



Ministry of Rural Transformation

Community Development, Labour
and Local Government

**OAS/RIAL TECHNICAL COOPERATION TRAINING
BELIZE AND THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR - BARBADOS
19th 21st and 22nd JULY 2022**

PREPARED BY THE BELIZE LABOUR DEPARTMENT

OCTOBER 4TH 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We want to express our gratitude to the OAS Inter-America Network for Labour Administration (RIAL) for this opportunity in making an effort in supporting and for working with us in arranging these training sessions with the Ministry of Labour from Barbados. A special thanks to the following persons who were very instrumental in the approval of these training sessions:

1. Ms. Maria Claudia Camacho, Chief Labour Employment Section, Department of Human Development, Education and Employment, Organization of Americas States,
2. Mr. Jesus Schucry Giacoman Zapata, Director of the Organization of American States,
3. Mr. Guillermo Calzado, RIAL Program Officer, Organization of Americas States.

Additionally, our sincere thank you to the Ministry of Labour, Social Partnership of Barbados and their respective team for delivering these outstanding training (presentations) as it relates to occupational safety and health.

1. Mrs. Claudette Hope-Greenidge, Chief Labour Officer, Ministry of Labour, Social Partnership of Barbados
2. Mrs. Alison Elcock, Senior Health Safety Officer, Ministry of Labour, Social Partnership of Barbados
3. Mr. Errol Goodridge, Safety and Health Office, Ministry of Labour, Social Partnership of Barbados

Furthermore, we want to acknowledge the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government for providing the opportunity and to ensure that Officers from the Labour Department are well prepared as it relates to occupational safety and health at workplace to prevent future accidents or illnesses.

We also want to thank the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour, and Local Government for giving us the opportunity in making sure that the Labour Department's officers are knowledgeable about occupational safety and health in the workplace in order to avoid any further accidents or illnesses.

1. Hon. Oscar Requena, Minister of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour & Local Government,
2. Mr. Valentino Shal, Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour & Local Government,
3. Ms. Claire Lamb, Ag. Deputy Labour Commissioner, Labour Department, Belmopan,

4. Mrs. Aida Reyes, Senior Labour Officer and her team for organizing and contacting the stakeholders.

INTRODUCTION

The Belize Labour Department has acknowledged the significance of occupational safety and health in the workplace. Safety and health are essential elements that should be of great importance to every job in which they help protect workers from potential illness or accidents. All workers should be trained in occupational safety and health, and it is the responsibility of the employer to guarantee that employees have a secure working environment.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), approximately 2.3 million fatalities occur each year worldwide due to accidents in the workplace. As a result, public and private sector organizations around the world are becoming more concerned with enhancing occupational safety and health in both developed and developing countries.

Due to the rapid pace of technological and environmental change as well as the persistence of hazardous and environmentally hazardous working conditions, the necessity of establishing a safe, healthy operating environment and promoting a consistent “safety culture” within the workplace has become more apparent.

Therefore, the Belize Labour Department requested technical assistance through bilateral cooperation within the 13th Call for Proposal for Bilateral of the OAS Inter-America Network for Labour Administration (RIAL) in 2020 and due to COVID-19, the proposal was on hold. Opportunity to make this training possible, the virtual technical assistance cooperation occupational safety and health training was approved for three days of training on the week of 18th July 2022

THREE DAYS TRAINING

The execution of the technical cooperation OSH training took place on the week of July 19th, 21st and 22nd, 2022.

OBJECTIVE OF THE TRAINING

Furthermore, the OSH training was intended to support the formation of the OSH Unit through discussion with Belize Labour Department personnel and other stakeholders, as well as the evaluation of any suggestions or plans that may already be in existence in Belize to improve the workplaces.

The primary goal of the technical cooperation's OSH training was to improve the institutional and personnel capabilities of the officers in the Belize Labour Department regarding OSH training pertaining to the workplace.

Additionally, the OSH training was designed to assist in the creation of the OSH Unit through consultation with various stakeholders and representatives of the Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industries, Representatives from the Belize National Trade Union Congress of Belize, the Belize Labour Department Staff and other interested parties, as well as the assessment of any plans or suggestions that may already be in place in Belize to enhance the safety and health of employees and the work environment.

