

# Health and safety in the workplace

## Why is it important?

Synthomer manufactures speciality chemicals using large-scale, complex manufacturing processes, and uses hazardous raw materials to make some of our products. As a result, we adhere to the highest health and safety standards across the business.

## Our commitments

Synthomer's Board, Chief Executive and Executive Committee are fully committed to continuous improvement in health and safety performance. Effective leadership to deliver such performance is a primary duty and everyone at Synthomer is accountable for their own health and safety, and for the safety of those around them, regardless of seniority.

We encourage all employees to participate in SHE programmes that are aligned with Synthomer's three long-term SHE<sup>1</sup> goals:

- To minimise any environmental burden created by our activities
- To have no accidents or incidents
- To have no adverse impact on the health of those who work in, or live near, our operations – or on the health of those who use our products.

## Our Vision 2030 targets:

- Recordable injury case rate (RCR) target<sup>2</sup> of  $\leq 0.20$  by 2030
- Process safety event rate (PSER) target<sup>3</sup> of  $\leq 0.10$  by 2030

## Additional short-term objectives to 2024

- Recordable injury case rate (RCR) target<sup>4</sup> of  $\leq 0.20$
- Process safety event rate (PSER) target<sup>5</sup> of  $\leq 0.20$

Our targets reflect our ambition to be in the top quartile for health and safety performance.

<sup>1</sup> SHE refers to Safety, Health and Environment – for the purpose of this document, we shall be focused on the safety and health aspects of SHE.

<sup>2</sup> Per 100,000 hours for employees and contractors.

<sup>3</sup> Per 100,000 hours for employees and contractors.

<sup>4</sup> Per 100,000 hours for employees and contractors.

<sup>5</sup> Per 100,000 hours for employees and contractors.

## Associated policies

Our Health and Safety Policy – [click here](#).

## Our approach

Our commitment to health and safety underpins our strategy and structure. Our SHE value, which states 'we always have time to work safely', sits at the heart of our five Company values. It means striving towards our ultimate goal of zero accidents and no adverse impact on human health.

Our SHE Management System (SHEMS) is our most important tool in helping us work towards our SHE goals. It includes 22 standards, and each standard has an accompanying mandatory requirement. SHEMS also contains more than 200 guidance documents. We expect sites to carry out an internal audit against these standards at least once every three years. Sites must audit themselves every year against areas that we consider to be of higher priority in terms of major accident prevention. In addition, sites must carry out annual internal compliance audits of our permits to work and management of change standards. Our central SHE team audits all our manufacturing facilities every three to five years, depending on performance and hazard prioritisation.

Synthomer has grown considerably in the past few years, thanks to several acquisitions, and integrating a new business is a complex, multi-layered process. As a result, we expect to see short-term fluctuations in our SHE performance. It is one of the reasons why we allow three to five years for new sites to meet our standards. We are taking a series of tried-and-tested steps to address key issues as we continue to integrate our Adhesive Solutions businesses.

We place all new sites into 'supported status'. This means our health and safety subject matter experts provide the site team with additional support to help meet our minimum standards in areas such as process safety and asset integrity.

Sites 'graduate' out of supported status once they reach those standards. If any site – new or otherwise – drops below those minimum standards, it can be moved back into supported status. In some instances, we may also run a SHE transformation.

As we welcome new colleagues and integrate sites, our SHE teams have a central role to play in creating an inclusive working environment, where everyone knows how to use our processes and systems and demonstrate the right behaviours.

We expect all our sites to follow Synthomer's SHE Principles and 10 Golden Rules to directly target and improve the safe operation of our plants.

Our principles are:

- Look after yourself
- Look after each other
- Effective last line of defence
- Stop and think
- Safe workplace
- Safe vehicle, safe driver
- Safe processes and operations
- Safe systems of work
- No change without assessment
- Learning from our mistakes.

Synthomer's 10 Golden Rules consolidate some basic guidance on good health and safety practice for all employees:

1. Do not access working areas without the required general and/or task-specific PPE
2. Only carry out routine tasks for which you are trained and authorised, and use the specified tools and equipment for the job
3. On stairs and steps – take one at a time, using handrails where present
4. Only drive vehicles for which you are authorised, and follow all signs and rules
5. Do not by-pass safety devices or interlocks without authorisation
6. When a work permit is required, ensure it is valid and complete, and do not deviate from its requirements
7. Lock out and tag out all energy sources before working on equipment
8. On tankers and other vehicles, ensure the fall protection and/or handrail system is in place before accessing the top
9. Do not make any change or carry out any non-routine work without following an accepted system with an appropriate assessment and authorisation
10. Immediately report injuries, incidents and near misses to your line manager.

To ensure our employees and contractors understand our SHE principles and Golden Rules, we expect them to attend inductions and refresher sessions.

In addition to occupational health and safety, good process safety relies on effective layers of protection and controls to keep equipment working efficiently, and ensuring teams understand their role in helping to prevent unexpected releases, including of hazardous chemicals. We carry out routine inspections and maintenance to address issues before they become a problem, and site teams perform safety-critical steps to ensure they are compliant.

