



Department of Inspections for Factories
and Establishments (DIFE)
Ministry of Labour and Employment



MANAGING HEALTH & SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE



Senior management needs to establish a system for the management of health and safety in the workplace.

You will find information in this brochure including:

- The benefits of a health and safety system
- The steps to set up an effective system
- Adopting policies and procedures
- Mechanisms for communication and consultation
- Identifying and controlling risks

This module forms part of an Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) kit developed by the Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments (DIFE), Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of Bangladesh

This booklet (Safety Committee) is not a substitute of Bangladesh Labour Act 2013 (BLA 2013). Establishing Safety Committee is made mandatory according to BLA 2013 and Bangladesh Labour Rules 2015 (BLR 2015) has been adopted to implement the law. Every factory will have to form safety committee following the rules set in the BLR 2015.

This booklet has been developed to assist in setting-up Safety Committee (easy set-up guide). This booklet will provide answers on, who can be a safety committee members, how to prepare agenda, how to prepare meeting minutes and develop plan and way to submit recommendation to the management, aimed at supporting the implementation process.

This Safety Committee book is intended to awareness raising among workers and employers about their roles and responsibilities according to the law and to support the process. This booklet should not be considered as an alternative to BLR and BLA under any circumstances and the rules set forth in the law should be followed.

Why is it Important to Manage Health & Safety? Employer Duties

An occupational accident can damage the reputation of a company and have serious legal and financial consequences for the company and its management.

Top management has the overall responsibility for ensuring health and safety in the company. This means that top management will be considered responsible for the accident, unless they can demonstrate that they have taken the necessary actions to manage health and safety in the company (BLA 61-62, 85-86, 150).

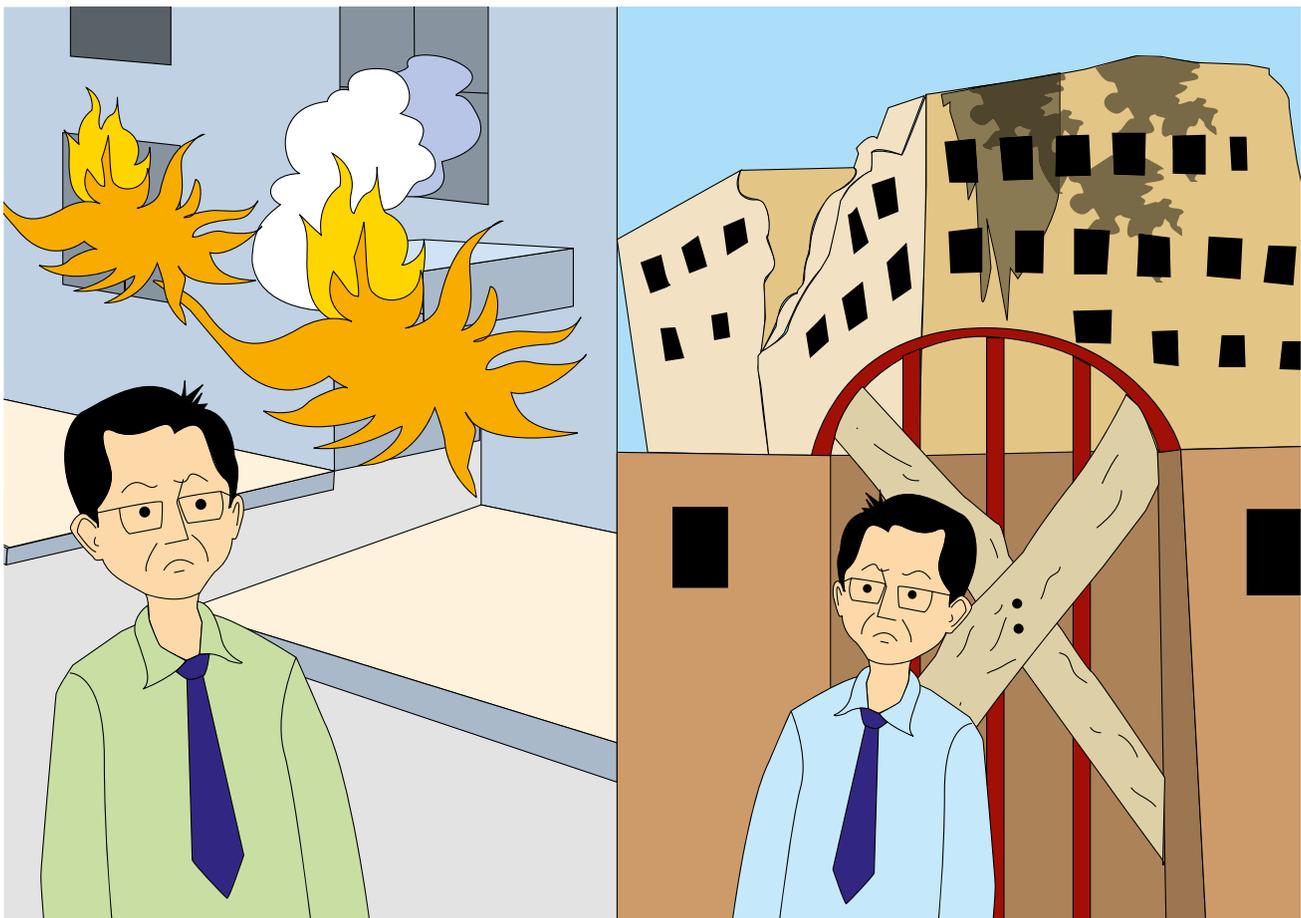
This is why it is important that **top management puts in place a system for the management of health and safety** similar to those in place for other aspects of management. **This publication describes the key elements** of such a system, as required by the Bangladesh Labour Act (BLA) and Bangladesh Labour Rules (BLR).

