BAKER HUGHES

Sector: oil and gas

Baker Hughes Norway discovers the luxury of 'the right glove for the right application'

Guardian℠ consulting service helps optimize glove usage

For almost a century now, Baker Hughes has been a technology leader, providing the global petroleum industry with best-in-class products and services for use in oil and gas wells, pipelines and refineries. Workplace safety is a key issue at all the group's facilities, worldwide. When it comes to hand protection, the Baker Hughes branch in Stavanger, Norway, has recently set a shining example. After an extensive glove audit, most operators switched to more comfortable Ansell gloves to guard against the particular hazards they're exposed to.

The roots of Baker Hughes date back to the early 1900s. In 1907, Reuben C. Baker developed a casing shoe that revolutionized cable tool drilling. In 1909, Howard R. Hughes, Sr. introduced the first roller cutter bit that dramatically improved the rotary drilling process. Over the next eight decades, Baker International and Hughes Tool Company acquired numerous oilfield pioneers, becoming global market leaders in well completions, drilling tools and related services. The two companies merged in 1987 to form the world's leading oilfield services company with operations in over 90 countries. It was at the two Norwegian facilities that Ansell recently became a household name.

Ansell

Inadequate hand protection and comfort levels

Until recently, workers at Baker Hughes in Stavanger wore protective gloves from several different suppliers. These did, however, not always provide the required protection, nor comfort levels. HS&E Specialist Marta Teigland: "Many workers are frequently exposed to chemicals, hazardous compounds as well as more commonly used liquids and substances, like offshore mud or grease. Although seemingly innocent, even the latter pose health risks when handled frequently so adequate hand protection is crucial. We did have quite a few high-quality gloves in our range, but there was frequent confusion about what gloves to wear for what application." That lack of insight, leading to wrong protection levels, and complaints about the discomfort of some gloves, made Baker Hughes call in the help of the experts. PPE distributor ProffPartner recommended Ansell's Guardian℠ consulting service to help the company compare its existing glove range with its needs.

"Now that our people have all experienced the superior comfort and protection levels of Ansell's gloves, tailored expressly to their application, everyone is convinced."

Marta Teigland, HS&E Specialist, Baker Hughes Norway

+ 26.2% fit with requirements

Quite soon after the first exploratory contacts, Marta Teigland sat around the table with Ansell to discuss the Guardian℠ audit process and elaborate a plan of action. Throughout that preparation phase, cooperation and consultation were the keywords. And also during the audit, the team attached great importance to communications. Workers were invited to provide feedback on their current gloves and express their hand protection needs. After a full day of auditing per facility, Ansell's Guardian experts summarized the key findings in an executive report, including the minimum glove requirements, the current levels of glove performance, the gaps between both sets of figures and valuable recommendations for all 33 workstations. "It was a real eye-opener to discover that the 16 different gloves we had been using for years only offered a 79.8% fit with the requirements," Mrs. Teigland admitted. The glove package Ansell recommended only contained 9 different gloves, yet promised a 96% fit. A bold claim that was confirmed after a series of intensive testings.

Everyone convinced

Besides the audit, Ansell also analyzed 30 chemicals frequently used in Baker Hughes' manufacturing units and laboratories. The results were presented in a chemical chart, indicating the penetration times for all the chemicals that come into contact with the gloves under review. That chart showed, for example, that the neoprene NeoTouch™ is the most appropriate glove for people working in the laboratory, as neoprene affords the best protection against hazardous chemicals. At present, the gloves used most frequently at the Baker Hughes facilities in Norway are the Touch N' Tuff®, to protect against chemical splashes, and the HyFlex® 11- 801, which replaces the less comfortable leather or nitrile gloves worn by all workers involved in general handling. Operators in the shipping department feel securely protected by the chemical-resistant AlphaTec® with its wet grip surface. "People who had been working here for years, were rather skeptical when we proposed to switch to new gloves. But now that they've all experienced the superior comfort and protection levels of Ansell's gloves, tailored expressly to their application, everyone is convinced," Marta Teigland concluded.

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Ansell Limited is a global leader in barrier protective products. With operations in the Americas, Europe and Asia, Ansell employs more than 11,000 people worldwide and holds leading positions in the natural latex and synthetic polymer glove and condom markets. Ansell operates in three main business segments: Occupational Healthcare, supplying hand protection to the industrial market; Professional Healthcare, supplying surgical and examination gloves to healthcare professionals; and Consumer Healthcare, supplying condoms and consumer hand protection. Information on Ansell and its products can be found at www.ansell.eu.

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