

TDS Projects Construction Sets a New Benchmark for On-Site Safety

Pretoria, 23 February 2017: TDS Projects Construction has reached another major milestone in its health and safety record, building on previous benchmarks to have now reached a total 16 808 injury free shifts (and counting). This impressive figure was achieved through a combination of cultivating a risk competent culture and total commitment to safety by staff at every level within the company.

The achievement of 'excellence in safety' is a goal for most organizations working within or closely to the mining industry and it is translated in a variety of ways into mission statements, programs or internal policies. Often though, deployment of these is done without full integration or a long term vision. If not properly implemented, this effort mostly results in short bursts of success, and unpredictable failures.

According to TDS Operations Director and person in charge of safety procedures, Willie Pieters, the firm has made achieving excellence in safety part of their sustainable business processes, manifested in a culture that has been fully embraced by all TDS staff. This was achieved, he says, by recognising and understanding the risk factors that arise from the nature of the industry in which TDS operates. "We do this by understanding our environment and industry. Our team consists of engineers with extensive experience in the mining and construction sectors. We value the health and safety of our people and their families. Being a medium size company, it is imperative that management and staff work together towards the same goal and have the same objectives."

Pieters explains that TDS has been working on the cultivation of a risk competent culture since its inception. TDS was founded in early 2011 and its first project was the installation of bulkheads, transfer chutes, and conveyor belts at Cullinan Mine. Its second contract was at Eland Mine where the TDS team installed bulkheads, conveyor belts, a transfer chute, side tips, and pipes in the underground sections and on the surface while the mine was at full production.

"The conveyors and bulkheads had to be installed under a very tight schedule to keep up with the production profile. Some of the areas were over excavated and, at times, flooded. Transporting material to the underground areas was a massive challenge and the installation and rigging constituted a high risk for our staff. With a safety conscious mind-set and positive attitude, the TDS team performed well and over two and half years achieved a total of 82 806 Lost Time Injury (LTI) free shifts before the first incident in June 2013 occurred," Pieters recalls. During this period, TDS installed 570 tons and casted 525m³ of concrete and installed 3.5 km of various sizes of piping and all the mechanical items associated with the conveyors, bulkheads and tips.

After reaching this first remarkable safety milestone, TDS was awarded a contract at Finsch Diamond Mine for the construction of conveyor belts, bulkheads, an Osborn crusher, apron feeders, and ore-pass tips with rock breakers in August 2014. The bulkhead and Osborn crusher with apron feeders were installed at a 12 metre high excavation, with the bulkhead weighing a total of 122 tons. "The safe and timeous installation of this magnitude was a challenge with the size of bulkhead underneath a 5.1 metre diameter ore-pass which in

itself posed a very high risk task. The completed project represents a business milestone for TDS but also a safety milestone as well. We experienced two minor Lost Time Injuries since this project at Finsch and since then we have achieved a total of 16 808 injury free shifts,” Pieters says.

Fully entrenching a risk competent culture is a process that takes time, says Corrie Coetzee, TDS Commercial Director. “For a company to achieve a significant safety record there must be recognition and understanding of the risks, motivation to take action and rigorous systems that control the variable and unique risks that differ from project to project.” TDS has developed a competency in managing risks from project to project by putting measures in place to ensure worker safety and risk mitigation.

“By knowing, understanding and applying the Mines Health and Safety act and the Occupational Health and Safety act in our work environment we ensure the safety of our employees. With our solutions driven management style and by applying our experience we also able go the extra mile to implement additional practical preventative measures,” Coetzee explains.

TDS’s management team monitors compliance on a regular basis and works with the company’s trained and experienced Safety Officers to implement sound safety practices, inspections and follow ups, recording keeping and reporting. These practices extend to TDS’s clients as well. All clients have to adhere to the Mines Health and Safety act, and/or the Occupational Health and Safety act. “Employing a contractor working with unsafe habits is a risk to them whereas employing a firm with a sound safety record provides peace of mind,” Pieters says.

“We have built a competent team over the years and value their health and the health of their family members. We know that we can only achieve good safety and production results with a healthy team at work every day. For this reason, the TDS team is totally committed to safety at all times, on every site,” Pieters concludes.