

## When it comes to safety, knowledge is good but practice is better.

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In collaboration with Safety Region Rotterdam, the strategic partner for safety management at SOHAR Port and Freezone, today saw the SOHAR health, safety, security and environment (HSSE) team organise a full-scale field exercise inside the Port's Sohar Aluminium terminal. The exercise included emergency response teams from the Port, Public Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulance (PACDA), the Royal Oman Police, Sohar Aluminium as well as ambulance crews from the Port's other main tenants, terminals and local hospitals working hand-in-hand to respond to the simulated incident.

The aim of today's exercise was to assess training levels and review teamwork under live conditions in the field. Although fully simulated, the trainers managed to create a high level of realism by using smoke generators and carefully positioning volunteer 'casualties' at the scene that the emergency crews had to respond to. Scenarios of this kind provide a full-scale test of the whole organisation's response to an incident, and the best means of confirming the seamless operation of emergency communications.



Two years ago SOHAR founded the Emergency Response Upgrade Programme, or ERUP; the programme is now bearing its first fruits, as Suwaid Al Shamaisi, Executive Manager Corporate Affairs at SOHAR Port and Freezone, explained: "With the establishment of ERUP came considerable investment in different parts of the safety chain, to create an integrated and balanced level of safety at SOHAR Port and Freezone. Corporate installations and safety systems must now comply with clear international standards and preparation for potential incidents is done with the most modern equipment and internationally trained personnel. We will now have an emergency service available at a turnout post in the Port that is manned 24/7/365, equipped with the latest emergency vehicles, a centralised communications and dispatch centre, and a dedicated training facility."

SOHAR is justifiably proud of its safety partnerships in the Port and Freezone concession areas, and the value of the ERUP programme is widely recognised by the Port authority's own teams as well as the Port's tenants. International companies searching for new worldwide industrial production bases often have high international standard safety policies already in place, and 24/7 emergency facilities come high-up on their list of priorities for the selection of a new location.

SOHAR CEO Mark Geilenkirchen, summed up the straightforward approach to safety at SOHAR: "Either we work here safely or we don't work at all, it's that simple. Taking the decision to run a live exercise, like the one we are witnessing here today, is a sign that we already have great confidence in the abilities of all those involved. Simulations like this provide the best possible means of confirming the perfect operation of emergency communications, response, coordination and teamwork, and we always do our utmost to add to the realism of the exercise for all those involved."

Several years ago, together with tenant companies and the local authorities, SOHAR established the HSSE Committee, which now meets monthly. "Every stakeholder, every business, every tenant has a representative in the HSSE-Committee," said Mark Geilenkirchen. "The power of the forum is that stakeholders meet each other face-to-face and developments, problems and solutions are discussed together at the same table and can be put into practice immediately."