

# PROMOTING HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

SPECIAL SERIES REPORT



## FROM THE REPORT...

### Did You Know?

According to the ILO, an estimated **2.3 million people die every year from work-related accidents and diseases**. More than 160 million people suffer from occupational and work-related diseases, and there are 313 million non-fatal accidents per year.



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## CONTRIBUTORS



Sudeep Uprety



Kritagya Regmi

## Background

[Occupational health and safety](#) (OHS) management protects the safety, health, and welfare of people at the workplace. In 1950, the first session of the joint International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) Committee on Occupational Health adopted a definition of occupational health. The definition was revised in 1995 and states:

“Occupational health should aim at the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations; the prevention amongst workers of departures from health caused by their working conditions; the protection of workers in their employment from risks resulting from factors adverse to health; the placing and maintenance of the worker in an occupational environment adapted to his physiological and psychological capabilities and, to summarize: the adaptation of work to man and of each man to his job”.

The [‘WHO Healthy Workplace Framework and Model: Background and Supporting Literature and Practices’](#) states that there is much that needs to be done to improve the health, safety and well-being of workers globally.

Priorities of the **Global Plan of Action on Workers’ Health** include:

- 1 Policies must be developed and implemented at national and enterprise levels to support worker health;
- 2 Health must be protected and promoted in the workplace
- 3 Access to Basic Occupational Health Services (BOHS) must be improved;
- 4 Evidence-based effective practices to improve worker health must be communicated
- 5 Worker health must be considered in the broader context of education, trade and commerce, and economic development.

This framework and model suggests ways that employers and workers and their representatives in collaboration can make significant contributions to these points.

World Health Organisation has defined a healthy workplace as the one where workers and managers collaborate to use a continual improvement process to protect and promote the health, safety and well-being of workers and the sustainability of the workplace by considering the following, based on identified needs:

- Health and safety concerns in the physical work environment;
- Health, safety and well-being concerns in the psychosocial work environment including organization of work and workplace culture;
- Personal health resources in the workplace; and
- Ways of participating in the community to improve the health of workers, their families and other members of the community.

### **World Day for Safety and Health at Work**

World Day for Safety and Health at Work is an international campaign launched by International Labor Organisation (ILO). This day is marked every year on April 28, since 2003 with the aim of promoting the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally.

ILO promotes the creation of a global preventative safety and health culture involving ILO constituents and all key stakeholders in this field. Various activities are organised in many parts of the world which is observed by national authorities, trade unions, employers' organizations and safety and health practitioners.

It is an awareness-raising campaign intended to focus international attention on the magnitude of the problem and on how promoting and creating a safety and health culture can help reduce the number of work-related deaths and injuries. This year the campaign has focused on the critical need for countries to improve their capacity to collect and utilize reliable occupational safety and health (OSH) data.

This year the theme is, "Optimize the collection and use of OSH Data". A set of fact sheet has been developed as part of the 2017 World Day for Safety and Health at Work campaign with the aim of raising awareness and to support countries in optimizing the collection and use of occupational safety and health (OSH) data. The fact sheets have summarized the key elements of national system for recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases and has discussed other complementary methods and sources of OSH data and highlight the challenges in this field.

**According to the ILO, an estimated 2.3 million people die every year from work-related accidents and diseases. More than 160 million people suffer from occupational and work-related diseases, and there are 313 million non-fatal accidents per year.** The suffering caused by such accidents and illnesses to workers and their families is incalculable.

## Themes over the years (2003-2016)



## International Labour Standards on Occupational Safety and Health

The [ILO Constitution](#) sets forth the principle that workers should be protected from sickness, disease and injury arising from their employment. ILO standards on occupational safety and health provide essential tools for governments, employers, and workers to establish such practices and to provide for maximum safety at work. In 2003 ILO adopted [global strategy to improve occupational safety and health](#) which included the introduction of a preventive safety and health culture, the promotion and development of relevant instruments, and technical assistance.

The ILO Constitution sets forth the principle that workers should be protected from sickness, disease and injury arising from their employment. ILO has adopted more than 40 standards specifically dealing with occupational safety and health, as well as over 40 Codes of Practice. Some of them are mentioned below:

### Fundamental principles of occupational safety and health

- [Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 \(No. 155\)](#) and its [Protocol of 2002](#)
- [Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 \(No. 161\)](#)
- [Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 \(No. 187\)](#)

## Health and safety in particular branches of economic activity

- Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964 (No. 120)
- Occupational Safety and Health (Dock Work) Convention, 1979 (No. 152)
- Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No. 167)
- Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176)
- Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)

## Protection against specific risks

- Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 (No. 115)
- Occupational Cancer Convention, 1974 (No. 139)
- Working Environment (Air Pollution, Noise and Vibration) Convention, 1977 (No. 148)
- Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No. 162)
- Chemicals Convention, 1990 (No. 170)

## Codes of Practice

ILO Codes of Practice set out practical guidelines for public authorities, employers, workers, enterprises, and specialized occupational safety and health protection bodies. Codes of Practice provide guidance on safety and health at work in certain economic sectors, on protecting workers against certain hazards, and on certain safety and health measures.