The importance of capacity building is a process by which individuals, groups, institutions, organizations, and societies enhance their abilities to identify and solve development challenges in a sustainable manner. Therefore, the labour department recognized the urgency for the officers to obtain this type of training on OSH and it was agreed that the following topics be discussed in the training session during the three days of activities.

The topic discussed in the training were as follows:

- ***To conduct Occupational Safety and Health theoretical and practical training for all staff***
 - Occupational Safety and Health Management System approach
 - Plan – Do – Check – Act; HSG 65, ISO45001,
 - Types of Hazards and Hierarchy of Controls
 - Illustrative examples using the main economic sectors in Belize
 - Workplace Inspections
 - Preparation for inspection – preliminary research on potential hazards
 - Inspection process – 3-stages
 - Tools – inspection forms
 - Illustrative examples using the main economic sectors in Belize
 - Simulated inspections using video recordings from Belize
 - Accident Investigations
 - Process – interviews, evidence gathering, report
 - Analytical accident investigation methods – FMEA, HAZOP, FTA, ETA, Herringbone
 - Case studies using the main economic sectors in Belize
 - Selected OSH Topics
 - Ergonomics - manual handling, industrial ergonomics, standing workstations, seated workstations
 - Indoor Air Quality
 - Noise Assessments
 - Chemical Safety
 - Machine Guarding
 - Lighting
 - Overview of key resources and references

- ***To assist with the development of an Occupational Safety and Health Policy***
 - Occupational Safety and Health Convention C155
 - Article 4
 - Stakeholder consultation – employers’ organisations/chamber of commerce, employees’ organisations, key sector associations (manufacturing, small business, tourism etc)

1. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY

In March 2020, the 13th Call for Proposals for Bilateral Cooperation of the OAS Inter-American Network for Labour Administration (RIAL) approved a bilateral cooperation activity between Belize (Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government) and Barbados (Ministry of Labour and Social Partnership Relations) for a three-day Virtual Technical Cooperation on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) for twenty-four staff from the Belize Labour Department which including Senior Labour Officers, Labour Officers, and Employment Officers. Considering the initial proposal for the training was two years ago, and the technical cooperation OSH training took place on July 19th, 21st and 22nd of this year. Attached is the list of officers who participated in the training (**Appendix A**).

The training was provided virtually by the Ministry of Labour, Barbados staff. The facilitators were well-prepared and knowledgeable of the topics presented and discussed in the training sessions. The list below is the name of the facilitators that presented on the three days of training:

1. Mrs. Alison Elcock, Senior Safety and Health Officer
2. Mr. Errol Goodridge, Safety and Health Officer
3. Mr. Darwin Brathwaite, Safety and Health Officer
4. Mrs. Nia Salankey-Payne, Safety and Health Officer
5. Mr. Trevor Blackman, Safety and Health Officer
6. Mr. Sandy Miller, Safety and Health Officer
7. Ms. Kerryann Branford, Safety and Health Officer
8. Ms. Nicole Sinclair, Safety and Health Officer

2. MAIN RESULTS AND FINDINGS – This section should identify the most important lessons learned from Barbado’s experience and indicate which of these lessons are useful and/or can be replicated or adapted in Belize.

All the topics discussed in the training were very informative and educational. For some officers, the training was a refresher for them and for the new officers, the training was very educational and helpful. The officers learnt that good safety at the workplace helps them to be more productive and mindful as it relates to physical health and when conducting inspections at the various workplace to prevent fatal accidents or illnesses. These types of accidents can happen in the workplace, inside and outside whether it may be a small, medium-sized company or organization, formal and informal business.

Moreover, this course taught officers that it is the responsibility of employers to provide all the necessary personal protective equipment to their employees. The availability of optimal distribution of all available resources to protect the health and safety of employees will increase their motivation to act mindful at the workplace and to raise their willingness to perform, leading to a higher economic performance of the enterprise, creating safe places of work, and in the medium term, contribute towards an optimised atmosphere at work.