An area of safety management known as 'human factors' plays an important part in helping us improve our health and safety performance. This term refers to the specific elements, such as the working environment, and the human and individual characteristics that influence the way we behave in that environment, that can have an impact – positive or negative – on health and safety. Having analysed the human factors that are at play in Synthomer, our central SHE team has been working with our sites to strengthen their understanding of the different steps involved in specific safety-critical processes, and developing tools to help them stay vigilant. For example, we have

introduced large-format 'job aid' boards at several sites, which provide a picture-based flow chart of the different steps involved in certain processes, the personal protective equipment the individual should be wearing to carry out the task, and key reminders along the way.

## **Our performance in 2024**

For the second consecutive year, we achieved an historic low in our recordable injury case rate (RCR) of 0.14. This is a great achievement, one that requires continual focus and diligence from all our teams.

This year's process safety event rate (PSER) was 0.21, which reflects considerable variation between divisions as well as the mix of chemistries and facilities we now have in our portfolio. We still have work to do at our most recently acquired sites to accelerate improvement.

These lagging indicators are important for tracking our overall performance but do not always tell the full story. Some sites have outstanding records, such as Uruapan, Mexico, which celebrated 10 years without a recordable injury or major process safety event. Meanwhile, our Adhesive Solutions site in Middelburg, the Netherlands, has completed a full year without a recordable injury for the first time since 2017.

Process safety has remained a priority throughout 2024, and we conducted around 10% of our 'bowtie' barrier checks as part of our ongoing major accident hazard prevention programme. We also carried out SHE audits at 10 sites to assess the way they continue to prevent potential major accident hazards. These audits included reviews on how sites manage contractors, after we noticed a correlation between contractor events and near misses – a key 'leading' indicator.

Improving our process safety performance remains challenging, particularly at our newer sites. So we continue to strengthen our site systems and focus on a range of leading indicators, such as permit to work, while encouraging sites to report near misses and weak signals. In addition, we make full use of traditional measures, such as incident reporting and learning from both internal and external incidents.

We used this year's annual regional SHE conferences to invite leaders to share their personal experiences of responding to an incident at their site, including what it meant for them and how they dealt with the necessary follow-up improvements. And we introduced new process safety webinars as a direct result of feedback from our 2023 conferences.

We have continued to roll out our competency assurance process to ensure we have consistent health and safety knowledge and skills across the business, and provided process safety training at our newer sites and for new employees.

Synthomer Group health and safety		Unit	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
<b>Total recordable injury case rate - RCR</b>	per 100,000 hrs		0.14	0.16	0.34	0.31	0.36	0.2
Employees' RCR	per 100,000 hrs		0.16	0.14	0.35	0.33	0.36	0.19
Contractors' RCR	per 100,000 hrs		0.06	0.26	0.27	0.23	0.35	0.22
<b>Total fatalities</b>	#		0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total process safety event rate – PSER</b>	per 100,000 hrs		0.21	0.18	0.22	0.16	0.1	0.11
Lost time injury frequency rate (LTIR)	per 1,000,000 hrs		1.3	1.42	2	1.6	2.6	1.4
Employees' LTIR	per 1,000,000 hrs		1.5	1.32	2.2			
Contractors' LTIR	per 1,000,000 hrs		0.6	1.91	1.1			
Lost time injury severity rate	per 100,000 hrs		6.1	8.3	9.7	5.5	12.1	6.3
Employees' LTISR	per 100,000 hrs		6.7	8.1	10.7			
Contractors' LTISR	per 100,000 hrs		3.4	9.1	4.7			
% of employees covered by Health & Safety (or SHE) Committee (including offices)	%		77	–	–	–	–	–
% of employees covered by health and safety risk assessment (or job or task risk assessment) (including offices)	%		80	–	–	–	–	–
% of employees covered by Health & Safety (or SHE) Committee (excluding offices)	%		78	–	–	–	–	–
% of employees covered by health and safety risk assessment (or job or task risk assessment) (excluding offices)	%		82	–	–	–	–	–

## Our next steps

The next 12 months will be very much business as usual for our central SHE team. They will continue to work with our sites to keep strengthening the way they track and address leading indicators.

While we still have work to do, our longer-term SHE trends continue to demonstrate that the longer sites are part of Synthomer and our SHEMS, the better their performance, although this year's PSER does show a small increase year-on-year. Our functional SHE experts will continue to support our newer sites to help them accelerate their SHE improvement by fully adopting strong systems and by learning from others across Synthomer.

In 2025, we will focus on process safety training for all our operations teams and continue to develop our major accident hazard scenario barrier checks.

## Our methodologies

**Recordable injury case rate (RCR)** – accidents per 100,000 hours of employees and contractors. We track and record our RCR for injuries that need more than first-aid treatment

**Process safety event rate (PSER)** – events per 100,000 hours of employees and contractors. We record, rate and track our PSERs using a four-tier scoring system. Tiers 1 and 2 (with Tier 1 being more severe) meet the International Council of Chemical Associations' (ICCA) definition of a 'reportable PSE'.

**Lost-time injury (LTI)** – any injury that prevents a person doing their normal job for one or more work periods, not including the work period of the injury.

**Lost-time injury severity rate (LTISR)** – based on the cumulative reported days away from work – of one person off >200 days.