Putting in place a system not only prevents injuries, deaths and damage to property. Management of health and safety also makes

good business sense:

- It reduces worker absenteeism and labour turnover
- It prevents conflicts, which often starts when a worker is injured
- Healthy workers perform better

This is why good OSH management has a positive impact on productivity and quality.

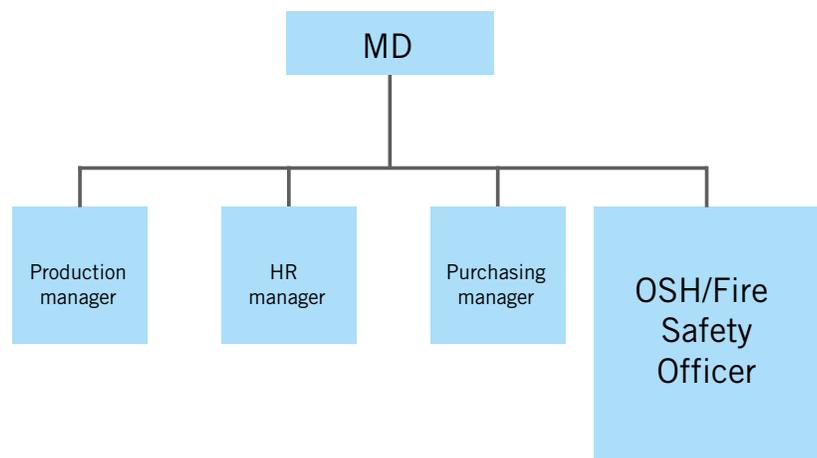


Managing Health & Safety

In general, Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) management systems are composed of the following elements:

1. Appointing one or more management members in charge of the operational and technical aspects of health and safety

One full time fire officer and one full time welfare officer are required by legislation if the factory has 500 or more workers (Sections 55 (12) & 79 BLR). It is recommended that companies make sure that these persons also cover other OSH issues, and to appoint such persons in smaller factories as well. It is important that these persons have sufficient time available to conduct their tasks and have the appropriate training/qualifications.



2. Communicating to ensure everyone plays his/her part in protecting health and safety

The fire and welfare officers alone cannot ensure a safe work environment. They need the support of *top management, other managers and supervisors. Workers* need also to contribute (see the list of worker duties at the end of this publication). Corresponding information, training and procedures are needed. To ensure health and safety, top management also needs to communicate with the building owner, manufacturers and suppliers of machinery, equipment and materials.