In workplaces, the management systems must play their part in ensuring that Health and Safety at the workplace are improved so as to have a lasting effect in preventing illnesses or accidents. New approaches, providing greater efficiency, can thereby also be opened for the monitoring activity of Labour Inspectorates.

The topics covered were very interesting and vital in the discussions. Some employers take these topics into consideration since safety and health in the workplace are utmost of importance. The implementation of these topics at work can save lives or prevent potential accidents or illnesses.

(i) **Safety Management System**

The Safety Management System (SMS) was facilitated by Mr. Errol Goodridge who mentioned that one of the major goals for safety at work is to increase safety and health by streamlining current procedures and fostering a culture of safety in general. Hence, it will help organizations to detect, evaluate, control, and prevent hazards in the workplace. For this system to be successful, both employers and employees must ensure to implement the legislation and must work as a team for the system to operate effectively. Furthermore, it was explained that the implementation of (PDCA) model which stands for Plan, Do, Check and Act is also important in the workplace. This approach is founded on a plan that identifies the goals and steps required to produce outcomes in line with the organization's health and safety policy. We consider aspects such as: where we are and need to be in the workplace. Additionally, we should decide what we want to accomplish considering the measures necessary to achieve these targets which include conducting meetings and training frequently with staff to prevent fatal accidents on the job.

The “Do” action also includes putting the process into practice. The “Check” action involves monitoring and evaluating processes in relation to health and safety policy, objectives, legal requirements, and reporting of results. The “Act” action entails taking steps to continuously improve health and safety performance. The significance of assessing risk, putting in place the necessary preventive and protective measures, providing the right tools and equipment for the job, and keep maintaining them. Additionally, to ensure that all staff members are qualified to perform their jobs by providing training and instruction. It is also advised to supervise and ensure that the plans are carried out to determine whether plans, policy papers, and risk assessments need to be updated, as well as to evaluate any differences and determine where additional training is necessary. It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that all workers receive proper training on the type of occupation workers are assigned

(ii) Hazards vs Risk

Hazards are considered anything that has the potential to cause harm, including chemicals, electricity, and working at heights. While risk is a measurement of the likelihood that a hazard-related incident can occur as well as the potential degree of harm or damage it could cause. We face biological, ergonomically related chemical physical risks.

Preventing accidents and poor health is the primary goal of occupational safety and health. When there are plenty of accidents, aspects such as productivity, staff morale, public perception, machinery repair/replacement costs, and restraint costs can all be greatly affected. For the prevention of accidents and illnesses, the right planning is required in an organization. Employees will be happy to work where they believe that safety is first. The facilitator focuses on the need of reducing the risks. The fundamental principle of hazard control in the workplace is to either eliminate the threat or limit its potential impact, hence reducing the risk.

Furthermore, it is important to advise employers and organizations to conduct assessments on the workplaces often such as:

- Identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm (hazard identification).
- Analyse and evaluate the risk associated with that hazard (risk analysis, and risk evaluation).
- Determine appropriate ways to eliminate the hazard or control the risk when the hazard cannot be eliminated (risk control).

(iii) Ergonomics

Ergonomics in the workplace is important in preventing sickness or diseases. Additionally, it aims to reduce pain, strengthen muscles, and improve blood flow. Moreover, it improves mental insight and employees will experience less anxiety, better emotional moods, and enhanced focus in the workplace. This means everyone can concentrate on their work more and work effectively. The facilitator also stated that it is crucial that officers conduct inspections at the workstations because there is where most accidents, injuries or illnesses happen.

(iv) Stakeholders Consultation Meeting

It was a good experience conducting stakeholder consultation meetings. Stakeholders were excited to share their thoughts, in which they voiced their opinions and concerns on how to best prevent accidents or illness on the job. At the stakeholder's consultation meeting, more than thirty (30) companies were invited including all members of the Labour Advisory Board which includes representatives of the unions, employers, and government to discuss the issues of occupational safety and health at work. Attached is the list of stakeholders that were invited (**Appendix B**).

