FCA Restarts Production at Sevel plant with Maximum Attention to Workplace Health and Safety

A variety of health and safety measures have been implemented at the Sevel plant in Atessa, Italy – a joint venture with PSA Group and one of the leading producers of commercial vehicles for the international market – in preparation for today’s return to work of most of the over 6,000 employees. Those measures include sanitization of over 300,000 m² of workshop floor, installation of around 130 dispensers of hand sanitizer, posting of information on prevention on 15 large billboards and 25 video monitors, distribution of over 6,000 informational brochures and 18,000 posters, installation of a dozen body temperature monitoring cameras at plant entrances and over 600 points equipped with disinfectant materials for employees to clean the equipment they use during their shift.

These and other measures form part of the agreement signed on April 9 with the Italian trade unions FIM-CISL, UILM-UIL, FISMIC, UILM, AQCFR and FIOM-CGIL. This agreement establishes a comprehensive series of measures for all FCA sites in Italy to ensure maximum protection of workers following restart of the production activities suspended due to the Covid-19 crisis. At the same time, limited activities also recommenced at the plants in Cassino, Pomigliano, Termoli and Mirafiori in connection with components supply for the Sevel plant.

Pietro Gorlier, COO for FCA’s EMEA region, said: "At the Sevel plant in Atessa today, we have demonstrated that protecting our workers is our main priority. Today’s reopening of the Sevel plant, together with R&D activities and pre-series production of electric and hybrid models in Turin and Melfi, is the result of rigorous analysis and preparation carried out in collaboration with leading virologists and other experts and agreed with all trade unions. We have been working daily with the Italian government and local authorities to prepare for a return to production in Italy, while ensuring there is no compromise to the safety of anyone working at any of our production facilities or offices."

Before employees returned to work, the Company repeated cleaning and sanitization activities carried out at the plant when production was suspended on March 17. Those activities covered 18 rest areas, 52 toilets, 29 changing rooms with more than 7,400 lockers, 2 medical rooms and 4 cafeterias. Maximum occupancy of dining areas will be reduced and opening hours extended to ensure compliance with the minimum required distance of one meter between individuals. These areas have also been equipped with sanitizers and disinfectant materials for employee use (sanitizing gel, antibacterial soap, surface cleaning kits, etc.). Safety signs and notices have also been posted throughout the plant.

Prior to the start of production, all Sevel employees were sent a link via WhatsApp and email to a webpage explaining measures to be taken in each production area, together with video tutorials. The measures include maintaining a minimum distance of one meter between individuals, instructions for washing hands with soap and water or sanitizing gel, instructions for refilling a cup or water bottle from public dispensers, new rules for the company cafeteria and correct management of meetings. Employees were also provided with instructions on how to recognize and respond to Covid-19 symptoms and preventive measures to be taken in an emergency.
Production and office areas have also been reconfigured based on specific health and safety requirements to enable the redistribution of workers and to increase distancing between those working in close proximity on the assembly line. In production areas, movement of personnel between areas has been limited to the minimum level possible and based on specific needs. Similar measures have been implemented in common areas, while the plant’s 85 offices have been fitted with protective barriers between employees or workstations have been relocated. Work breaks have been organized by area and phased throughout the course of each shift.

In the coming days, training on safety standards will be made available via e-learning, standard internal communications channels and by sector managers with the support of specialized medical personnel.

Today, every employee at the Sevel plant was given a personal kit containing surgical masks and gloves (to be replenished daily), as well as a pair of safety glasses to be worn when cleaning their individual workstation. The number of masks supplied also means that those employees who commute via public transport will have an additional mask for their travel to and from work.

Finally, rigorous checks were also put into place at all entrances to the Sevel plant, as provided under the agreement signed by FCA and the trade unions. Everyone entering the premises on foot or by car, had their temperature checked by thermal camera or remote thermometer operated by first aid and medical staff wearing adequate protective equipment.

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For further information:
Email: mediarelations@fcagroup.com
www.fcagroup.com