3. Establishing a procedure to receive feedback on OSH

It is of primary importance to be informed by workers about hazards. If not, the employer might not be aware of a hazard until it is too late. *Workers must know who to contact in case they identify a hazard* (see publication “*Receiving information about OSH hazards and solving them*”). Management must assure the workers that there will not be any adverse impact if they raise an OSH issue (BLA 86; BLR 79 & Schedule IV 1, 11 & 12).



4. Establishing a Safety Committee

Every factory/industrial establishment where 50 workers or more are employed is required to constitute a Safety Committee, i.e. a team of equal

representation of management and union/worker representatives, which assists management in creating and maintaining a safe workplace (90a BLA; 81- 85

BLR; see publication on Safety Committee). Such regular consultations are of great help to adopt solutions accepted by all.

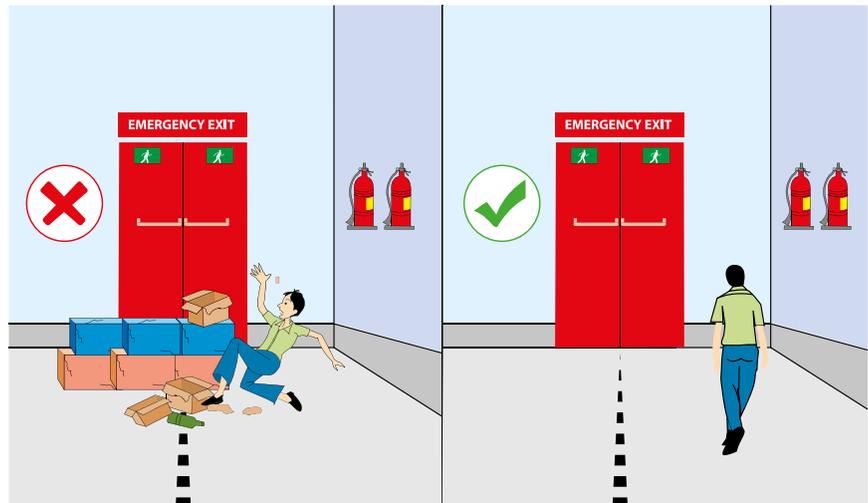
5. Adopting health and safety policy and procedures

When organizing health and safety, top management should consult with the Safety Committee to define targets, organization, responsibilities, etc. These decisions are put in writing in one document called the *Company OSH Policy*, so that they can easily be communicated in the company and to stakeholders. The OSH policy also contains the commitment of top management to ensuring OSH (see sample at the end of this publication). In addition, the Safety Committee drafts an *OSH Guideline* which defines *procedures* on various aspects such as emergencies, accident investigation, risk assessment, and responsibilities of the Safety Committee etc. (Schedule IV (2) BLR).



6. Clarifying supervisors responsibilities to ensure health and safety

Supervisors are the ones who need to enforce health and safety procedures on a daily basis, and protect the workers under their supervision (e.g. wearing of PPE, use of machine guards etc). They need to lead by example, regularly remind workers about rules and provide support. Enforcing safety should be promoted as an integral part of their job and performance review.



7. Identifying hazards regularly, assessing them and taking actions to control the risks

The members of the Safety Committee need to conduct regular thorough inspections of the workplace to identify hazards (at least *every quarter*; Schedule IV 1, 2 & 4 BLR).

Some aspects, such as unobstructed emergency exit,

wearing of PPE need to be checked on a *daily-weekly* basis. Members of the Safety Committee including union members/ workers representatives need to be involved in these processes. **See the publication on *risk assessment*.**



8. Accidents and diseases: investigating them and taking corresponding preventive actions

The company needs to learn from its shortcomings. Important information about possible improvements in the management of safety in the company can be gained from accident investigations and from statistics. Actions based on this information can prevent similar accident and disease in the future. This is why *investigating accidents and keeping records* are required by BLR 73 and Schedule IV 2. Members of the Safety Committee need to conduct the investigation and discuss results (see **Brochure on Work accident**).

