Case Study: Kimberly-Clark

A-Safe - Leading the way for a safer workplace

Since 2005, A-Safe, safety barrier specialists based in Halifax, England, has been working alongside health care giant Kimberly-Clark to provide solutions to protect its 53,000-strong workforce across the globe.

> **"A-Safe has proved the most cost-efficient solution for our safety barriers, however this is just a bonus, as the most essential point is that it provides the highest standard of safety so that our team feel much safer in their working environment."**
>
> *Miguel Perez, Safety Environmental Manager, Kimberly-Clark, Spain*

As a multi-national company Kimberly-Clark has an enviable safety record that it is keen to maintain. Busy factories, warehouses and manufacturing mills located in almost every continent around the world require the best solution to keep its assets (employees and equipment) safe, and A-Safe has successfully risen to the challenge.

From trialling a small section of barrier at its site in Flint, North Wales, Kimberly-Clark has not looked back in its relationship with A-Safe. Since 2005 the blue chip company has seen the benefits of the polymer-based safety barrier systems over and above its steel equivalents, by providing the strength and durability of steel with the flexibility and reduced maintenance of plastic. As a result, Kimberly-Clark has appointed A-Safe an approved supplier on a worldwide-basis, implementing barriers in over 11 countries, including 12 sites in America alone.

Stewart Leary, Safety Technician at Kimberly-Clark's Flint plant was one of the first to introduce A-Safe barriers on-site.

He explained: "Safety is obviously a number one priority at Kimberly-Clark. We operate huge sites with hundreds of workers on the factory floor at any given moment. We were approached by A-Safe and I have to admit we were extremely sceptical. We had steel barriers in place and whilst they did the job, we did have to continually replace, repair and maintain them, so we were willing to offer A-Safe a trial.

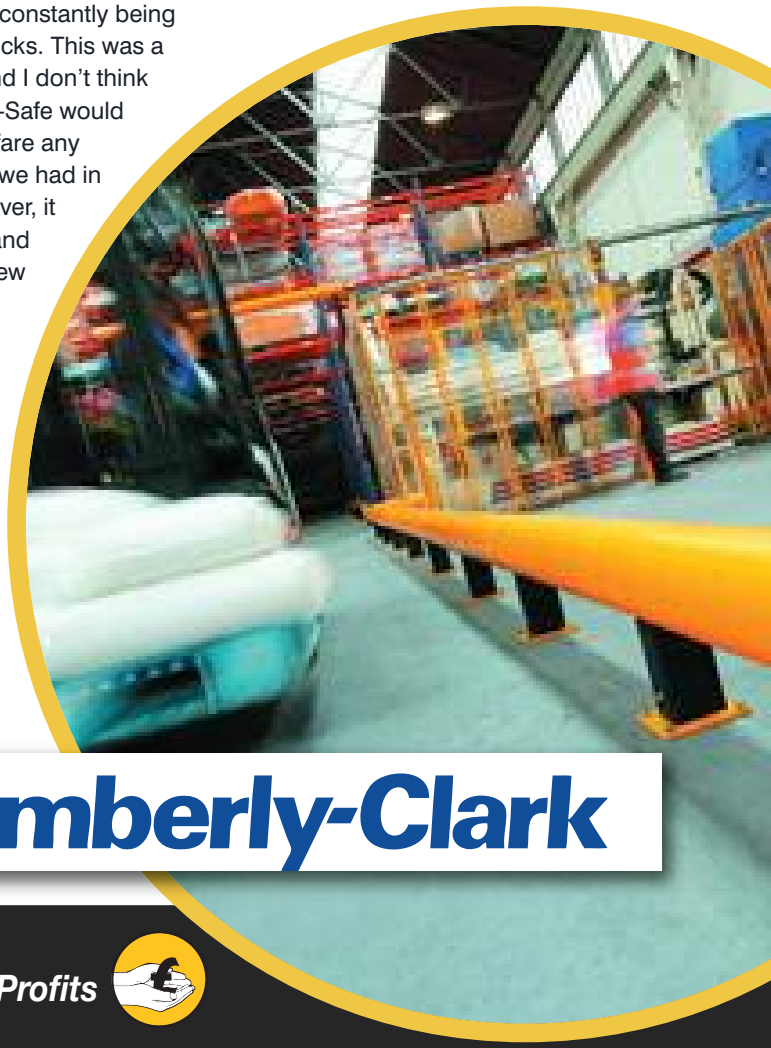
"We didn't make their life easy, providing a trial section in a high traffic area. The gantry that we wanted protecting was a problem area and was constantly being damaged by fork lift trucks. This was a very vulnerable area and I don't think anyone believed that A-Safe would stand up to the test or fare any better than the system we had in place previously. However, it more than did the job and was the catalyst to review the site and start replacing steel barriers with A-Safe ones."

