



A Guide to Risk Assessment



OSHA HOTLINE: 623-OSHA (6742)
www.osha.gov.tt

Introduction

This leaflet aims to help you assess safety and health issues in the workplace.

A risk assessment is an important step in protecting your workers and your business, as well as complying with the law. It helps you focus on the risks that really matter in your workplace – those with the potential to cause real harm. In many instances, straightforward measures can readily control risks, for example, drawers are kept closed to avoid injury. For most, that means simple, cheap and effective measures to ensure your most valuable asset – your workforce - is protected.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

All employers must conduct an annual risk assessment of their individual establishment as outlined in Section 13A of the Occupational Safety and Health Act Chap. 88:08 (OSH Act).

The full text of Section 13A can be found on Page 11 of this document.

The law does not expect you to eliminate all risks, but you are required to protect people as far as 'reasonably practicable'. This guide tells you how to achieve that using a five step approach.

This is not the only way to do a risk assessment. There are other methods that can be applied, particularly for more complex risks and circumstances. However, we believe this approach is the most straightforward for most organisations.

Hazard and Risk

A hazard is anything that can cause harm e.g. chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, etc.



A risk is the likelihood, great or small, that the hazard will cause harm, and its consequences.

What is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is nothing more than a careful examination of what, in your work-place, could cause harm to persons, to enable you to decide whether you have taken sufficient precautions or you need to do more to prevent harm. The intent is to make sure that no one gets hurt or becomes ill.

Accidents, injuries and ill health ruin lives and adversely affect your business when output is lost, machinery is damaged, insurance costs increase, or you have to attend court. You are legally required to assess the risks in your workplace. The important things you need to decide are whether a hazard is significant and whether you have it controlled by satisfactory precautions so that the risk is small. You need to check this when you assess the risks. For instance, electricity can kill but the risk of it doing so in an office environment is remote, provided that 'live' components are insulated and metal casings are properly earthed.

HOW TO ASSESS THE RISKS IN YOUR WORKPLACE

The following five steps can be followed:

- **STEP 1:** Look for the hazards
- **STEP 2:** Decide who might be harmed and how
- **STEP 3:** Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
- **STEP 4:** Record your findings
- **STEP 5:** Review your assessment and revise if necessary



Do not be overcomplicated. In many firms the hazards may be obvious. Checking them is common sense but necessary. You probably already know whether, for example, you have machinery that could cause harm, or if there is an awkward entrance or stair where someone could be hurt. If so, check that you have taken what reasonable precautions you can to avoid injury. If your firm is small and you are confident that you understand what is involved, you can do the assessment yourself, (you do not have to be a health and safety expert!). If you are not confident, get help from a competent source. But remember, you are responsible for seeing it is adequately done.

Five steps to Risk Assessment

STEP 1

Look for the hazards. If you are doing the assessment yourself, walk around your workplace and look afresh at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm.

- Ignore the trivial and concentrate on significant hazards which could result in serious harm or affect several people.
- Ask your employees or their representatives for their thoughts. They may have noticed things which are not immediately obvious.
- Manufacturer's instructions or data sheets can also help you identify hazards and put risks in their true perspective.
- Accident and ill-health records can also be used.

STEP 2

Decide who might be harmed and how.

Do not forget:

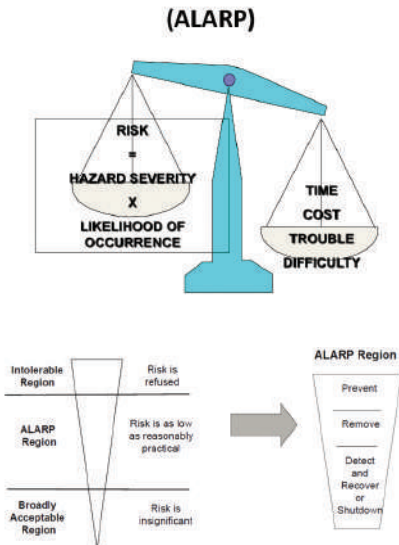
- Young workers, trainees, pregnant and nursing employees etc. may be particularly at risk.
- Cleaners, visitors, contractors, maintenance workers, etc. who may not be in the workplace all the time.
- Members of the public, or people you share your workplace with, if there is a chance they could be hurt by your activities.

STEP 3

Evaluate the risks identified and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done. Consider how likely it is that each hazard could cause harm. This will determine whether or not you need to do more to reduce the risk. Even after all precautions have been taken, some risk usually remains. What you have to decide for each significant hazard is whether this remaining risk is acceptable or not.

- First, ask yourself whether you have done all the things that the law says you have to do. For example, have you prevented access to dangerous parts of machinery as required by the law?
- Then ask yourself whether generally accepted industry standards are in place.

Do not stop there – think for yourself, because the law also says that you must do what is reasonably practicable to keep your workplace safe. Your real aim is to make all risks small by adding to your precautions as necessary. If you find that something needs to be done, draw up an 'Action List' and give priority to any remaining risks that are high and/or those that could affect most people.



In taking action ask yourself:

- a) Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- b) If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

In controlling risks apply the following principles below, if possible in the following order:

- Try a less risky option.
- Prevent access to the hazard (e.g. by guarding).
- Issue personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Provide welfare facilities (e.g. washing facilities for removal of contamination and first aid).

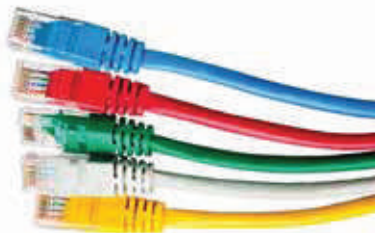
Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. For instance, placing a mirror on a dangerous blind corner to help prevent vehicular accidents, or putting some non-slip material on slippery steps are inexpensive precautions considering the risks. Failure to take simple precautions can cost you a lot more if an accident does happen.

But what if you share a workplace?

Tell the other employers and self-employed people there about any risks your work could cause them, and what precautions you are taking. Also, think about the risks to your workforce from the activities of those who share your workplace.

STEP 4

Record your findings. If you have fewer than twenty-five employees you do not need to write anything down, though it is useful to keep a written record of what you have done. However, if you employ twenty-five or more people, you must record the significant findings of your assessment. This means writing down the significant hazards and conclusions. Examples might be 'Electrical installations: insulation and earthing checked and found sound' or 'Fume from welding: local exhaust ventilation provided and regularly checked'. You must also tell your employ-



ees about your findings. Risk assessments must be suitable and sufficient.

You need to be able to show that:

- A proper check was made.
- You asked who might be affected.
- You dealt with all the obvious significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved.
- The precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low.

Keep the written record for future reference.

It can help you if an Inspector asks what precautions you have taken, or if you become involved in any action for civil liability. It can also remind you to keep an eye on particular hazards and precautions and it helps to show that you have done what the law requires. There is an example at the end of this guide, which you may find helpful to refer to but you can develop your own form if you prefer. To make things simpler, you can refer to other documents, such as manuals, the arrangements in your safety and health policy company rules, manufacturers' instructions, your safety and health procedures and your arrangements for general fire safety. These may already list hazards and precautions. You do not need to repeat all that and it is up to you whether you combine all the documents, or keep them separately.

STEP 5

Review your assessment and revise it if necessary.