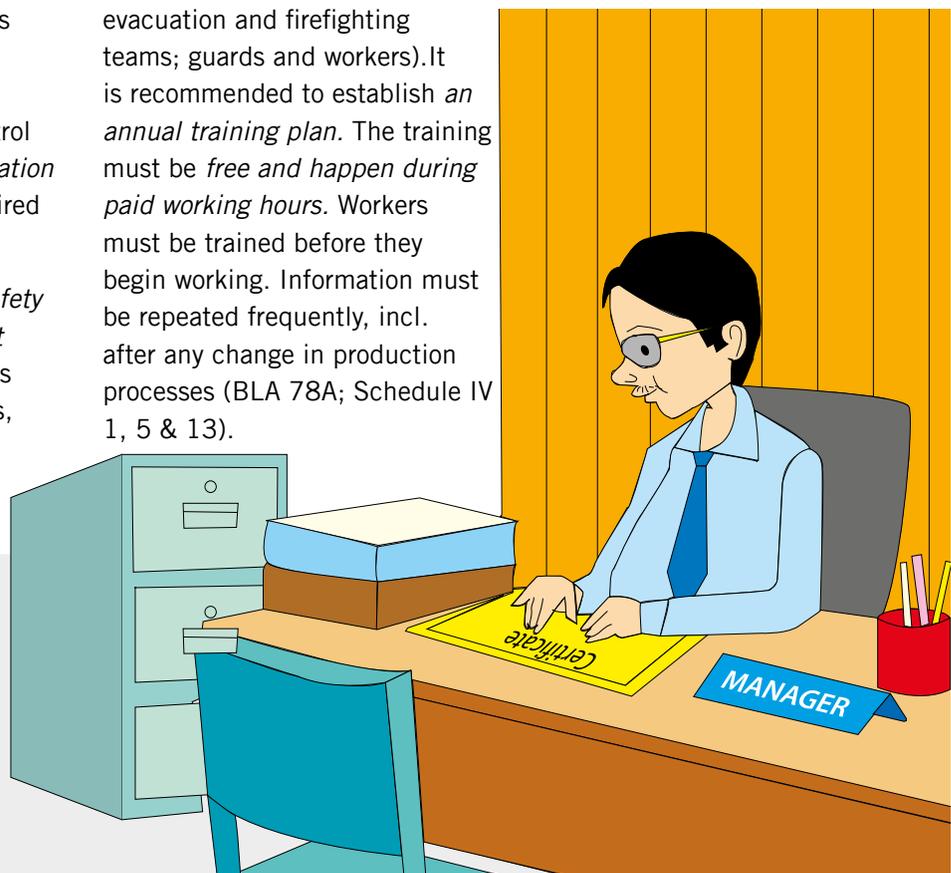


9. Providing regular information and training

Everybody in the factory needs to be informed about their responsibilities for OSH and understand the risks and control measures in place. An *information board* specific to OSH is required (BLR 80).

The Safety Committee, fire safety officer and the employer must arrange training for the various groups (managers, supervisors, maintenance staff; first aid,

evacuation and firefighting teams; guards and workers). It is recommended to establish an *annual training plan*. The training must be *free and happen during paid working hours*. Workers must be trained before they begin working. Information must be repeated frequently, incl. after any change in production processes (BLA 78A; Schedule IV 1, 5 & 13).



10. Management of licenses, certificates, tests and other OSH records

The employer needs to make sure that inspections required by law are conducted, that he has the required licenses, certificates and permits and that they are renewed on time. For example:

- Building: structural safety must be certified (incl. for alterations of building; approval from the Inspector General is also required before using an existing building as a factory. The use of the building must be in conformity with the license provided (BLA 88, 326; BLR 53 & 353).
- Fire License (Fire prevention Act sections 4 & 8)
- Certificate for the electrical system (58 BLR)

- Drinking water certificate (50 & 5 BLR)
- Health check for workers who perform dangerous operations (79c BLA; 68 4 & 5 BLR)

- Lifting machinery, pressure plant (60 & 62 BLR)

Because factories are often inspected by various parties, it is important to keep records of actions taken (BLR363).