## Safety and health at work in Nepal

The concept of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is in its initial stage in Nepal as the concept of working conditions, occupational safety and health of the workers is quite a new concept for many. After the restoration of a multi-party system in Nepal, Government of Nepal has begun to pay more attention to industrial working conditions and environment by enacting and enforcing the new Labour Act 2048 (1992). It has highlighted few issues and provisions on working hours, physical infrastructural setup, yearly medical examination and provisions of safety measures in work etc.

The OSH sector in Nepal has three major identified sectors: **government, industries/employers and work force/labour unions**. The government has introduced 'National Occupational Safety and Health Policy' with the goal to minimise any type of accidents in workplace by adopting necessary preventive measures and to develop OSH culture. According, to the Policy along with the development of industries, the economic tasks has also increased.

On one hand, it has generated job for many people while on the other hand the risk of accidents, death in the workplace has increased. Such development which keeps citizens life at risk doesn't bring long term development but creates many problems. It

has been estimated that many deaths occur every year at the workplace. In terms of safety and health the situation of the workplace is hazardous. It is a big challenge to minimise the accidents and create a healthy and safe environment. Some of the obstacles in meeting the challenge are lack of policy guideline for industrial safety and health; lack of implementation of laws, lack of awareness and monitoring among others.

According to the study, "[Current Situation of Occupational Safety and Health in Nepal](#)" the issue pertaining to occupational safety and health are in infant stage in Nepal. It is estimated that each year approximately 20,000 workers suffer from accidents at workplace which lead to about 200 lives lost in Nepal. The inspection, recording and monitoring of OSH related activities and the policy formulation and implementation needs to improve, especially in industrial sector where informal sector is not covered by the provision. To establish safe, friendly and hazard free work and workplace, there is a need of sufficient research, development and recording of OSH issues and their proper management.

In Nepal, ILO has been working with the government, employers' organizations and workers' organizations in promoting safe and healthy conditions in the work place. It has been enhancing the application of the International Labour Standards and is supporting to formulate national labour legislation and promoting social dialogue, social justice, and decent work.

The ILO **Occupational Safety and Health Development in Nepal (SHIELD) Project**, implemented from 2013-2015, contributed to conduct needs assessment and a gap analysis of the current legal provisions on OSH and labour inspection, development of [National Occupational Safety and Health Policy](#) and development of OSH guidelines to be adopted by Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agricultural Roads (DoLIDAR) for construction sector.

Currently, efforts are underway to promote awareness on OSH in post-earthquake reconstruction work and occupational disease.

### **Health and Safety Management practice at HERD**

As a non-government organization and public entity, HERD is committed to health and safety of its employees and has managed health and safety in the business to ensure all work activities are done safely. HERD's statement on general health and safety policy is to:

- Provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from our work activities
- Consult with its employees on matters affecting their health and safety
- Ensure safe handling and use of substances

- Provide information instruction and supervision for employees
- Ensure all employees are competent to do their tasks, and to give them adequate training
- Prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health
- Maintain safe and healthy working conditions
- Review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals

HERD Management is firmly committed to a policy enabling all work activities to be carried out safely, and with all possible measures taken to remove (or at least reduce) risks to the health, safety and welfare of workers, contractors, authorized visitors, and anyone else who may be affected by our operations. The overall responsibility of the health and safety provisions are designed and regulated by Programme Management Unit and approved by the Executive Committee. General health and safety induction training is provided for all staff by the Operations Head. First aid box is checked kept ready and fire extinguishers and escaped routes are maintained and checked every 6 months. In case evacuation is needed, the evacuation procedure is: If the alarm sounds everyone should evacuate the building immediately by the nearest exit and ensure any visitors leave the building. The staffs are asked not to put themselves on risk, assemble outside the building and asked not to re-enter the building for any reason until the Senior Management Board confirms that it is safe to do so.

## **Conclusion**

Occupational health and safety (OHS) management has been regarded as an important issue which has to be addressed in the workplace globally. Considering the importance of the issue every year April 28 is marked as World Day for Safety and Health at Work. Various activities are carried out globally on the day to raise awareness and promote the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases globally.

Every year numerous people lose their life, get diseases and injuries due to accidents at workplace. There is a need to create a strong safety management practice in all the workplaces, be it a big industry or a small scale industry with very few workers. Just creating a safety management policy is not enough it has to be implemented and monitored time and again. The policy has to be revised time and again and it has to be ensured that it is followed by the workers as well as the management.

There is a need of strong legal mechanism which will be responsible in ensuring that the policy is adapted by all workplaces. Stringent legal mechanisms on OSH needs to be placed to handle OSH issues on a day to day basis. Capacity development of government and non-government officials (both at the leadership level and implementation level) is also required in terms of sensitization and advocacy on the importance of OSH and consequences of improper and ineffective OSH practices in the overall performance of the organizations.