Sooner or later you will bring in new machines, substances and procedures, which could lead to new hazards. If there is any significant change, the assessment must be reviewed to take into account any new hazard. {Ref: Section 13A(2)}. Do not amend your assessment for every trivial change.



However, if a new job introduces significant new hazards of its own, you will want to consider them in their own right and do whatever is necessary to minimise risks. In any case, it is a good practice to review your assessment from time to time to make sure that the precautions are still working effectively. Remember that the OSH Act requires an annual assessment to be undertaken.

The following is an example of the five-step process:

STEP 1 Hazard

Look only for hazards which you could reasonably expect to result in significant harm under the conditions in your workplace. Use the following examples as a guide:

- Chemicals (e.g. battery acid)
- Dust (e.g. from grinding)
- Ejection of material (e.g. from using a grinding wheel)
- Electricity (e.g. exposed conductors)
- Fire (e.g. from flammable materials)
- Fumes (e.g. welding)
- Low temperature (e.g. frozen food processing plant)
- Manual handling (e.g. lifting heavy objects)
- Moving parts of machinery (e.g. blades)
- Noise (e.g. loud noise in a bottling factory)
- Poor lighting (e.g. dimly lit office environment)
- Pressure systems (e.g. steam boilers)
- Slipping/tripping hazards (e.g. poorly maintained floors or stairs)
- Vehicles (e.g. fork-lift trucks)
- Work at height (e.g. from scaffolding)

STEP 2 Who might be harmed and how?

There is no need to list individuals by name, just think about groups of people doing similar work or who may be affected, e.g. office staff, maintenance personnel, contractors, people sharing your workplace, operators, cleaners, members of the public or people that may be more vulnerable.

Pay particular attention to:

- Staff with disabilities
- Visitors
- Inexperienced staff

- Lone workers
- Young persons
- Pregnant and nursing employees

STEP 3 Is more needed to control the risk?

For the hazards listed, are the following precautions already taken:

- Meet the standards set by a legal requirement?
- Comply with a recognized industry standard?
- Represent good practice?
- Reduce risk as far as reasonably practicable?

Have you provided:

- Adequate information, instruction and training?
- Adequate systems or procedures?

If so, then the risks are adequately controlled but you need to indicate the precautions you have in place. (You may refer to procedures, company rules, etc.) Where the risk is not adequately controlled, indicate what more you need to do (the 'Action List')

STEP 4

Record your findings. Are you able to verify:

- Date and time of the assessment
- Person(s) conducting the assessment
- Significant findings
- Precautions taken to reduce risk
- Remaining risk
- Review and revision date.

If you employ more than twenty-five (25) people you need to be able to demonstrate a risk assessment. If you have less than twenty-five (25) people, although you are not compelled to, it is a good practice to keep a written record of what you have done.

STEP 5 Review and revision

Set a date for review of the assessment. On review, check that the precautions for each hazard still adequately control the risk. If not, indicate the action needed and note the outcome. If necessary, complete a new page for your risk assessment.

Making changes in your workplace for example, when bringing in new machines, substances and procedures may introduce significant hazards. Look for them and repeat steps one to four.

The following is an example of a risk assessment format:

ASSESSMENT REVIEW

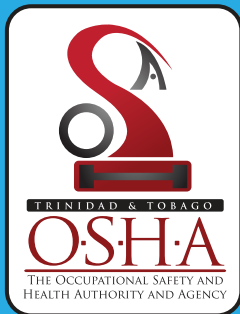
Date: _____

List significant hazards here:

List groups of people who are at risk from the significant hazards you have identified:

List existing controls or note where the information may be found. List risks which are not adequately controlled and the action needed:





Duke Place, Level 4 & 5
50-54 Duke Street, Port of Spain

For further information:

Tel: (868) 299-0300 Fax: (868) 623-5905

OSHA HOTLINE: 623-OSHA (6742)

www.osha.gov.tt

OSHA is a statutory Agency of the Ministry of Labour
and Small and Micro Enterprise Development
August 2014



Guidance in preparing a Safety & Health Policy

Health and safety
Statement

Health and safety at Work etc

This is the Health and S

Company)

Statement of general

OSHA HOTLINE: 623-OSHA (6742)
www.osha.gov.tt

Introduction

Occupational Safety and Health Act Chapter 88:08 (the OSH Act) requires inter alia, every employer of an industrial establishment with 25 or more employees to prepare or revise a Safety and Health Policy in consultation with representatives of the employees. Section 6(8) of the OSH Act also states that the Chief Inspector may direct employers of fewer than 25 persons to also prepare a safety and health policy. Consequently, the following information can be used as a guide in the preparation of the required document by all employers in Trinidad and Tobago.

What is a safety and health policy?

Your safety and health policy sets out how you manage safety and health in your organisation. It is a unique document that identifies who does what and when and how they do it. Pages 4-14 of this booklet give an example of a policy that you can use and keep in your workplace. However, you do not have to use this document or format, it is meant for guidance only. You are free to record and store the information in any form you choose. This format gives you an idea of the kind of information you need to record.



Your policy document should describe your arrangements, i.e. the systems and procedures you have in place for ensuring employees' safety and health. You may wish to refer to other documents, e.g. work rules, safety checklists, training programmes, emergency instructions, etc. All employees may not need to see all the other documents, but they must see the policy.



Why do I need a safety and health policy?

The safety and health policy is your starting point to managing safety and health in the work place, your general policy on safety and health at work and the organisation and arrangements for putting that policy into practice. Writing a safety and health policy is more than just a legal requirement, it is your commitment to planning and managing safety and health. It is the key to achieving and maintaining acceptable standards, reducing accidents and work-related illnesses and it shows our employees that you care for their safety and health.

Who should develop the policy?

With very few exceptions, the responsibility for safety and health rests on you as an employer. However, many day-to-day tasks may be delegated. Your policy should clearly identify how these tasks are allocated, but remember, you will still have ultimate responsibility. You should consult your employees, (through worker representatives) about the policy. Everyone should be able to see from the policy exactly who is responsible for different tasks, such as advice, reporting an accident and first aid, etc.

How often do I need to revise the policy?

It should be reviewed and possibly revised in the light of experience, or because of operational or organisational changes. It is useful to review the policy regularly (e.g. annually).



Do I need to do anything else?

Yes, you have other legal duties under other sections of the legislation. In particular, under the OSH Act Section 13(A), you have to assess the risks arising from your work activities and record the significant findings (refer to page 7 of this document). Depending on your type of work, there may be other specific legislation that will apply.

REMEMBER: What you write in the policy has to be put into practice. The true test of a safety and health policy is the actual conditions in the workplace, not how well the statement is written. You are also required to submit the policy and any revision thereof to the Chief Inspector and make it known to all employees. (Section 6(7) of the OSHA Act).

Safety and Health Policy

(This example Safety & Health Policy is for guidance only. Please note that this is not a generic template that you can just put your company's name on and adopt without any thought. Every business is different, you need to think through the hazards and controls required for your business.)