11. Setting up an emergency response system in case things go wrong

Every factory has to be prepared for an emergency before it happens. Good emergency preparedness can prevent casualties and the worsening of health conditions.

The employer must organize:

- A fire fighting team, and provide fire detection and fire-fighting equipment
- A rescue team and adequate well-marked emergency exits
- A first aid team, and provide a first aid kit; a medical room, a clinic (an agreement with a local hospital might be required depending on the number of workers.)

All processes must be planned in a written *emergency procedure*. *Emergency drills* (incl. firefighting) must be conducted at least every

six months (62 & 89 BLA; 54-55, 68, 76-78, Schedule IV 6 BLR). See the publication on emergency preparedness.



12. Reviewing the performance of the system by top management

Top management needs to be in *regular contact with the Safety Committee*, and make the necessary budget decisions to support OSH improvements. In order to systematically track progress, it is recommended that the company uses an *OSH improvement plan*, which lists issues to be improved and progress made. Top management needs to review it regularly (See publication on Safety Committee for more details).

The performance of the system

can also be evaluated based on *internal statistics and other reports* (e.g. accident statistics, audit reports from buyers, external audit organizations or from labour inspections).

Overall, it is important that management allocates the necessary budget and time for the management of safety in the company. This is money well invested: it saves lives, ensures the good reputation of the company and prevents negative legal and financial consequences.

Workers duties

Everybody needs to contribute to safety. Workers must take reasonable care to protect their own health, and the health of others that may be affected by their actions or omissions at work. Concretely this means, workers must:

- Comply with all safety procedures
- Follow reasonable instructions the employer gives on health and safety





- Ask questions whenever one is unsure about the procedure to follow
- Use the correct tools and equipment for the job; keep it in good condition
- Use machine equipment provided to protect health and safety as well as personal protective equipment
- Not block emergency pathways, exits and firefighting equipment
- Not work under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- Immediately report any hazards they identify to management (**see publication on raising and solving issues in OSH**)
- Report any arrangement intended to protect health

which is not effective (not just ignore the problem and carry on working in unsafe conditions)

- Promptly report accidents to supervisors
- (62, 78A,86, 150& 331 BLA)

For further information see:

- The Bangladesh Labour Act 2006, Labour Rules 2015
- Fire Prevention and Extinction Act 2003
- ILO Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems ILO-OSH 2001, ISBN 92-2-111634-4
- OHSAS 18001
- The other publications in this series for example:

- Raising and solving OSH issues
- Risk assessment
- Establishing and operating a safety committee
- Emergency preparedness

Disclaimer

This resource has been prepared to help the workplace parties understand some of their rights and obligations under relevant legislation. It is not intended to replace the regulation and only the text of the legislation is binding.

Annex: Sample company OSH Policy

The OSH Guideline required according to Schedule IV (2) BLR is composed of:

- The company OSH Policy
- Procedures on various aspects such as emergencies, accident investigation, risk assessment, and other documents required in Schedule IV (2).

The following annex is a sample of an OSH Policy. The example used is a factory, which has a Safety Officer. The Safety Committee needs to discuss

this document and adapt it to the specific circumstances of the factory. The Safety Committee then submits it to the top management for approval.

Key questions around the policy are:

- How will the policy be communicated to workers? Should the factory prepare a shorter version to inform workers? One separate communication on the Safety Committee? One communication on workers duties?

- Are the responsibilities listed in the policy (e.g. for supervisors) also part of their job descriptions?
- How will the review of the effectiveness of the policy be conducted?

