

EVERYONE JOINS IN

Working together to improve safety on all sites and in all offices, that's what ITA stands for. Everyone joins in. No one stays behind. Geert Versweyveld, head of Operations of the Civil Engineering department and Project Manager for the A11 project, is happy to put his back into the ITA programme and, with it, wants to help prevent industrial accidents on civil engineering sites.

Use hand signals

Every site has its safety rules, the real challenge is to have these standards applied. "Over the years, our teams on civil engineering sites have become more heterogeneous. Several nationalities work together every day to execute projects that involve considerable risks," explains Geert. "Different cultures have different customs, and that's true as regards to safety. Then there is also the language barrier. Therefore, we must stress the importance of good communication on sites if we want to ensure our safety."

But language difficulties not always make this easy. "As a site or project manager, you need quite a bit of resourcefulness," says Geert. "An example: something we introduced on some of our sites is the use of universally used hand signals. In a toolbox meeting, we defined and introduced them in the different languages of our on-site colleagues, with success, we can say."

The message must be clear and unequivocal to everyone because misunderstandings can lead to incidents. So, it is of the utmost importance that the communication on sites, for instance during toolbox meetings, safety instructions, etc. takes place in the different languages.

Add safety to your to do list

Every day, our teams on construction sites must go through a whole list of technical, organisational, financial and administrative action points. "Make sure that safety is mentioned every day as well," emphasises Geert. "Be aware of our on-site safety. Assess beforehand whether or not a certain action is safe and stop what you are doing whenever necessary." The Imagine-Think-Act programme is there to remind us of this.



"Being aware of safety in our daily tasks is the start of everything."