Occupational Safety and Health Act Chapter 88:08

This is the Safety and Health Policy of:

(Name of Company)

Our statement of general policy is:

- To provide adequate control of the safety and health risks arising from our work activities
- To consult with our employees on matters affecting their safety and health
- To provide safe systems of work
- To provide and maintain safe plant and equipment
- To ensure safe handling and use of substances
- To provide information, instruction and supervision for employees
- To ensure all employees are competent to do their tasks and to give them adequate training
- To prevent accidents and cases of work-related ill health
- To maintain safe and healthy working conditions
- To review and revise this document as necessary at regular intervals
- To ensure commitment to safety and health issues
- To maintain safe transportation of articles
- To ensure continual improvement of employee working conditions

Signed:

(Employer)

(Date)

(Review Date)

Responsibilities

1. Overall and final responsibility for safety and health is that of

.....

*Your name must be inserted here. As the employer (i.e. sole trader, senior partner or managing director), you have overall responsibility for safety and health.

2. Day-to-day responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice is delegated to

.....

*If you are not always there, or do not have time to manage on a day-to-day basis, you can delegate this role to some one else, e.g. director, manager or supervisor. You will need to ensure that they keep you fully informed of safety and health matters as this will still be your overall responsibility.

3. To ensure safety and health standards are maintained/improved, the following people have responsibility in the following areas

Name

Responsibilities

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

*You may delegate functions to people within your organization, either by specific areas within the workplace or by topic. You should include their specific responsibilities in their job description. You must also ensure that they are competent to undertake their safety and health responsibilities and have adequate resources to enable them to do

their job properly. It is important that responsibilities are clearly set out as this will make sure that if there are any safety and health concerns, they can be reported to the right person, and dealt with. You may wish to insert a diagram or chart showing your management structure/arrangements.

4. All employees must among other things:

- (a) Co-operate with supervisors and managers on safety and health matters**
- (b) Not interfere with anything provided to safeguard their safety and health**
- (c) Take reasonable care of their own safety and health**
- (d) Report all safety and health concerns to an appropriate person (as detailed in this policy statement).**

*Employees have legal responsibilities to take care of their own safety and health and that of others and to cooperate with you to help you comply with the law. Equally if employees have any concerns over safety and health issues, they should be clear about who they should tell so that the concerns can be addressed. [Ref: OSH Act Part II section 10].

Safety and health risks arising from our work activities

Risk assessments will be undertaken by:

.....
The findings of the risk assessments will be reported to:

.....
Action required to remove/control risks will be approved by:

.....



.....
will be responsible for ensuring the action required is implemented.

.....
will check that the implemented actions have removed/reduced the risks.

Assessments will be reviewed every:

.....
or when the work activity changes, whichever is soonest.

*You must assess risks to the safety and health of anyone who may be affected by your work activities, so that you can weigh whether you have done enough or need to do more to comply with the law.

[Ref: OSH Act Section 13(A)]. You will need to involve a number of different people, including your Safety representatives and employees, to do the risk assessment. You need to record the significant findings of your risk

assessments in a separate statement. Your policy document only records your arrangements for ensuring the assessments are done and are kept up to date. Once you have done your risk assessments, you must take the necessary action to remove or reduce the risk as far as is reasonably practicable. For further information see “A Guide to Risk Assessment”.

Consultation with employees

Employee representative/s is/are:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Consultation with employees is provided by:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

*You must consult your employees. If you recognise a trade union and that trade union has appointed a safety representative, you must consult them on matters affecting the employees they represent. If you do not have trade unions, you must consult employees, either directly or through an elected representative [Ref: OSH Act Section 6(7)]. You may wish to use your safety and health committee or another meeting as a forum for consultation. See “Guidance on Safety and Health Committees”.



Safe plant and equipment

.....
will be responsible for identifying all equipment/
plant needing maintenance.

.....
will be responsible for ensuring effective maintenance
procedures are drawn up.

.....
will be responsible for ensuring that all identified
maintenance is implemented.

Any problems found with plant/equipment
should be reported to:

.....
.....
will check that new plant and equipment meets
safety and health standards before it is
purchased.

*You will need to ensure that all plant and equipment (e.g. lift
trucks, vehicles, gas appliances, machinery guarding,

ladders, electrical equipment, lifting equipment, air receivers, ventilation plant) that require maintenance (e.g. pre-shift checks, servicing, thorough examinations) are identified and that the maintenance is done. It may be worthwhile using a logbook to record the maintenance checks. When buying new or second hand plant and equipment, you must check it meets safety and health standards before buying it. [Ref: OSH Act Section 13].

Safe handling and use of substances

.....
will be responsible for identifying all substances which need a risk assessment.

.....
will be responsible for undertaking risk assessments.

.....
will be responsible for ensuring that all actions identified in the assessments are implemented.

.....
will be responsible for ensuring that all relevant employees are informed about risk assessments.

.....
will check that new substances can be used safely before they are purchased.



Assessments will be reviewed every

.....
or when the work activity changes, whichever is soonest.

*You must assess the risks from all substances hazardous to health [Ref: OSH Act Section 6-(3)(4)(5)(6)].

These are known as your risk assessments. You should do assessments on substances you use (e.g. adhesives, paints, cleaning agents, solvents) and substances generated from work activities (e.g. dust, fume, vapour). Your assessment should identify any health risks. If there is a risk, you should take steps to remove or control the risk. Further, an employer should ensure that his employees are provided with health surveillance as appropriate. [Ref: OSH Act Section 25(K). All health records should be kept for 25years [Ref: OSH Act Section 75(1).

Information, instruction and supervision

Safety and health supervision of young workers/trainees will be arranged/undertaken/monitored by:

.....
.....
is responsible for ensuring that our employees working at locations under the control of other employers, are given relevant safety and health information.

*You are required to have access to competent advice, either in-house or, if not available, external (e.g. employer organisations, trade associations, trade unions, consultants). If you have young workers and/or take on trainees or students to provide work experience, you will need to ensure that they are properly instructed and supervised. You must also undertake specific risk assessments for young people and you need to take account of their inexperience, lack of awareness of risks and immaturity [Ref: OSH Act Section 22; Sections 53-56]. If your employees go to work for another

employer on your behalf (e.g. if you are a contractor), you will need to check that they are given relevant safety and health information for that location, by that employer/company.

Competency for tasks and training

Induction training will be provided for all employees by:

.....

Job specific training will be provided by:

.....

Specific jobs requiring training are:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Training records are kept at/by:

.....

Training will be identified, arranged and monitored by:

.....

*All employees must be given safety and health induction training when they start work. This can be combined with other useful information e.g. pay, leave, and hours of work). It needs to cover basic safety and health such as first aid and fire safety. Employees will need job specific training, which includes the safety and health aspects of the job. You also have to provide safety and health

training for people when risks change, or periodically, e.g. if skills do not get used regularly. Some jobs will require additional special training (e.g. manual handling, driving, slinging techniques, confined space entry and asbestos removal). You may wish to refer to your company training programme. It is important to keep records of training, (even training you have provided in-house), to show that employees have received training. You should monitor the training records, so that refresher training is given when necessary.

Accidents, first aid and work related ill health

Health surveillance is required for employees doing the following jobs:

.....

.....

Health surveillance will be arranged by:

.....





Health surveillance records will be kept by/at:

The appointed person(s)/first aider(s) is/are:

All accidents and cases of work-related ill health are to be recorded in the accident register. The register is kept at:

is responsible for reporting accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to the enforcing authority.

