

It's Always "Safety First" for Reuter-Stokes

Senior Chemist Christa Kalcic

Safety plays an important role in any manufacturing facility. At Reuter-Stokes, it's a way of life. A voluntary protection program (VPP) drives much of this safety-first culture. In fact, the company is one of 2,200 active site members of the Voluntary Protection Program Participant's Association (VPPPA).

The VPPPA is the leader in helping worksites achieve continuous improvement toward their occupational safety and health goals. VPPPA members are champions of safety and health excellence, experiencing fewer workplace fatalities, injuries, and illnesses. The association provides national and regional advocacy, education, and resources to support the advancement of our members, their worksites, and the OH&S profession. OSHA started the organization, which remains a cooperative program with the regulatory agency.

Reuter-Stokes has been a VPP STAR site since 2001, which means it and its employees have been continuously recognized for demonstrating "exemplary achievement in the prevention and control of occupational safety and health hazards with the development, implementation and continuous improvement of their safety and health management system." The company is one of only 102 VPP STAR sites in Ohio.

"As a site, we are grateful to be a part of the OSHA VPP program and know it's truly a partnership with our state regulatory agency," says Reuter Stokes Health, Safety and Environmental (HSE) Manager Tanya Miller.

Much of this success stems from the company's employees and their commitment to voluntary protection programs (VPP). Recently, Senior Chemist Christa Kalcic was named VPPPA's February Member of the Month. This honor recognizes Kalcic's involvement in VPPPA and OSHA safety activities. Kalcic has been with the company for 13 years and has served as Reuter-Stokes' VPP leader since 2017.

"VPP is tied into our site daily, and everyone participates in it," Kalcic explains. "We have HSE policies that apply to every employee in some way or another. VPP has been very helpful in



regards that it keeps pushing us to go above and beyond the safety culture for our employees. It is a great program that gets everyone involved in safety so we can remain a STAR site and adapt to safety changes as they arise."

Kalcic's commitment to safety reaches beyond Reuter-Stokes. She also has become a VPPPA special government employee (SGE) member. This allows her to serve as a volunteer safety auditor at different facilities on behalf of OSHA.

As Miller notes, the site's VPP participation under Kalcic's leadership has grown beyond what anyone could have expected.

"Christa has such passion and a willingness to step up and lead the way in safety. She's a natural leader, goal-oriented, and driven person," Miller says. "Her outreach and participation in the VPP program have created more connections and relationships with other VPP sites. She steps up at VPPPA conferences by volunteering and using her time to connect with others. She is always looking for ways to give back and support others. It's great seeing Christa recognized as the VPPPA Member of the Month, she is so deserving of this recognition! Way to go Christa!"