A few questions were sent to stakeholders ahead of time so that they can respond to the questions and be able to have an answer for each question. The questions were based on resources and administration on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats confronting OSH. In the stakeholder consultation meeting, only a few stakeholders attended the meeting. Stakeholders that attended the consultation meeting agreed that:

1. Employees are very important to the job.
2. It is important to know more about how to identify existing and potential hazards at work and determine the underlying causes of hazards.
3. It is important to know whom to consult when they want to correct potential hazardous action or when an accident has occurred. Many times, they are not sure to whom the company should report to.
4. It is important for employers to train workers in Occupational Safety and Health often.
5. Not all companies have a manual policy on OSH. Stakeholders need to know who can help design an OSH policy for their companies.
6. Employers were willing to learn more about what mechanism exists for improvement, particularly with micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises.
7. Employers were also interested in how the informal sector will access the OSH mechanism.

The response to these questions was very interesting, in one response, a stakeholder gave their point of view and said that they hope this is not the first consultation nor the last. Employers were saying that they would like to have other stakeholders' consultation meetings. To them, it is very beneficial in improving the working and environmental conditions for the employees.

The Belize Technical Staff was enlightened with all the topics, but three topics that were the most crucial in which captured the staff's attention were "Hazardous and Risk, Ergonomics and Stakeholders Consultation". Which emphasizes the importance of consulting and communicating issues and concerns between employers and employees to improve the work environment in organizations and companies from small and medium-sized companies.

The study of ergonomics was quite intriguing because we learnt that even in workstations where it seems well-organized, illnesses and accidents could still occur. Learning about ergonomics will prevent and eliminate disorders, reduce stress, and decrease injuries that occur with repetition on the job, such as the overuse of muscles and poor posture. The result will be redesigning tasks, workspaces, controls and display of tools, lighting, noise, and equipment that conform to the physical capabilities of employees and eliminate constraints in the workplace which should be the number one concern for employers when it comes to promoting safety and health in the workplace.

3. **NEXT STEP** – This section should specify what the Labour Department of Belize will do with the information received. Please specify the ways in which your institution will incorporate the lessons learned into current initiatives.

We appreciate the lesson provided to the Belize Labour Department Technical Staff within three days. As inspectors, we will implement the topic mentioned in the above paragraphs as it relates to preventing accidents on the job and when conducting inspections at different workplaces. We learned that it is necessary to inspect business offices more frequently because we were not certain that accidents, sicknesses, and illnesses do occur in these types of workstations. In our day-to-day inspections, we were focusing more on manufacturing companies instead of workstations.

For instance, employers and employees take for granted a safe and healthy workplace because they are confident that accidents related to their line of work are exceedingly uncommon. However, individuals, regardless of their duties, can be in danger in settings with fewer evident hazards if they become complacent while performing their daily duties.

Accidents can take place anywhere, and more serious incidents can have long-term physical and emotional impacts on those affected. Additionally, they will have significant financial implications for the business itself. That is why it is imperative to train officers every quarter.

With that said, we want to educate employers and employees more on occupational safety and health. Moreover, we want to create a team specialised in OSH and also able to write reports on accident investigations whenever there is an accident to report.

4. EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO RIAL – In this section, please specify the extent to which the initial objectives and expectations of the cooperation were met. Also, do any recommendations for future RIAL/OAS activities?

The topics discussed in the training were a refresher for most Senior Labour Officers who have been employed for more than ten years in the Labour Department. It was beneficial to all Labour Officers and Employment Officers, especially for those who have joined the Department less than two years.

- ❖ We strongly agreed that the training received will benefit officers who participated in the training, especially when they conduct follow-up and routing general inspections and special joint child labour inspections across all workplaces.
- ❖ We strongly agreed that with the topics discussed in the training, Officers will feel more comfortable disclosing information to companies and employees while performing their duties. Topics that officers feel more confident in sharing with employers are the following: ergonomics, noise assessments, chemical safety, machine guard lighting, an overview of hazards; occupational safety and health management approach and preparation for inspections at the workplaces.
- ❖ We all thought that the facilitators were very knowledgeable, and the materials were highly useful and enlightening.