***Employees must receive health surveillance for certain work (e.g. work with flour, lead, chrome, asbestos, noise, isocyanates and other hazardous chemicals).**

This will identify any health problems early on so that action can be taken before an employee's condition worsens.

Your risk assessments should identify all areas and the type of health surveillance needed. Your records should contain details of the employees, the health surveillance procedures, dates and conclusions. The health care professional doing the surveillance will hold the actual medical records, as these are confidential. [Ref.: OSH Act Section 25K]. Providing immediate first aid can prevent minor injuries becoming major ones. It is a good practice to have a first aid box and an appointed person to take charge of first aid requirements. Recording accidents (even minor ones) and diseases means you can see whether you have a problem in a particular area. You must report certain types of accidents and ill health at work. [Ref: OSH Act Sections 46A and 48].

Monitoring

To check our working conditions and ensure our safe working practices are being followed, we will:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

is responsible for investigating accidents.

.....

is responsible for investigating work-related causes of sickness absences.

is responsible for acting on investigation findings to prevent a recurrence.

*You must be able to show that you are checking working conditions and systems of work, i.e. that you are monitoring safety and health. You can do this both actively and reactively, i.e. before and after something goes wrong. **ACTIVELY:** you or any other appointed person can carry out inspections, have reports submitted to you by managers, do spot check visits, safety representative inspections, etc. The safety and health committee has the right to carry out inspections and investigate accidents. **REACTIVELY:** You can investigate any accidents or sickness/absences that occur. Investigating accidents is a useful way of reviewing your safety systems. Ask yourself why the accident really happened and what you can do to stop it happening again. Similarly, if you have a number of employees absent because of similar ailments, this might mean there is a problem with their jobs causing ill health. When you find out what went wrong, put it right.

Emergency Procedures, fire and evacuation

is responsible for ensuring the fire risk assessment is undertaken and implemented.

Escape routes are checked by/every:





Fire extinguishers are maintained and checked by/every:

Alarms are tested by/every:

Emergency evacuation will be tested every:

***You must carry out a fire risk assessment in the same way you do for safety and health risks. Your local fire service can tell you your obligations. For escape routes, extinguishers and alarms, you should state who checks, how often and also where they are based. You need a routine in case of fire or any other emergency evacuation. You should test your alarms and emergency evacuation procedures regularly. [Ref: OSHA Act Part V]. An emergency plan is required if you are an occupier, i.e. the person who has the ultimate control over the affairs of the industrial establishment. [Ref: OSH Act Section 8(2)(b)].**





Some key areas of risk

- Asbestos
- Chemicals
- Confined spaces
- Display screen equipment
- Electricity
- Excavation
- Falling objects/collapsing structures
- Fire and explosion
- Machinery (including guarding)
- Manual handling
- Noise
- Pressure systems
- Radiation
- Slips, trips and falls
- Stress
- Substances hazardous to health (including dust, fumes, etc.)
- Temperatures
- Transport (including carrying dangerous substances, and pedestrians in the workplace)
- Vibration
- Violence to staff
- Work equipment
- Work-related upper limb disorders
- Working alone
- Working at heights
- Working environment

These are just some examples of key areas and not an exhaustive list. Look around your workplace to identify other risk areas. If any risks apply to your work activities, you will need to do risk assessments to check that you have removed or reduced the risk.

FOR FURTHER READING SEE:

- A Short Guide for Employers
- A Short Guide for Employees
- A Guide to Risk Assessment
- Guidance on Safety and Health Committees

GETTING HELP

If any additional information is required,
please feel free to consult with:



**Level 5, Duke Place, 50-54 Duke Street
Port of Spain, Republic of Trinidad and Tobago**

Tel: (868) 299 0300 Fax: (868) 623 623 5905

OSHA HOTLINE: 623 OSHA (6742)

www.osha.gov.tt

OSHA is a statutory agency
Of the Ministry of Labour and Small
And Micro Enterprise Development
Version 3, July 2015



Emergency Response Planning

Guidelines

OSHA is a statutory Agency of the Ministry of Labour
and Small and Micro Enterprise Development



This leaflet is a brief guide to the OSH Act Chapter 88:08.
It does not describe the law in detail, but it does list the key points

OSHA HOTLINE: 623-OSHA (6742)
www.osha.gov.tt

Introduction

This document provides you with guidelines for developing an emergency response plan to address safety and health at your workplace. It is important that your workplace be made as safe as possible and that everyone is aware of the procedures to follow in an emergency. We believe this guide will help you to accomplish that goal.

LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Requirements for Emergency Response Planning in the OSH Chapter 88:08

Section 8(2) states "An occupier of an industrial establishment employing twenty-five or more persons shall prepare or revise, in consultation with worker representatives in the industrial establishment:

- (a) A written statement of the general policy with respect to the safety and health of persons employed in the industrial establishment, specifying the organization and arrangements for the time being in force for carrying out that policy and the provisions specified in subsection (1); and
- (b) An emergency plan in writing based on a risk assessment made in accordance with section 13A which shall include:
 - (i) Suitable and rapid means of obtaining first aid help and transportation from the industrial establishment to a hospital for injured workers; and

- (ii) Measures and procedures to be used to control a major fire, to react to serious damage to the industrial establishment, to evacuate the industrial establishment and to notify rescue personnel,
- (c) The occupier shall submit the statement or the emergency plan, as the case may be, and any revision thereof to the Chief Inspector and bring them to the notice of all persons employed in the industrial establishment,
- (d) The Chief Inspector may, having regard to the statement or the emergency plan submitted under subsection (2), direct the occupier to appoint at his own expense, a Safety Practitioner who shall assist in ensuring that the policy and the provisions specified in subsection (1) or the requirements of the emergency plan, as the case may be, are complied with.
- (e) An occupier shall ensure, as far as is reasonably possible, that no unsafe structure exists in the industrial establishment that is likely to expose persons to risks of bodily injury.
- (f) An occupier shall ensure that the requirements under this section are complied with within three (3) months of the employment of its twenty-fifth employee.”

GENERAL GUIDANCE

In an emergency you need to respond quickly, whether it is a major or minor incident. You must plan how to deal with possible problems. An emergency plan will help to address all situations that pose serious or imminent danger.

What should your emergency action plan include?

When developing your emergency action plan, it is a good idea to look at a wide variety of potential emergencies that could occur at your workplace. It should be tailored to your worksite and include information about all potential types of emergencies.

Your emergency action plan should consider the following:

- Accidents
- Explosion
- Flood
- Seismic Events
- Poisoning
- Electric Shock
- Fire
- Release of Radioactive Materials
- Medical Emergency
- Chemical Spills

Prepare your emergency action plan

Developing an emergency action plan means you should do a risk assessment to determine the likelihood of existing hazards in your workplaces that could cause an emergency. If you have more than one worksite, each site should have an emergency action plan. Plan for reasonably foreseeable incidents.

COMMUNICATION

Your plan must include a way to alert employees, including differently abled persons, to evacuate or take other action and how to report emergencies, as required. Following are some of the steps you must take:

Tell People:

- What might happen and how the alarm will be raised.
- What to do, including how to call the emergency services.
- Where to go to reach safety or get rescue equipment.
- Who will control the incident, and the names of other key people such as the first aiders.
- Essential actions such as emergency plant shut down or making processes safe.