The Flint site spans several mills and employs over 500 people in total, manufacturing brands such as Huggies baby wipes and Kleenex bathroom tissue.

Andy Linkman, Site Safety Advisor, is responsible for the ongoing health & safety across the Flint site.

Five years on and the Kimberly-Clark success story rolls on. Word spread, health and safety chiefs from Head Office in America saw the A-Safe barriers in-situ and the success they were achieving and set about recommending A-Safe as the approved barrier supplier across its sites going forward with similar results being achieved in all areas.

Miguel Perez, Safety Environmental Manager at its modern plant in Spain, explained how the company-wide recommendation led to enhancing its safety systems across its 5,000 sq metre diaper production hall. Pedestrian segregation barriers were installed to help coordinate the busy factory which could have up to 100 personnel on site at any one time.



Kimberly-Clark

Our flexibility is our strength

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“A-Safe has proven time and again that the plastic barriers are superior to steel in all areas, offering my team peace of mind that what we are installing is not only doing its job of protecting the workforce and machinery but also cost-effective in the sense that repairs, maintenance and damage to the barriers, vehicles and equipment is negligible. Where possible we are looking to continue to roll out A-Safe barriers to replace steel ones across the site.”

Andy Linkman, Site Safety Advisor Kimberly-Clark, Flint

Better segregation was required to improve pedestrian flow around the plant and also to separate forklift truck aisles from pedestrian corridors. Hi-tech electrical units which were vulnerable from vehicles using the site also needed protecting and A-Safe barriers proved to be the perfect solution for this. A-Safe has also reached across the Atlantic and has particularly impressed Kimberly-Clark health and safety advisors in its parent company’s own country, the USA.
11 locations across America now have A-Safe barriers installed across its sites and this is continuing to grow and develop as health and safety teams see first hand how neighbouring mills have benefited from the plastic barriers.

Everett Mill in Washington is one of the latest to adopt A-Safe systems on-site. Scott Basom, Facilities Engineer at part of the Mill had seen A-Safe traffic barriers used efficiently and effectively at other parts of Everett Mill and decided to introduce A-Safe to the areas he had responsibility for.

He explained: “I wasn’t actively looking for a new barrier system, but had come across A-Safe at other parts of the site, and engineer colleagues had shown me how they were benefiting from using A-Safe across some of their applications. I was aware that it was used across the corporation and was a recommended supplier to us. Using a few smaller projects I was able to test the benefits myself, which led to us incorporating A-Safe wherever possible.

“It’s easy to see why A-Safe is so popular. It’s so easy to use and install and it looks pretty nice in the warehouse too! Safety is obviously a top priority and with over 1,000 employees on-site we need to eliminate risk at all levels. Metal bollards have to be welded to be repaired and this in turn poses a fire danger, so A-Safe automatically negates this. Due to the resilience of the material and its ability to deflect and bend under loads, damage to the driver or pedestrian is reduced as is the need for constant repair.”

The Everett Mill is part of Kimberly-Clark’s ‘family care’ production site, producing amongst others, Scott Toilet Tissue.
In particular Scott Basom has overseen the installation of A-Safe traffic barriers with handrails in its large storage facility which is used by pedestrians as well as heavy duty trucks sharing the same area. The barriers create a clear segregation for pedestrians from vehicles and delineates a walkway for employees on foot next to the trucker aisle.

So, would Scott recommend A-Safe to other facility managers? The answer is a resounding ‘yes’.

“I would definitely advise anyone looking for safety solutions to give A-Safe a try. If safety is your job, like mine, then you are always looking for a system like A-Safe that does what it says and can make your role simpler.”

Jay Martin, CAD Contact at Kimberly-Clark’s Utah facility also in the United States of America, concurred, adding: “We have been hearing positive things about the use of A-Safe barriers from other KCC sites, and it is always satisfactory when a product lives up to its high reputation. Our health & safety record is not something that we would jeopardise on the whim of a new product, but A-Safe is delivering time and again.”

Similar positive stories are being reported globally and the successful collaboration between Kimberly-Clark and A-Safe is set to continue well into the future, with new areas being developed including opportunities at its operations in the Far East, as well as rolling out A-Safe systems across existing client sites.
As the leading health care manufacturer develops internationally, it can be confident that A-Safe will continue to provide solutions to protect its safety record and reputation the world over.

- **Kimberly-Clark has an enviable health & safety record to maintain**
- **Close working relationship between A-Safe & Kimberly-Clark since 2005**
- **A-Safe preferred supplier at sites all over the world including the UK, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, USA and Singapore**
- **A-Safe systems found in busy production halls, storage and logistic warehouses providing effective pedestrian and vehicle segregation as well as protecting equipment**

For more information, contact the team at A-Safe on 01422 344402 or visit www.asafe.com
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