

Health & Safety Laboratory

An agency of the Health & Safety Executive



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LABORATORY

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The background of the page is an aerial photograph of a quarry or industrial site. The terrain is rugged and uneven, with various shades of brown, grey, and blue. There are several large, irregularly shaped pits or excavations scattered across the landscape. A prominent dark line, possibly a road or a railway track, runs diagonally across the upper left portion of the image. A semi-transparent green rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title text.

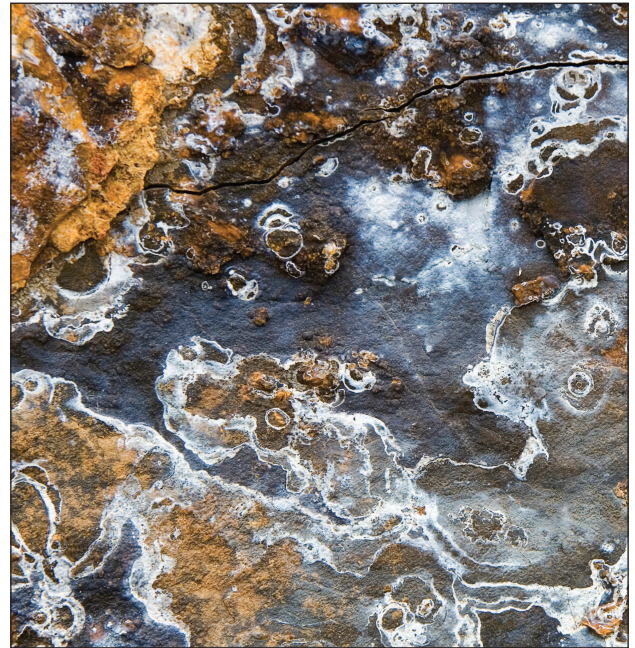
# Improving Safety Culture at Vale

## The Client

Vale is a global mining company and a leading producer of iron ore, potash, nickel, and other base metals. The Clydach Refinery is in Swansea, Wales and employs around 300 people, and produces high purity nickel products.

## The Problem

As a responsible employer and as an organisation aiming to become the largest and best mining company in the world, Vale recognised the impact that improving safety culture could have on their business. At the core of a series of initiatives to encourage employees to communicate more frequently and identify issues before they became problems, was the recognition that safety must be everyone's concern. The assessment of the prevailing safety culture was therefore seen as the first step in the development of a sustainable programme of continuous improvement, so Vale chose the Health and Safety Laboratory's Safety Climate Tool (SCT) to do this.



## What We Did

- We worked with Vale to tailor the SCT question set to ensure that the survey was specific to their circumstances.
- We provided impartial analysis of the survey's results in order to identify the key issues.
- Our Human Factors specialists used the key issues from the survey as the basis for a series of staff focus groups and interviews.
- We used the information from the focus groups and interviews to make recommendations to the Senior Management Team for a strategy of continuous improvement.

## Outcome/Benefits

2010 became a year to remember for Vale's Clydach refinery. They established a new record low for work-related injuries - down 20% over the previous year. However, the most impressive thing about this statistic was that for the first time in the refinery's 108-year history, none of the injuries represented a lost-time injury. Not a single worker from the 200 full-time employees or 100 contractors who work at the refinery missed work due to a work-related injury.

"This is an outstanding achievement for us and demonstrates our commitment to the safety of our employees. Measuring the perceptions of our staff to safety was key to understanding where improvements could be made. We won't be resting on our laurels though, as the challenge now is to sustain this performance and move closer towards our goal of zero harm. The Safety Climate Tool will be instrumental to us achieving this."

*Chris Thomson, Environment, Health and Safety Manager, Vale*