At a minimum, your emergency action plan must include the following:

- A predetermined method for reporting fires and other emergencies.
- An evacuation policy and procedure.
- Emergency escape procedures and route assignments, such as floor plans, workplace maps, and safe or refuge areas, names, titles, departments and telephone numbers of individuals both within and outside your industrial establishment to contact for additional information or explanation of duties and responsibilities under the emergency plan.
- Procedures for employees who remain to perform or shut down critical plant operations, operate fire extinguishers, or perform other essential services before evacuating.
- Rescue and medical duties for any workers designated to perform them. You must designate an assembly location and procedures to account for all employees after an evacuation.
- Make sure alarms are distinctive and recognized by all employees as a signal to evacuate the work area or perform actions identified in your plan.
- Make available an emergency communications system such as a public address system, portable radio unit, or other means to notify employees of the emergency and to contact local law enforcement, the fire department, and others.



systems, evacuation plans, and shutdown procedures, and evacuation plans.

Discuss any special hazards you may have onsite such as flammable materials, toxic chemicals, radioactive sources, or water-reactive substances. Clearly communicate to your employees who will be in charge during an emergency to minimize confusion.

After an Accident or Serious Incident:

- Treat any injuries and deal with the immediate emergency.
- Make the premises safe.
- Report the details to the relevant bodies (Fire, Police etc) and the OSH Agency.
- As far as possible in clearing up operations, take care not to destroy the evidence which might be required during investigation of the circumstances. If in doubt, check with the OSH Agency.

Small Industrial Establishments:

Appoint someone to take charge in an emergency, to call an ambulance and to look after the first aid equipment. At least one 'appointed person' must be available at all times when people are at work.

Provide a fully equipped first aid box. The location of the first aid box should be clearly marked for easy detection and should be stored ideally near to washing facilities.

Display notices giving the locations of first aid equipment and the name and location of the appointed person or first aider should be provided. In some cases, where there are special hazards, you may need a first aid room, a qualified first aider or someone with specialist first aid training. As your company grows, reassess your need for qualified first aiders. First aiders must have training appropriate to the hazards of the workplace, and be in possession of a valid first aid certificate. After that, a refresher course and re-examination is necessary. In all industrial establishments, it makes sense to have someone who knows the basics of first aid, e.g. resuscitation, control of bleeding and treatment of an unconscious patient.

Guidelines for Emergency Response Planning for Major Hazard Industrial Establishments include the following steps:

- 1 A report on status relating to risk assessment and the measures taken to prevent the accidents.
- 2 Report of probabilities of possible hazards due to the failure to provide control measures and equipment at different stages of all processes. Mention the names of hazardous substances which may create above hazards.
- 3 Provision for all facilities, procedures for immediate control to minimize the effect of such probabilities.
- 4 Provisions of control room arrangement for twenty-four hours (excluding or with other services).
- 5 Submission of material safety data sheets for hazardous substances.
- 6 Arrangements regarding maintenance of different equipment, control measures and safe procedures of work so that they shall work effectively.
- 7 A statement on all possible sources of accidents involving fire, explosion, release or leakage of toxic substances and the plan showing the places of above accidents within the facilities to control the emergency near the place and the control room.



Duke Place, Level 4 & 5
50-54 Duke Street, Port of Spain

For further information:

Tel: (868) 299-0300 Fax: (868) 623-5905

OSHA HOTLINE: 623-OSHA (6742)

www.osha.gov.tt

OSHA is a statutory Agency of the Ministry of Labour
and Small and Micro Enterprise Development



Guidance on **Safety & Health Committees**



OSHA HOTLINE: 623-OSHA (6742)
www.osha.gov.tt

INTRODUCTION

This document is for guidance only.

A safety and health committee is a forum where safety and health problems can be identified and resolved. Safety and Health committees are important forums for employers and employees to consult and work together to identify and resolve problems and contribute to the development of safe systems of work. Everyone in a workplace shares the responsibility for safety and health. Joint safety and health committees are a mechanism for maintaining this co-operative effort.

A safety and health committee provides an opportunity for the employer and employee representatives to meet and decide what should be done to improve safety and health in the workplace. It provides a mechanism for developing policies and procedures, and for discussing issues which have significance for the whole organisation. The committee is not the best vehicle for the resolution of day to day safety and health issues,



which are best handled promptly by those directly involved.

The committee should review work procedures and make recommendations to improve them where necessary. Members should also take active steps to keep themselves informed of the latest safety and health standards in similar workplaces and undertake training where necessary.

Other functions, which may be given to the committee by the employer, are subject to the committee's consent. These could include functions relating to health promotion in the workplace and the operation of employee assistance programmes.

Importantly, the management representatives on the committee should be aware of their responsibility to bring the latest technological and management developments to the attention of the committee to ensure that committee members are fully informed, and trained as required.



LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Sections 25E and 25F of the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act Chapter 88:08 require the following:

25E (1) Every employer in consultation with the representatives of his employees shall establish a safety and health committee at an industrial establishment in accordance with this section where:

- (a) There are twenty-five or more persons employed at that establishment; or
- (b) The Chief Inspector on the basis of prescribed criteria, directs the establishment of such a committee at the industrial establishment where fewer than twenty-five persons are employed.

25F Every safety and health committee established at a place of work in accordance with his Act shall:

- (a) Keep under review the measures taken to ensure the safety and health of persons at the place of work;
- (b) Investigate any matter at an industrial establishment
 - (i) which a member of the committee or a person employed thereat considers is not safe or is a risk to health; and
 - (ii) which has been brought to the attention of the employer;
- (c) Attempt to resolve any matter referred to in paragraph (b) and, if it is unable to do so, shall request the Chief Inspector to undertake an inspection of the place of work for that purpose;
- (d) Have such other functions as may be prescribed.

COMPOSITION OF SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMITTEES

Management Representatives

The direct involvement of senior management on the committee is recommended so that decisions can be readily implemented.

Worker Representatives

It is recommended that at least half of the members of a safety and health committee be representatives of the employees. The employee representatives for the committee should be elected by the employees who work at that workplace. The employee representatives should not be outnumbered by the employer representatives on the committee.

Observers and Specialists may attend if invited

Observer status is frequently granted to individuals with an interest in a particular issue being discussed or to those who can provide specialist advice. However, observers cannot take part in the decision-making processes of the committee.

Role of Safety Practitioners

Safety practitioners can be representatives of management on a Committee, although it is more common for them to be ex-officio members, giving them an advisory role. Safety officers can also be used as a source of information and to undertake research tasks for the committee.



There may be more than one safety and health committee

In large organisations, it may be useful to define work areas so that a number of committees can exist on one site. In such cases a coordinating committee may be established to oversee the operation of individual committees.

An alternative suitable for some organisations that comprise of a number of different operations involves the formation of subcommittees with appropriate representation to deal with specialised areas.

ROLE AND FUNCTIONS

Safety and Health committees should deal with policy issues and not minor issues

The existence of agreed policies and procedures will assist in ensuring that the committee functions effectively and deals with appropriate matters. Committee members representing the employer and employees should consult and co-operate to initiate, develop, recommend or carry out measures to ensure the safety and health of employees. They should have a sound understanding of the role of the committee in the overall safety programme.

