

OSHA UP TO DATE



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VPP Participant Profile



Koch Carbon LLC

Achieving 100 percent employee participation is the goal of any safety program. At Koch Carbon's Corpus Christi, TX, VPP Star site, full participation is a nonissue.

The worksite has four employees – one of the smallest of the 1,395 OSHA VPP sites. But small doesn't mean a lack of safety challenges.

While only one employee works per shift at the site, employees still manage to keep safety at the forefront through constant communication, whether by telephone calls or written notes. Daily diaries are kept to help keep each shift worker informed of worksite activities that occurred during the past shift, and completed or incomplete tasks. The site brings everyone together monthly for safety meetings to help resolve issues before they arise.

The four Corpus Christi workers stack and load petroleum coke produced during the crude oil refining process. A small portion of the petroleum coke is then trucked to domestic terminals, but the vast majority is loaded onto vessels at the Port of Corpus Christi and is exported outside the United States.

For the past 10 years, the site's OSHA recordable incident rate has been zero, as is its lost-time injury rate, said Kevin Kauk, manager of Gulf Coast operations for Koch Carbon Corpus Christi site leaders.

The petroleum coke facility or "pad" is part of sister company Flint Hills Resources' Corpus Christi refining complex. These two refineries earned VPP Star status in 2000. Koch Mineral Services, the parent company of Koch Carbon, also was part of the OSHA strategic partnership formalized in 2003. The Corpus Christi team has the distinction of being the first in the KMS family to earn VPP Star status.

Kauk said smaller sites mean frequent communication between employee and supervisor. Site safety is always a topic, and this carries through to any contract personnel that may be working as well.

Koch Carbon decided to participate in VPP in part because it desired a "reality check" on its safety program, Kauk said. Rather than believing it had a good safety program, it wanted a "report card" validated through OSHA attesting that it was meeting or exceeding safety expectations, he said.

Koch also wanted to ensure organizational discipline required to attain VPP Star status in safety, which Kauk said is the same discipline required to deliver on time, reduce cycle times and have excellent quality. "We have a methodical, systematic approach that is not based on any one person. This makes for stronger, more reliable results," he said.

All Koch Carbon sites manage their pursuit of health and safety excellence via a defined environmental health and safety system that fits within the company's "Market-Based Management Culture." The driving force of Koch's EHS system is seven elements: management commitment; employee involvement; risk identification and compliance; applicability; key controls; training; and changing, sustaining and improving management.

Snapshot

Koch Carbon LLC

Headquarters: Wichita, KS

Founded: 1976

Primary business: Trading, marketing and terminalling petroleum coke, coal, salt, slag, cement, clinker, ocean freight and other related commodities

Top executive: Steve Tatum, president

Number of employees: approximately 140; 4 located at VPP Star site in Corpus Christi, TX