impact of HIV/Aids on its businesses, Altron has come to recognise the necessity of conducting an in depth study of prevalence rates across its diverse operations. Whereas in the past, operations have had ad hoc policies and programmes in place including voluntary counselling and testing, Altron aims to provide guidance at group level to operations in terms of policy and practices for addressing HIV/Aids, and has consequently embarked on a major study of the impact of HIV/Aids across all its operations.

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, Altron is 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 on key suppliers and market groups.

This project commenced in March 2007 and made the following findings and recommendations in 2008:

► **Findings:**

- Prevalence in Altron is estimated between 5% and 11%.
- Economic impact is predicted to vary between 0.4% of payroll in Bytes to 1,1% in Powertech.
- The direct risks in Altron are manageable and HIV does not currently pose a direct threat to the business operations in any of the three sub-holding groups.
- The most significant risks are likely to take the form of supply chain disruptions, loss of skilled individuals and HIV risks in customer bases.

Air response agreement

Altech Netstar has entered into an air response agreement with the National Airways Corporation (Pty) Limited (NAC) in terms of which they provide a 24 hour airborne reaction service. NAC provides the pilots and aircrafts to Altech Netstar and bears full responsibility for the safety of the aircraft and crew, despite Altech Netstar branding.





► **Recommendations: Altron should:**

- undertake an evaluation of its suppliers to ensure that adequate systems are in place to ensure that there are no disruptions, particularly at Powertech;
- assess higher risk units situated in provinces such as Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal;
- formulate a comprehensive HIV/Aids policy to be adopted across the Altron group; and
- monitor absenteeism rates as this can highlight increasing prevalence and identify individuals who may benefit from a wellness programme or other intervention.

Altron is formulating a response based on these findings and recommendations, but will also be informed by international best practice and the dti CoGP. Local guidelines studied include NEDLAC, Anglo American, Goldfields, and other leading employers in heavy industry.

Awareness

Various operations have established HIV/Aids committees represented by management, unions and the workforce. Activities predominantly focus on education and awareness programmes. A Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey was performed by the National Institute Community Development and Management, an external service provider in conjunction with the Sociology Department of the VISTA University. The findings were presented to the workforce and played a significant role in raising awareness. Further education and awareness efforts were focused to address the gaps identified by the KAP survey.

A second external service provider, Epicentre, was contracted to add to the

education and awareness effort. This was done by way of a workshop with senior management during which the origins, magnitude and projected outcome of the epidemic were discussed. Future efforts were discussed and decided upon.

The training of peer educators by Epicentre and the provision of training kits followed this workshop.

Initiatives

Powertech Transformers

The occupational health clinic at Powertech Transformers follows international safe work standards to prevent transmission, including a needlestick protocol as well as antiretrovirals (ARVs) on site. This goes for the first aiders as well. Powertech Transformers has an ongoing education programme that displays posters and other training aids around the worksite. This programme culminates on 1 December each year with a voluntary counselling and testing campaign. The peer educators that were trained three years ago will be retrained in 2008.

Medical, nursing and counselling services are available on certain sites. Medical aids have established disease management programmes and provide ARVs and prophylactic drugs. Immune boosting meals called e-pap are provided by various subsidiary companies.

Sponsoring community-based care

Altron sponsors the publication of an annual Aids guide for distribution across the country. Altron also provides an annual sponsorship to SA Medical Foundation and Somerset Hospital for treatment, care and support. See also The Altron Group In Social and Enterprise Development Report on the Altron website www.altron.co.za.