Policy related functions of an occupational safety and health committee

The functions of a safety and health committee may include:

- Facilitating consultation and co-operation between the employer and employees in initiating, developing and implementing measures designed to ensure the safety and health of employees at the workplace.
- Keeping itself informed as to standards relating to safety and health generally recommended or prevailing in workplaces of a comparable nature.
- Reviewing, and making recommendations to the employer on rules and procedures at the workplace relating to the safety and health of the employees.

- Recommending to the employer, the establishment, maintenance and monitoring of programmes, measures and procedures at the workplace relating to the safety and health of employees.
- Considering and making such recommendations to the employer as the committee sees fit, in respect of any changes to or at the workplace that may reasonably be expected to affect the safety or health of employees.
- Considering such matters that are referred to the committee by an employee representative.
- Performing such other functions as may be prescribed in regulations or given to the committee, with its consent, by the employer.

Three crucial functions

1. Making recommendations to the employer.
2. Keeping and reviewing information.
3. Dealing with matters referred by employee representatives.



Making recommendations to the employer

Safety and health committees can make recommendations to the employer on a wide range of programmes, measures and procedures, which may include such things as:

- Resolution of relevant issues
- Programmes to set priorities for the reduction or elimination of hazards from the workplace
- Programmes to reduce the number of particular accidents which occur in the workplace, for example, head, eye, ear or back injury
- Procedures for frequency and type of regular inspections of the workplace, or parts of it
- Procedures for timely notification of accidents and dangerous occurrences to management, the employee representative and the employer's safety officer
- Emergency evacuation and fire procedures
- A regular and systematic process for the identification of hazards and reference to the employer for assessment and control of risk
- Developing ways of ensuring all employees are kept informed of the committee's decisions
- Developing a procedure for minutes of meetings to be made available to employees
- Developing procedures for monitoring and surveillance of employees who may be exposed to health risks such as hazardous substances and noise
- Developing systems to ensure safety and health issues are considered during the selection of new plant and equipment
- Planning for important changes in the work environment to ensure safety and health issues are considered and included in the planning of work processes
- Establishing a procedure for the identification of training necessary to be provided to persons at the workplace
- Establishing procedures for ensuring that early attention is given to any safety or health implications of proposed changes

Keeping and reviewing information

Information provided by the employer regarding hazards at the workplace must be kept readily available in an accessible place. Other material gathered by the committee in the course of its work

should also be stored appropriately so that it can be easily retrieved when needed. It is recommended that the committee and the employer agree on the location of the information and who is responsible for its upkeep. Information may include:

- Accident/incident reports (maintaining confidentiality when appropriate)
- Accident statistics for workplaces and similar industries
- Hazard identification and risk assessments
- Audits of safety management systems
- Workplace procedures
- First aid treatment statistics
- Biological and environmental monitoring reports
- External occupational safety and health reports

Dealing with matters referred by Employee Representatives

Employee concerns are tabled at safety and health committee meetings through the employee representatives.

Typical matters referred by the Safety and Health Representatives include:

1. Hazardous conditions
2. Employee concerns about welfare or indoor air quality
3. Requests for clarification on refusal to work procedures
4. Concerns regarding compliance with the OSH Act

The representative will subsequently provide feedback to the employees that they represent on the progress and outcomes of committee meetings



PROCEDURES AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Ensure committee is seen to be of value

A safety and health committee should develop its own meeting procedures. The effectiveness of a safety and health committee will depend on a number of factors. Significant among these will be the degree of co-operation the committee is able to develop and the respect with which the employer and employees view the work of the committee. The following activities could considerably assist the committee's work:

- Regular meetings of the committee, as well as provision for special or urgent meetings as required
- Ensuring all employees are informed of the committee and its functions
- Effective publicity of committee decisions and recommendations
- Speedy decisions by management on committee recommendations and, where necessary, prompt action with effective communication to employees
- Facilitating the means by which workers can input into the processes of the committee
- Setting priorities and monitoring results

Conduct of meetings

The following points are provided to assist safety and health committees establish procedures for the conduct of meetings:

- (i) Who will chair the meeting? If the parties have difficulty in agreeing on a chairperson, the position could be rotated between employer nominees and employee representatives at each meeting or for a specified period.
- (ii) Will there be a quorum? The fixed number of members that must be present to make the meeting valid should be decided. All parties need to be represented and, when setting the quorum, the parties should allow for absences.
- (iii) Who will take the notes or minutes? The proceedings of all meetings should be recorded. This could be done by a committee member or a minute taker provided for this purpose. Typing and photocopying facilities need to be available.
- (iv) Who will issue minutes? A person should be made responsible for this task.
- (v) Who will draw up and issue the agenda? A member of the committee should be made responsible for drawing up the agenda. Adequate notice of items to be discussed should be given to this person to ensure timely distribution of the agenda.
- (vi) How will decisions be made? Committees need to determine whether decisions are to be made by consensus or by a vote.
- (vii) Who will see the minutes? A copy of the minutes should be provided to each member of the committee as soon as possible after the meeting. Copies of the minutes should be displayed or made available by other means for the information of employees. A member of the committee should be responsible for providing the employer with recommendations of the meeting.

Avoid the same item appearing on the agenda month after month with no outcome

- Ensure that definite outcomes result from each agenda item and that someone is allocated the responsibility for actioning the item
- Make more effective representations to management if needed
- Make sure those who can resolve the issue are invited to the next meeting, if the outcomes seem beyond the scope of the committee.
- Document the progress of each item and present the information to the employer

Recommendations for action should be followed up and implemented. Ensure that:

- All recommendations and actions required are noted in the minutes
- Display and distribute the minutes so that responsibility for action is understood throughout the workplace
- Management support is provided to implement action in a timely manner with sufficient information and resources being available
- All members of the committee are committed to the agreed objectives

Ensure committee has direction and makes decisions

Membership of the committee should comprise persons with an appropriate level of safety and health competence. There must be a two-way flow of information between the committee and the workforce.

Avoid committee running out of time and not completing business

- Have a manageable agenda that can be worked in the allocated time
- Start meetings promptly
- Set a priority for items, urgent business should come first

- Ensure agenda has been circulated so that members come prepared

Avoid committee meetings becoming dominated by particular committee members

Ensure all committee members are well informed and confident about holding a position on the committee.

Consider allocating time for each member who wants to contribute to the discussion on a particular item.

Review the operations of the committee

After the committee has been operating for some time, it should review and audit its own operations. This should be undertaken by both management and the committee. These are some of the areas that should be reviewed:

- The success or failure of prevention messages
- Procedures to ensure their continued effectiveness
- The effectiveness of the safety and health committee. This should be done at least once a year
- Policies and procedures, responsibilities, training and inspection process if injuries and diseases have not been reduced or eliminated.

It is important to know where and how to change and improve. Statistical comparisons will help to let the committee know if accidents and incidents are being reduced.

CONCLUSION

An effective safety and health committee is an important part of any preventative strategy to reduce loss of time, injury and disease in the workplace. A committee will only function properly if it has a clearly defined role and purpose and is able to monitor its progress.

