

## California's Safety and Health Stars The Biggest Gets There the Fastest

EL SEGUNDO — The largest company to qualify for California's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) also got there the fastest. Now, Raytheon Space and Airborne Systems, which occupies a huge campus in the middle of this town south of Los Angeles International Airport plus two other nearby sites, is the 84th workplace to fly a Cal/VPP Star flag on its grounds.

The El Segundo facilities house some 7,500 workers and develop sensor systems for military and space applications, including electro-optical infrared sensors, airborne radar, high-energy lasers, precision guidance systems and electronic warfare systems.

Dennis Reed, vice president of operations for Space and Airborne Systems, says the VPP certification "symbolizes our commitment to a safer workplace." When the firm decided to go after its safety Star, management knew it had big task in getting buy-in from such a large and diverse workforce. But it realized that the company would be taking the same steps to achieve safety excellence even if it weren't working toward VPP, so "why not just go for it," Reed says.



*Raytheon Environmental, Safety and Health Director Suzelle Moss (left), Cal/OSHA Consultation Manager Vicky Heza and Raytheon Vice President for Operations Dennis Reed unveil the firm's VPP flag.*

Once it started on the journey, the company culture drove the workforce to make it happen ahead of schedule. As a result, Raytheon went from application to certification in 18 months. Many VPP participants take almost twice as long to achieve Star status.

Hazards at the campus represent the high-tech nature of the work, such as lasers and chemicals, plus everyday threats such as ergonomics; slips, trips and falls; and hazards from light manufacturing.

VPP Manager Iraj Pourmehraban notes that it is "especially challenging" for a firm with such a large workforce and such complex work to complete the journey, requiring a "cohesive, strategic team effort." He added that the El Segundo site is a powerful example of what VPP is all about: "leadership commitment and employee-driven safety at the highest levels."

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