

GVK attains international environmental certifications

The Gordon Verhoef and Krause (GVK) group of companies has recently attained its ISO 14001 environmental management accreditation - making it one of the first medium-sized organisations in its sector to attain this certification. GVK specialises in the construction, renovation, restoration and recycling of buildings.



It is also one of only a few construction firms in South Africa to be registered as an Occupational Health and Safety Assessment Series (OHSAS) 18001:2007 compliant company. The group has been re-awarded its OHSAS 18001:2007 certification, which the company originally received in 2010 following stringent assessments. Earlier this year, the company was reassessed to ensure that not only did the OSHAS system remain compliant, but was also improved. This resulted in the successful renewal of their accreditation for another three years.

Having OHSAS certification means that companies in the group comply with the international occupational health and safety management standards. This commitment to health and safety on site has resulted in a reduction in its Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate, an increase in work from specialised clients, exposure to international associations, industry awards and improved legal compliance. Most importantly, it means fewer injuries to their workforce, which results in better working conditions, improved morale, less downtime on site and increased productivity.

Self-imposed controls

Prior to receiving ISO 14001 accreditation, the group had already self-imposed and implemented stringent environmental controls at all levels of the organisation in line with international Safety, Health, Environmental and Quality (SHEQ) standards. By becoming more environmentally conscious and pro-active, the group has unlocked opportunities for work with local and international clients who place a high premium on earth-friendly operations.

These have included major multinational companies such as Volkswagen and Continental who are governed by international standards of practice and audited based on the contractors and suppliers that they use. All of their contractors and suppliers must be deemed competent enough to conduct work with the highest safety controls and the least amount of impact on the environment. According to Ryan Binedell, SHEQ manager for the Gordon Verhoef and Krause Group of Companies, "Being re-certified for OHSAS 18001 and gaining ISO 14001 positions us as a contractor able to meet these requirements," according to Ryan Binedell, SHEQ manager for the GVK group.

Project has platinum status

Green building retrofits are a key offering in the GVK group's bouquet of services. The company was recently tasked with a high end office fit out in Cape Town's prestigious Clock Tower Precinct in the V&A Waterfront. "The client wanted to achieve a platinum status for the project, using the American-based Green Building LEED system. Achieving platinum status equates to a 95% compliance rate overall to which the contractor contributes points through green practices. We would not have been able to meet this target had we not implemented practices aligned with ISO 14001."

"We are thrilled about being recertified for OHSAS 18001 and attaining ISO 14001 accreditation as both of these promote our aim of being the contractor of choice for our clients. Not only is it very important to our workforce, it also gives our clients peace of mind to know that in addition to complying with the laws of the land, we work to the highest international standards. By adopting these practices, we ensure that as contractors, we are responsible and perform our business in an ethical manner, which in turn benefits our clients," concludes Binedell.

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