For further reading:

- A Short Guide for Employers
- A Short Guide for Employees
- A Guide to Risk Assessment
- The Prevention of Occupational Diseases
- Guidance in Preparing a Safety and Health Policy



Duke Place, Level 4 & 5
50-54 Duke Street, Port of Spain

For further information:

Tel: (868) 299-0300 Fax: (868) 623-5905

OSHA HOTLINE: 623-OSHA (6742)

www.osha.gov.tt

JULY 2015



The Prevention of Occupational Diseases



OSHA HOTLINE: 623-OSHA (6742)
www.osha.gov.tt

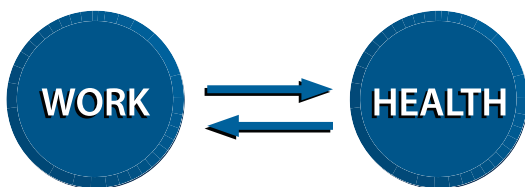


What is an Occupational Disease?

Occupational or work-related diseases are disorders of health resulting from conditions related to the workplace.

Occupational diseases often develop over many months or years, depending on the intensity and circumstances of exposure. Occupational cancer, for example, may result from long-term exposure (years) to different chemical and physical health hazards.

Occupational diseases often resemble other medical conditions and are regularly overlooked or misdiagnosed. For example, asthma that results from sensitization to chemicals in the workplace is often falsely attributed to exposures to home allergens.



Classification of Occupational Disease

Schedule 1 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act Chap. 88:08 (OSH Act) gives a comprehensive list of Occupational Diseases.

The following is a summary of this Schedule.

1) Diseases caused by chemical, physical and biological agents.

Examples of diseases caused by exposure to chemical agents include:

- Diseases caused by beryllium or its toxic compounds

- Diseases caused by cadmium or its toxic compounds
- Diseases caused by manganese or its toxic compounds
- Diseases caused by mercury or its toxic compounds
- Diseases caused by lead or its toxic compounds
- Diseases caused by hexane

The Routes Of Exposure To Some Of The More Common Agents Are Illustrated In Figure 1.

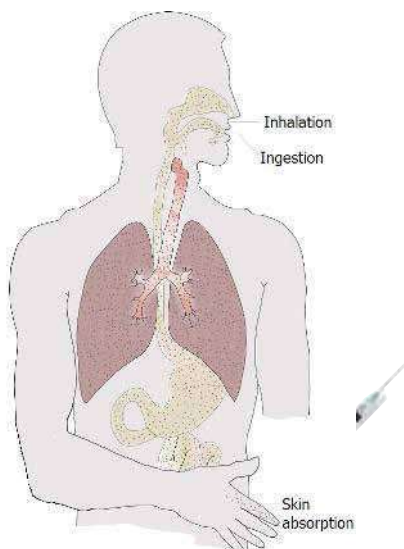


Figure 1

Examples of diseases caused by exposure to physical agents include:

- Hearing impairment caused by noise
- Diseases caused by vibration (disorders of muscles, tendons, bones, joints, peripheral blood vessels or peripheral nerves)
- Diseases caused by ionizing radiation
- Diseases caused by heat radiation
- Diseases caused by ultraviolet radiation
- Diseases caused by extreme temperatures (eg: sunstroke)

Examples of diseases caused by exposure to biological agents include:

- Infectious or parasitic diseases contracted in an occupation where there is a particular risk of contamination, eg: tuberculosis (TB).

2) Diseases caused by agents Targeting Organ Systems:

Examples include:

Occupational Respiratory Diseases

- Bronchopulmonary diseases caused by hard-metal dust
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases
- Diseases of the lungs caused by aluminium

Occupational Skin Diseases

- Skin diseases caused by physical, chemical or biological agents
- Occupational vitiligo

Occupational musculo-skeletal disorders

- Musculo-skeletal diseases caused or made worse by specific work activities or work environment where particular risk factors are present





Examples of such activities include:

- a) Rapid or repetitive movement
- b) Forceful exertion
- c) Excessive mechanical force concentration
- d) Awkward or non-neutral postures
- e) Vibration

3) *Occupational Cancer.* Cancer caused by the following agents:

- Asbestos
- Chromium and chromium compounds
- Vinyl chloride
- Coal tars, coal tar pitches or soot

4) *Other Diseases such as Miners' nystagmus*

Cancer Causing Agents



Asbestos



Chromium Sulphate



Coal Tar



Vinyl Chloride Monomer

TABLE 1 GIVES A LIST OF OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES ALONG WITH THE OCCUPATIONS IN WHICH THEY MAY BE FOUND

TABLE 1 - Common Occupational Diseases associated with
Occupational Exposure and Possible Occupations

OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES	SELECTED EXPOSURES	SELECTED OCCUPATIONS
Musculoskeletal Carpal tunnel syndrome	Repetition Vibration Awkward postures Cold temperatures	Letter sorting Assembly work Office work Food Processing
De Quervain's tendinitis (aka. gamer's thumb, washerwoman's sprain)	Repetition High Force	Meat packing Manufacturing
Cervical Strain	Static posture	Computer work
Thoracic Outlet Syndrome	Static posture, repetition	Assembly work
Respiratory Interstitial fibrosis	Asbestos Silica Coal	Mining, construction trades, building maintenance Mining, foundry work, sandblasting Mining
Asthma	Wood dust Isocyanates Metal (e.g., cobalt) Cutting oils Irritants (e.g., sulphur dioxide)	Furniture making Plastic manufacturing Hard metals manufacturing Machine operation Various occupations
Bronchitis	Acids Smoke Nitrogen Oxides	Plating Fire Fighting Welding
Hypersensitivity pneumonitis	Mouldy hay/grass Cutting oils	Farming Machine operation
Upper airway irritation	Indoor air pollution (e.g. sick building syndrome)	Office work, Teaching
Neurologic Chronic encephalopathy	Organic solvents Organophosphate pesticides	Painting, automobile body repair Pesticide application

(continued on next page)

TABLE 1 - CONTINUED

TABLE 1 - Common Occupational Diseases associated with Occupational Exposure and Possible Occupations

OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES	SELECTED EXPOSURES	SELECTED OCCUPATIONS
Neurologic (continued) Chronic encephalopathy	Lead	Bridge work, painting, radiator repair, metal recycling
Lyme disease	Borrelia burgdorferi Tick (ixodes ricinus)	Pesticide application Animal health workers
Hearing loss	Noise	Many occupations
Infectious Blood borne infections	HIV, hepatitis B	Health care work, prison work
Airborne infections	Tuberculosis	Health care work, prison work
Infections transmitted via faeces or orally	Hepatitis A	Health care work, animal care
Cancer Lung Liver Bladder	Asbestos Chromium Coal tar, pitch Vinyl chloride Benzidine	Construction trades Welding, plating Steel working Plastics manufacturing Plastics and chemical manufacturing
Skin Contact dermatitis	Organic solvents Nickel Latex	Many occupations Hairdressing Health care work
Reproductive Spontaneous abortion Sperm abnormalities Development abnormalities Birth defects	Ethylene oxide Dibromochloropropane Lead Ionizing radiation	Sterilizing Pesticide manufacturing Bridge work, metal recycling, battery manufacturing Radiographic technicians
Cardiovascular Coronary artery disease	Carbon monoxide Stress	Working with combustion products Machine-paced work
Gastrointestinal Hepatitis	Polychlorinated biphenyls	Electrical equipment manufacturing and repair

Ref: www.aafp.org

Notification of Occupational Diseases

The OSH Act places a responsibility on dutyholders to report Occupational Diseases. The following steps detail the procedures required:



Step 1

The Chief Inspector of the Occupational Safety and Health Agency must be notified of an Occupational Disease. These notifications can come from either:

- *The Chief Medical Officer.* Section 48(1) of the OSH Act requires a medical practitioner to notify the Chief Medical Officer within 48 hours after discovering that a person is suffering from an occupational disease. Section 48(2), requires the Chief Medical Officer to notify the Chief Inspector immediately.
- *An employer.* Section 48(3) requires an employer, upon notification by or on behalf of an employee that the employee suffers from a disease outlined in Schedule 1, to notify the Chief Inspector of any such employee within **four days**.