- ❖ We were in complete agreement that officers would like to participate in future training as it relates to occupational safety and health. Perhaps at another level of OSH and it will be great if the facilitators could visit Belize so as to do the physical training.

CONCLUSION

Overall, Technical Cooperation OSH training sessions were a success as it relates to the best practices of occupational safety and health at the workstations. Similar case studies and scenarios were reviewed based on the challenges and gaps encountered in companies in Belize. Technical officers are glad that this type of training was provided to the Labour Department Staff in Belize and provided by experts from the Ministry of Labour from Barbados.

This type of training has enlightened officers to conduct more inspections in a more oriented way and understand the importance of conducting inspections at different business establishments. We believe that these sessions were quite beneficial but most of all very informative, in which it provided relevant knowledge regarding inspecting the different workplaces. The ergonomics elements also taught us that the Belize Labour Department is facing serious issues such as poor posture, inadequate office equipment and poor lighting. We need to make urgent changes in our offices countrywide as we are leaders, and we should be an example for organizations by implementing occupational safety and health in the workplace.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The training was helpful and educational. The timeframe for the training was too short. Officers were requesting more days, at least 10 working days.
2. The theoretical training was very interesting and active. Officers recommended that it would be good to have the facilitator onsite for the practical training (one-week theory and one-week practical).
3. The 'Guide to the Inspection of occupational safety and health in the assessment of management systems, including analysis of documents;
– Risk Control Systems planned plant inspections and permits to work.
4. To analyse, and discuss relevant documents as it relates to the accident investigation report, for example, to have a sample of how accidents are conducted and reported;
5. To discuss the involvement and contribution of labour inspection services to the establishment and implementation of the OSH-Management System;
6. To deal with the special situation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in this context;
7. To ascertain the impact and suitability of such standards, also in dealing with new and unfamiliar occupational hazards, such as stress, and violence.

APPENDIX A

Below is the list of the names and emails of the participants from the Belize Labour Department that attended the three days' virtual OSH training sessions.

No.	Names	Status	Email Address
1	Rudy Ake	Labour Officer	rudy.ake@labour.gov.bz
2	Claire Lamb	Senior Labour Officer/ Ag. Deputy Labour Commissioner	lambcl@gobmail.gov.bz
3	Aida Reyes	Senior Labour Officer	aida.reyes@labour.gov.bz
4	Rissela Dominguez	Senior Labour Officer	brenda.ferguson@labour.gov.bz
5	Jesus Yam	Senior Labour Officer	Jesus.yam@labour.gov.bz
6	Herman Pastor	Labour Officer	herman.pastor@Labour.gov.bz
7	Brenda Ferguson	Employment Officer	rissela.dominguez@labour.gov.bz
8	Marcelle Theurs	Labour Officer	marcelle.theus@labour.gov.bz
9	Alfaro Muy	Labour Officer	alfaro.muy@labour.gov.bz
10	Tarina Moody	Employment Officer	tarina.moody@labour.gov.bz
11	Christy Edwards	Employment Officer	christy.edwards@labour.gov.bz
12	Franklin Martinez	Labour Officer	martinezfr@gobmail.gov.bz
13	Orvin Sanchez	Labour Officer	orvin.sanchez@labour.gov.bz
14	Eluterio Novelo	Labour Officer	eluterio.novelo@labour.gov.bz
15	Perla Coba	Employment Officer	perla.coba@labour.gov.bz
16	Gabiel Ramos	Employer Officer	Gabiel.ramos@labour.gov.bz
17	Vernon Avila	Employment Officer	vernon.avila@labour.gov.bz
18	Aniki Palacio	Labour Officer	aniki.palacio@labour.gov.bz
19	Denise Spain	Employment Officer	denise.spain@labour.gov.bz
20	Esperanza Coleman	Employment Officer	esperanza.coleman@labour.gov.bz
21	Shemika Cattouse	Employment Officer	shemicha.cattouse@labour.gov.bz
22	Sujelli Ku	Labour Officer	sujelli.ku@labour.gov.bz
23	Gicely Cal	Labour Officer	gicely.cal@labour.gov.bz
24	Domingo Pau	Labour Officer	domingo.pau@labour.gov.bz

APPENDIX B

The list of stakeholders that were invited to the stakeholder's consultation meeting.

