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Zapa beton safety training for concrete mixer and fire truck drivers

YOU'RE DRIVING THROUGH A PARKING LOT WHEN SUDDENLY YOU COME ACROSS A CAR ACCIDENT. LYING FRONT OF THE CAR IS THE PERSON WHO HAS BEEN RUN OVER, YOU CANNOT SEE HIS FACE BUT AT FIRST GLANCE HE APPEARS TO BE INJURED. INSIDE THE VEHICLE, A YOUNG WOMAN IS BLEEDING PROFUSELY AND SCREAMING IN PAIN... . DURING THE TRAINING SESSIONS, WE SUBJECTED OUR FELLOW DRIVERS TO COMPLEX SCENARIOS SUCH AS THIS!

One of the occupational safety and health protection goals for ZAPA beton in 2025 was to organize practical training sessions for the group of employees potentially at highest risk, namely the concrete mixer and fire truck drivers. Besides the cement plants, their daily working environment includes roads, highways and construction sites of various sizes. These are therefore places where they are not only exposed to normal occupational hazards, but also to a whole series of other factors, ranging from weather conditions through to the variable quality of access roads, the journey itself on busy roads, as well as coordinating work with other people at the construction sites. In order to best safeguard our colleagues, besides the normal occupational safety topics required by law we prepared a series of training sessions this year focused on practical solutions to the most serious situations that could occur during the course of their work. We carefully selected these training sessions based not only on the relevance of the topics but also in collaboration with the transport managers in an effort to cover the aspects that most concern the drivers themselves. Since ZAPA beton employs about 130 concrete mixer and fire truck drivers all over the Czech Republic, we divided the training into various sub-groups.

Early in the year, we organized three very content-rich training courses at our largest plants/operating units: in the Kačerov district of Prague on 9/10 January, and in Hulín, Moravia, on 15 January. We prepared three topics for each day of training: occupational safety on construction sites, first aid, and the use of fire extinguishers.

1. DURING THE SAFE DRIVING COURSE, SCENARIOS INVOLVING WATER-RELATED ACCIDENTS WERE SIMULATED, AMONG OTHER THINGS. (PHOTO: JAN ZAVŘEL, LUKÁŠ LHOTSKÝ)
2. ABOUT 40 SELECTED DRIVERS TOOK A COURSE IN THE SAFE DRIVING OF CONCRETE MIXERS ON SPECIAL TRACKS, LEARNING HOW TO BRAKE IN AN EMERGENCY AND AVOID OBSTACLES (PHOTO: JAN ZAVŘEL, LUKÁŠ LHOTSKÝ)
3. DURING THE TRAINING SESSIONS ON CONSTRUCTION SITES, THE DRIVERS DISCUSSED SPECIFIC RISKY SITUATIONS AND PRACTICAL RULES OF CONDUCT WITH SAFETY TECHNICIANS (PHOTO: JAN ZAVŘEL, LUKÁŠ LHOTSKÝ)





In the first part focused on construction sites, our safety technician, Petr Čuřík, was supported by the most qualified person in the sector: the Construction Site Occupational Safety and Health coordinator and authorized engineer ČKAIT (Czech Chamber of Authorized Engineers and Technicians), whose very responsibility is to monitor compliance with safety regulations on construction sites and collaborate with individual contractors. The drivers learned about the evaluation method used by the control bodies and the consequences of their individual actions, among other aspects. Fellow drivers in this subgroup also received advice such as how to react to the hostile conduct of employees from other companies on construction sites, who to turn to in case of problems, and what the risks are if they do not comply with the established regulations. The first aid training course was held by external experts and was the most

successful activity among the participants. A group of close-knit young paramedics had prepared several very realistic, life-threatening scenarios, including the use of fake blood, the simulation of burns and exposed bone fractures. Of course, this was all part of a carefully organized exercise where there was no risk of actual injury. Through these practical scenarios, our colleagues were thus able to test how similar situations or the voices of potential victims, for example, can impact their psyche and ability to apply the first aid knowledge they have acquired even in stressful situations.

A very interesting element, and for many participants one that was completely new, was the use of a fire extinguisher in a virtual reality environment. Here too, a realistic model complete with safety (nozzle?) and hose was available. Various virtual situations were created that required using the appropriate type of fire

extinguisher depending upon the material on fire, whether it was a fire in a kitchen, wooden pallets, tires or even an entire vehicle on fire. Colleagues were able to compete with each other to see who could put out the fire quickest and also learned why using water on burning oil is absolutely not recommended, for example.

And because driving on the roads is an integral part of our drivers' work, we also organized a safe driving course on four different tracks throughout the Czech Republic as part of a series of practical training sessions for 40 selected colleagues. During these sessions, which were conducted with all safety measures in place, the drivers were able to practice skills such as emergency braking, avoiding sudden obstacles, front and rear skidding, and other situations that could occur on the roads. All this took place behind the wheel of our concrete mixers and fire trucks, i.e., the actual vehicles they use during their work.

We sincerely hope that our colleagues will never have to put into practice the new skills they have learned, but we are sure that if one of the above scenarios should occur they will be ready to face it to the best of their abilities. This not only contributes to the greater safety of our colleagues but also of everyone else. This is also a positive step towards increasing the ability of our colleagues to manage hazardous conditions and improve the company's image at the same time.