Step 2

Section 48(4) requires the Chief Inspector within two weeks to arrange for a medical inspector to investigate the occupational disease. That medical inspector is to then submit a report to the Chief Inspector within two weeks.

Step 3

After receiving the report, under Section 48(5), the Chief inspector shall conduct the necessary enquiries.



How to Prevent Occupational Diseases (Employers' & Employee's Responsibilities)

Employers' Responsibilities

► Legislative aspects of prevention:

- Section 6(1) of the OSH Act – Every employer is to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety, health and welfare at work of all his employees
- Section 13A (*Annual Risk Assessment*) of the OSH Act – every employer is to make a suitable and sufficient annual risk assessment of the risks to the safety and health of his employees to which they are exposed whilst they are at work;
- Section 25K (*Medical Surveillance*) of the OSH Act – every employer is to ensure that his employees are provided with such health surveillance as is appropriate having regard to the risks to their safety and health which are identified by the annual risk assessment

► **Recognize risks/ hazards or health & safety problems**

These are some of the ways you can identify health and safety problems:

- observe your workplace;
- investigate complaints from workers;
- examine accident and near-miss records;
- examine sickness figures; use simple surveys to ask your co-workers about their health & concerns;
- use check-lists to help you inspect your workplace;
- learn from the results of inspections that are done;
- make sure you know and understand the hazards you are exposed to.

Once you recognize a hazard, then you can determine which measure will correct the problem most effectively.

► **Control measures** - there are five major categories of control measures:

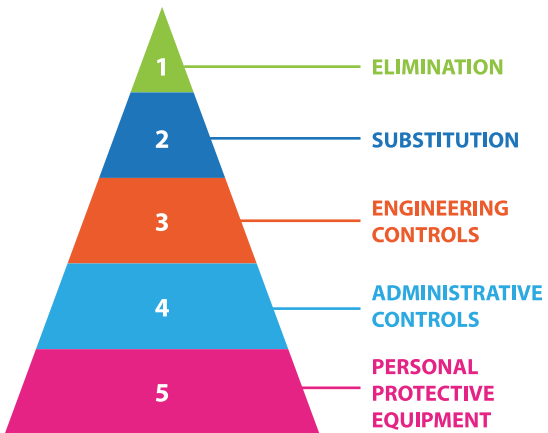
- i. Elimination - eliminating a hazard means removing it completely. Elimination of a specific hazard or hazardous work process, or preventing it from entering the workplace, is the most effective method of control.

If you cannot completely eliminate a hazard, then use a combination of the following control methods, in the order listed, to protect yourself and your co-workers from being exposed to occupational hazards.

- ii. Substitution - replacing one hazardous agent or work process with a less dangerous one. (eg, using a brush to paint rather than spray painting)
- iii. Engineering controls - do not eliminate hazards, but rather keep people isolated from hazards (e.g, enclosures such as paint hoods or lab hoods)
- iv. Administrative controls - for example,

job rotation, leading to working a limited number of hours in a hazardous area or changing a work process to reduce exposure to a hazard.

- v. Personal protective equipment - including ear and eye protection, masks/respirators and protective clothing – according to the exposure type.



- **Occupational medical screening (§ 13A & 25K).** This is intended to detect adverse health conditions that result from hazards and diagnose diseases existing in or derived from the workplace. The most effective control of an occupational disease is by primary prevention, which means preventing exposure or diminishing exposure to an acceptable level. Secondary prevention or treatment of the exposed is less effective in reducing disease.

Screening programs are intended to supplement control efforts, not replace them. The importance of screening is that it contributes to the early detection of diseases in the individual and can lead to better prevention to those who share his exposures and risks.

Medical observation of individuals may highlight the hazards that are not controlled

sufficiently and in that way, health and safety policies can be improved in the company.

Best results are observed when everyone involved: workers, supervisors and management take their responsibility and work together for a safer and healthier work environment.

Occupational Health Medicals including complete physical examination, paraclinical and laboratory investigations are advised to be done regularly as a preventive screening or as a periodical control of the health status of workers.

Executive medical check-ups are suggested in order to rule out major diseases which could affect the health status and if any to be investigated and treated from the very beginning, for avoiding complications or too late diagnostics and treatments.

- ▶ **Educational Programmes /Awareness Programmes.** Programmes that address health and safety issues; occupational diseases; hygiene in the workplace; as well as those that deal with where, when, why and how to use PPE can also help in preventing occupational diseases.





Employee's Responsibilities

- **Good OSH practices** can reduce your risk of occupational diseases: try to stay fit, reduce stress, set up your work area properly and use the right personal protective equipment (PPE). An understanding of basic workplace health and safety issues means you can protect yourself against workplace hazards.
- **Personal hygiene (cleanliness)** is also very important as a method of controlling hazards. Washing hands regularly, eating and smoking away from your work area help to prevent ingesting contaminants.

Your family can be exposed to the hazards you work with if you bring chemicals and other workplace contaminants home with you on your clothes, hair or skin. Before you leave work, wash/shower and change your clothes when necessary to prevent bringing workplace contaminants home.

Leave your dirty clothes at work or, if you must wash them at home, wash them separately, not with the family wash.

- Report any concerns or problems to your safety and health committee and/or employer immediately. If you need further assistance, contact the OSH Agency at 623-OSHA.

► **General measures to reduce workplace stress.**

- Think positive, try to solve the problems and responsibilities on time;
- Have a healthy life style, including healthy foods, adequate amounts of water per day regular physical exercises and a minimum of eight sleeping hours daily;
- Try to create a balance between work, family life and social life. Do not overload yourself. Divide projects into smaller phases, and prioritize tasks, delegate responsibilities to colleagues working with you in certain projects;
- Take short breaks throughout the day, to sit back and clear your mind;
- Meditation, listening to music, walking for 5 minutes can improve your mood significantly;



Success in prevention ultimately rests on acceptance by the employer of one's responsibility, cooperation by the workers, teamwork by occupational health professionals, government regulation and education of the public.

Although, there may be challenges to prevention, such as cost, lack of education and awareness and a lack of motivation to change practices. Remember, good health is good business.

For further reading:

- A Short Guide for Employers
- A Short Guide for Employees
- Safe storage, Transport and Disposal of Pesticides
- A complete Guide to Risk Assessment
- A Simple Guide to Office Safety
- Safety & Health in the use of Hazardous Chemicals at Work



Duke Place, Level 4 & 5
50-54 Duke Street, Port of Spain

For Further Information:

Tel: (868) 299-0300 Fax: (868) 623-5905

OSHA HOTLINE: 623-OSHA (6742)

www.osha.gov.tt

March 2014