Agricultural Development and Services Ltd.	jcanton@agdevser.com	Judith Canton	Directing Manager
BAHAR Bio-tech Ltd.	bbtechbelize@gmail.com	Barkat Faroouqi	
Bel-Car Export & Import Company Limited	otto@belcar.bz	Otto Friesen	CEO
Belize Poultry Association	belizepoultry@yahoo.com	Armando Cowo	General Manager
Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association	bscfacom.management@gmail.com	Oscar Alonzo	CEO
Belize Sugar Industries Ltd	Shawn.Chavarria@asr-group.com	Shawn Chavarria	
Big Creek Group	zahida.flores@bigcreekgroup.com	Zahida Flores	Chief operating officer
Circle R Products Ltd	areimer@circlerproducts.com	Anthony Reimer	Ceo
Citrus Growers Association	eccleiftonirving@gmail.com	Eccleifton Irving	Chairman CGA
Project Management Services (Belize) Ltd.	lhoban@fyffes.com	Leighton Hoban	General manager
Royal Mayan Shrimp Farm, Ltd.	alvin@royalmayanshrimp.com	Alvin Henderson	
Running W Brand Meats	runningw@btl.net	Alexandra Bedran Valdes	
Santander Sugar Ltd	bburke@santandersugar.com / afernandez@santandersugar.com	Beverly Burke/ Ana Fernandez	Health And Safety Manager
Spanish Lookout Community	office@spanishlookout.net	Reynold Reimer	Secretary of the community
TexBel Agricultural Investments Ltd	info@texbelfarms.com / jennifer.faulkner@texbelfarms.com	Rosenda Logan- Jennifer Faulkner-	Chief operating officer
Tropic Rice	ray@tropice.bz	Ray Dueck- Owner.	
Caribbean Chicken LTD.	wicabcc88@gmail.com	Wilfrid Wicab	Health and Safety Supervisor -
BTL	javila@livedigi.com / itsucum@livedigi.com	Jolene Avila	Human Resource Manager
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BEL	denise.gillett@bel.com.bz	Denise Gillett	Human Resource Manager
Phina Purified Water	Phinaczl@gmail.com	Mr. Reyes	General Manager
Prosser Fertilizer	admin@prosserbelize.com	Salvador Epat	Assistant CEO
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY			
Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry	claudette@maheias.com	Ms. Claudette Elters	Member of OSH Bill Committee
Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry	analyst@belize.org	Mr. Dyon Elliot	Member of OSH Bill Committee
Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry	ehabet@mai.com	Emogene Habet	Member of OSH Bill Committee
Belize Chamber of Commerce and Industry	m.longsworth@belize.org	Ms. Marissa Longworth	Member of OSH Bill Committee
Social Security Board	avillas@socialsecurity.org.bz	Mr. Arnaldo Villas	Senior Manager, Service Management
LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD			
Labour Advisory Board	marcelcardona@btl.net	Mr. Marcel Cardona Cervantes	Labour Advisory Board- Chair
Labour Advisory Board	galvez.fredo@gmail.com	Mr. Wilfredo Galvez	Labour Advisory Board-Deputy Chairperson
Labour Advisory Board	borlandbz@yahoo.com	Rear Admiral (Ret.) Cedric Borland	Labour Advisory Board-Member
Labour Advisory Board	sharon_fraser32@hotmail.com	Ms. Sharon Fraser	Labour advisory Board- Member
Labour Advisory Board	marvinmora@gmail.com	Mr. Marvin Mora	Labour Advisory Board- Member
Labour Advisory Board	lukepsu15@gmail.com	Mr. Luis Luke Martinez	Labour advisory Board- Member
Labour Advisory Board	ceo@belize.org	Ms. Kim Aikman	Labour Advisory Board- Member
Labour Advisory Board	membership@belize.org	Ms. Yorshabell Cattouse	Labour advisory Board- Member