

Corporate social responsibility report

Environmental

Charter encourages each group company to adopt a responsible approach to environmental management.

ESAB

During 2005, ESAB implemented an Environmental Management System ('EMS') covering certain aspects of its business in such areas as development, design, production, sales and services of welding and cutting products. The EMS will enable ESAB to manage compliance with new European requirements like the WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) and RoHS (Restriction of the use of certain Hazardous Substances in electrical and electronic equipment) Directives.

In December 2005, ESAB became the first company in the welding industry to achieve worldwide ISO 14001 certification. The certification demonstrates ESAB's commitment to control its environmental impact and to comply with legal and other regulatory requirements.

As part of ESAB's ISO 14001 environmental management system, environmental aspects have been integrated as part of product development programmes. The programmes include areas such as energy consumption, waste and elimination of hazardous substances.

Howden

There has been increased emphasis on environmental matters during 2005 and a formal policy has been issued.

Key areas of concern include conserving energy and water; promoting recycling and reuse where possible; considering the environmental impact throughout products' life cycle; and ensuring waste products are treated or disposed of so as not to damage the environment.

Howden is a significant provider of products for pollution control systems. It is intended that increasingly demanding internal systems be implemented to improve operating standards in partnership with customers and with other users of Howden equipment throughout the product lifecycle to minimise any adverse effect on the environment of the power generation or other equipment to which it is attached.

Community

ESAB and Howden are involved in a number of social, community and sponsoring activities. Individual businesses may contribute to specific activities in their location.

In relation to ESAB, examples include a social programme in the city of Ushuaia in Argentina, a volunteers programme to benefit needy families in the Itaú Village near ESAB's head office in Brazil and the sponsoring of the Nordic Arc, a centre for endangered species in Sweden.

Within Howden, charitable donations are made to organisations such as St. Margaret of Scotland Hospice, Belfast Children in Need, and an Aids charity for children in South Africa.