The original file can be downloaded from the website of Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments www.dife.gov.bd

Sample of company OSH policy

The health and safety of all persons employed within the facility and those visiting the facility are considered to be of utmost importance. The top management of <Name of the Company> is committed to:

- Improve continuously to establish a healthy and safe workplace
- Prevent injuries and illnesses
- Respect legal requirements as stated in the Bangladesh Labour Act and Rules

1. Responsibilities

Responsibilities of top management

- Appoint responsible persons for management of OSH, welfare and fire safety
- Provide adequate resources
- Provide staff with proper and well maintained equipment (incl. personal protective equipment)
- Finance necessary OSH training
- Establish and maintain an OSH programme which complies with all applicable OSH regulations and is in compliance with internationally recognized labour standards

- Encourage all workers to report all unsafe working conditions and ensure that there is no retaliation
- Maintain overall control of safety

Responsibilities of Safety Officer (OSH+Fire)

- Advise management and workers on:
 - Preventing injury and illness to personnel and damage to plant and equipment
 - Legal requirements affecting safety and health
 - Provision and use of protective clothing and equipment
 - Suitability, from a safety viewpoint, of new equipment, and validity of all appropriate test certificates
- Coordinator of all OSH activities
- Ensure that all established safety procedures are administered and enforced in all areas
- Provide information, instructions, and assistance to all supervisory staff

- Participate in the Safety Committee
- Provide continuous training for all workers on safety and health (in collaboration with the Safety Committee)
- Coordinate identification of hazards in the workplace; ensure that corrective action has been taken whenever deficiencies are identified
- Receive complaints on OSH and liaise with the Welfare Officer on OSH related complaints
- Assess accident trends and review overall safety performances
- Accompany the government inspector during inspections
- Maintain contact with regulatory professional bodies
- Maintain all OSH related records

Responsibilities of welfare officer related to OSH

- Receive complaints from workers on OSH and liaise with Safety Officer
- Maintain communication with the medical officer of the factory to ensure adequate medical facilities for the workers
- Ensure arrangements for transportation to hospital are always in place
- Make sure information on injuries, illness, damage and production loss are recorded and analyzed
- Monitoring various welfare facilities such as canteen, restroom, drinking water
- Maintaining communication with the medical officer of the factory for further medical facilities for the workers
- The welfare officer has other responsibilities related to welfare not listed here

Responsibilities of supervisors

- Give instructions to workers about safe working procedures before they are allowed to start work
- Facilitate regular safety meetings at workplace level

- Ensure that machinery and equipment required for use by each worker under their supervision are safe; conduct regular inspections for unsafe practices and conditions and ensure prompt corrective action
- Identify OSH problems and fix them
- Report unresolved problems to fire/safety officer or Safety Committee members
- Remind workers about safe work instructions, enforce their observance, and ensure that they use the protective equipment provided
- Report all accidents immediately
- Participate in accident investigations
- Provide an example for others by always directing and performing work in a safe manner

Responsibilities of workers

- Read and comply with all safety regulations and procedures
- Follow reasonable instructions the employer gives on health and safety
- Ask questions whenever one is unsure about the procedure to follow
- Use the correct tools and equipment for the job; keep it in good condition
- Use machine equipment provided to protect health and safety as well as the personal protective equipment provided
- Not block emergency pathways, exits and firefighting equipment
- Do not use alcohol or drugs while at work
- Announce any hazards they identify immediately to management
- Report any arrangement intended to protect health which is not effective (not just ignore the problem and carry on working in unsafe conditions)

2. Safety Committee

Due to the importance of consultation and co-operation between management and workers for effective implementation of the OSH program, <Name of the factory> has decided to set up a Safety Committee in accordance with BLA & BLR. The Safety Committee is a joint worker-management team that assists the employer in creating and maintaining a safe workplace.

¹The factory might decide to engage workers more intensively on OSH decisions

Members

Half of the members of the Committee are from the union/workers and half from management. The BLA & BLR define in details the criteria for the members of the Safety Committee. The current composition will be communicated in a separated announcement.

