



Green Cross for Safety® Awards 2022 Finalist | Advocate

Nutrien

Agriculture is rife with hazards that pose potentially fatal consequences. As part of its vital work helping growers feed the world, Nutrien deals with numerous hazardous materials, mobile equipment and extended work hours in compressed seasons. Quality training is one of the essential components for Nutrien to prevent serious injuries and fatalities and send everyone home safe, every day.

Nutrien is a diverse business, operating close to 2,000 facilities around the world. In Canada, Nutrien's retail business (Nutrien Ag Solutions) has approximately 350 retail, terminal and distribution centers, employing nearly 1,600 workers across six vast provinces.

Historically, Nutrien relied on third-party providers for retail employee training in Canada. However, the content was generic and did not account for operational or regulatory differences between provinces, regions or countries, and did not meet some local standards. This led to confusion, inconsistency and even disengagement among workers who attended these classes.



Nutrien knew it needed to address these issues to keep its employees engaged in training and safe on the job. The Safety, Health and Environment Team advocated on behalf of employees for the quality, relevant, in-class, hands-on training that was critical to success. This advocacy resulted in a proposal to build a central Nutrien-owned facility serving Canada and develop a suite of custom, region-specific training programs. This would allow the company to achieve consistent messaging to drive and promote its safety culture and influence daily decisions that contribute to safe operations and prevent serious injuries and fatalities. Upon approval of the project, the facility construction and content development occurred concurrently.

Facility Design and Construction



Located in Rosthern, Saskatchewan (not far from Nutrien’s head office), the training center is a state-of-the-art, purpose-built facility. It provides an immersive learning environment designed to engage adult learners. It includes hands-on training components, using real equipment and props, as well as advanced audio, visual and smartboard technologies. Nutrien is in the process of incorporating augmented and virtual reality into future training offerings.

The Training Center will house training for high-risk, life-critical operating tasks such as fall protection, hoisting and rigging, confined space entry, energy isolation and hot work, to name a few. It also supports the delivery of the company’s world-class Advanced Ammonia training and any future training projects. The Training Center provides year-round hands-on training. Having an indoor facility built for the purpose of hands-on training allows Nutrien to conduct life-critical training sessions at times that better suit workers during winter months.



Content Development

Subject matter experts (SMEs) and Nutrien’s Learning and Development Team collaborated on region-specific training programs to meet the needs of workers, with a special focus on Serious Injury and Fatality (SIF) prevention. SMEs can facilitate high-quality, in-house training that reinforces core messages, best practices, company standards and policies in a consistent manner. The courses are designed to promote networking, collaboration and knowledge sharing across a diverse employee base. The Training Center was designed to meet the needs of these different groups and be accessible to all.

The first of such courses is the world-class Advanced Ammonia training, which uses instructor-led sessions and hands-on activities to take learners through regulatory requirements, procedure development, emergency response scenarios, contractor management, equipment inspection and maintenance, and safe operation of equipment. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, 120 participants have so far completed the courses. A diverse mix of operators, managers and safety, health and environment professionals from across Canada have trained as students, and 84% of them rated these courses as “Excellent.”

Inclusion and Partnership

Nutrien envisions the Training Center as an inclusive, accessible space and hub of learning. Currently, the Training Center is used by other business units within the organization and provides a conducive atmosphere for all training needs at Nutrien Ag Solutions. Nutrien’s Transportation Emergency Response team has utilized the facility for a training event to initiate a Retail Transportation Emergency Response team. The facility has the space and designated props to enable real-world mock exercises.



It has also provided Nutrien with the opportunity to create new partnerships with other industry leaders who share the company's passion for SIF prevention. The positive publicity surrounding the Training Center in the industry has resulted in inquiries from Fertilizer Canada to host their 2022 auditor training sessions in conjunction with the Agrichemical Warehousing Standards Association at the Training Center. The team has also received an inquiry from the Saskatchewan Safety Council to explore partnership opportunities with them on safety training priorities.

We look forward to more partnerships and collaboration to make our business and our industry safer.