



# Wtca Update

## Shelter Systems Limited Manages Risk with SCORE Certification

by Marisa Hirsch

One CM discovers surprising benefits from the programs that make up SCORE.

**S**CORE certification was something that Joe Hikel, chief operating officer of Shelter Systems Limited, immediately knew he wanted for the company. Upon learning about the developing program at WTCA Board meetings, he saw it as a way to protect the company.

In fact, Hikel said he views SCORE essentially as a group of best practices, which makes it a valuable risk management tool. If a bad situation were to arise, being SCORE certified would be a way to protect the company.

"If we were to get [involved in] a product liability suit, let's say, we can point to [SCORE] and say we are at the head of the industry and employing great practices," said Hikel. "We think that would be a great defense."

Shelter, a SCORE Elite company, attained its status in July 2007. Like many WTCA members, the company was already using several WTCA programs and resources required by SCORE—but not everything required for the Elite level. Shelter had to get some technicians up to higher levels of Truss Technician Training certification, purchase ORisk and send the required people through, and purchase and implement Operation Safety.

While this may sound like a bit of an undertaking, everyone on Shelter's management team was on board. "We really didn't get bogged down in the detail of 'Well, we already have a safety program,'" Hikel said.

While Shelter did indeed already have a safety program, they decided to mold theirs and WTCA's together, which was a relatively seamless process. Hikel said that putting Operation Safety in place does not mean throwing out an established safety program. For Shelter, it meant recording a little more information than they had been previously—such as preventative maintenance of equipment.

"It really didn't cost much money because we were doing a lot of it already," said Hikel. "And we actually got some benefits.... Some of the requirements of Operation Safety made our program better."

ORisk was the most challenging part of their attaining SCORE Elite certification, but Hikel said it really opened up some eyes. There was some initial resistance due to time and doubts about applicability, but it was quite valuable to the group as a team. It helped people understand the liability that the company assumes with each job. (The ORisk SCORE requirement is for the following people to complete the course: all general managers, a contract administrator, 75 percent of sales staff, and all technical staff managers.)

Shelter decided to send people through ORisk using a projector in a group setting. Participants then had a chance to discuss the content. "The discussion really helped people to understand how [the material] related to what we're doing," he said.

While SCORE's inherent risk management value is the biggest reason Hikel sees for participation, the company also uses SCORE for marketing purposes. The logo and the Elite seal are used in correspondence and on layouts, as well as on their company website.



### at a glance

- Shelter Systems Limited believes that SCORE certification is one way to protect the company.
- The company embraced the requirements of SCORE, even when it came to implementing WTCA programs that they wouldn't have voluntarily chosen to use.
- Operation Safety and ORisk are programs that delivered surprising benefits to Shelter.



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"What we're trying to do is build a profile and build the market's perception," Hikel said. "I believe you have to invest in your company's perception in the marketplace. If not, you're going to be the cheap guy; you're going to be the commodity. If you want to be differentiated, [SCORE] is a good path."

"We've always wanted to raise our profile and to be the best truss manufacturer in the country," Hikel added. "We saw this as a way to quantify that." **SBC**

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