Tasks

- Participates in the development, implementation and monitoring of the company health and safety policy and procedures
- Support the set up and training of the company firefighting team, evacuation team and first aid team
- Development of a checklist for risk assessment
- Monthly conduct of comprehensive risk assessment using a checklist, including development of remediation proposal
- Conduct daily-weekly checks and propose remediation
- Inform the employer in case hazards are identified
- Receive OSH concerns from workers and assist investigating and resolving them
- Request immediate stoppage of the activity in case of serious and immediate risk for life of the workers
- Participate in the development, organization and delivery of training and information campaigns

- Conduct accident investigations
- Maintain the contact details of OSH experts and authorities
- Maintain up to date copy of the acts, implementation rules, building code and circulars related to fire safety and OSH
- Inform both management and the workers about its activities
- Liaise with concerned authorities: in particular, inform the Labour Inspectorate in case management has not taken action seven days after receiving a recommendation from the Safety Committee.

Meetings

Due to the importance of the topic, <Name of the factory> decides to have monthly meeting² of the Safety Committee. Meetings can be organized on short notice if needed.

Meetings can only take place if at least 50% of the members of each side of the committee participate.³

President and vice president of the Safety Committee

The Safety Committee has:

- One president appointed by management
- One vice president appointed by the Collective Bargaining Agent (CBA) or by workers representatives on the Safety Committee (in case there is no CBA).

The president and vice president:

- Prepare the agenda for the meeting
- Make sure members will be able to attend
- Preside over and conduct the meeting
- Review and approve the minutes

²It is a good practice to have monthly meeting. The minimum requirement is one meeting every 3 months.

³This is also a good practice which the company in the sample imposed on itself.

- Report regularly to the top management
- Inform the Labour Inspectorate in case management has not taken actions seven days after receiving a recommendation from the Safety Committee.

Secretary of the Safety Committee

The secretary is elected in the first meeting of the Safety Committee.

The secretary is in charge of:

- Distributing the agenda and notifying members at least five days in advance
- Arranging the meeting room (incl. drinks)
- Recording minutes of the meeting
- Distributing and posting the minutes of the meeting
- Maintaining Committee documentation

Duration

The committee is established for a period of two years from the date of its first meeting. BLR describes how to replace a member in case of resignation or death.

3. First aid team

Members:

- At least 6% of the workforce in each department
- There is always at least one team member per floor, during each shift
- Be active and commit to help worker peers in case of injuries and illnesses
- Nurse and doctor are members of the team
- The team members are trained in first aid

4. Evacuation/rescue team

Members:

- At least 6% of the workforce in each department
- There is always at least one team member per floor, during each shift
- Be active and commit to help worker peers in case of evacuation
- The head of security guards is a member of the team⁴
- The team members will be trained in evacuation/rescue

5. Fire fighting team

Members:

- At least 6% of the workforce in each department
- There is always at least one team member per floor, during each shift
- Be able to fight small fires
- The team members will be trained in fire fighting

6. Annual Work plan

Top Management will approve an annual work plan based on recommendations of the Safety Committee. The company will also maintain an improvement plan on OSH, indicating issues received, actions planned, and progress made.

⁴This requirement is a specific decision of the factory and not a legal requirement

7. Procedures

Procedures will be drafted by the safety officer. The Safety Committee will support their development. Top management will issue the final version. Material safety data sheets will be accessible in the workplace for the workers.

8. Information and training

Regular information on OSH will be posted on the notice board. Monthly campaigns on various OSH and welfare topics will be conducted. Hazards will be indicated by signs.

<Name of the company> will give training in health and safety to all workers. The training needs as well as the requirements for the staff involved in OSH will be defined in a separate training procedure, in particular training requirements for persons responsible for handling and transporting chemicals, for members of the first aid team the fire fighting and rescue teams as well as for the members of the Safety Committee. The training policy will also describe first day orientation, on-the-job training, and “refresher” training. Fire and evacuation drills will be conducted every 6 months.

9. Monitoring of implementation

<Name of the company> is committed to regularly monitor the effectiveness of the present OSH policy. To do so, it will use the following arrangements:

- OSH improvement plan
- Factory statistics about accident and illness (which will be collected regularly)
- Internal self-assessments
- Annual health checks for workers
- External audit reports on OSH compliance
- Suggestions/complaints of workers

10. Review of OSH policy implementation

The top management of <Name of the Company > and the Safety Committee will annually review the effectiveness of the present policy. Necessary amendments will be made in consultation with the Safety Committee.

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Factory GM/President

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