

Occupational Safety & Health



DEFINITION
&
IMPORTANCE TO SOCIETY

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What is Occupational Safety & Health?



- Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) is a cross-disciplinary area concerned with protecting the safety, health and welfare of people engaged in work or employment and entrants.
- As a secondary effect, OSH may also protect co-workers, family members, employers, customers, suppliers, nearby communities, and other members of the public who are impacted by the workplace environment.

ILO/WHO OSH Definition



- In 1950 the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) met at the first Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health and came up with a shared definition for Occupational Safety & Health
- 1995 at the 12th Session of the Joint ILO/WHO Committee on Occupational Health this definition was revised.



The definition reads:

“Occupational health should aim at:

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

Occupational Safety and Health Objectives



- The promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations;
- The prevention amongst workers of departures from health caused by their working conditions;
- The protection of workers in their employment from risks resulting from factors adverse to health;
- The placing and maintenance of the worker in an occupational environment adapted to his or her physiological and psychological capabilities;

Common Workplace Hazards



- **Mechanical Hazards** including: impact force (such as collisions and falls from heights), slips and falls, injury for machines that are not properly guarded, workplace transport, heavy metals, etc.
- **Physical Hazards:** such as poor lighting, loud noises, vibration, heat and cold stress, radiation and faulty electrical wires



- **Biological Hazards:** such as bacteria, viruses, fungi (mould), blood-borne pathogens (HIV) and tuberculosis
- **Chemical Hazards** including acids, heavy metals (lead), solvents (petroleum), particulates (asbestos and other fine dust/fibrous materials), fumes (noxious gases/vapours) and fire, conflagration and explosion hazards: explosion.



- **Psychosocial Hazards** include: work-related stress, whose causal factors include excessive working time and overwork, violence from outside the organisation bullying, which may include emotional and verbal abuse, sexual harassment mobbing, burnout, and exposure to unhealthy elements during meetings with business associates, e.g. tobacco, uncontrolled alcohol.
- **Musculoskeletal disorders**, avoided by the employment of good ergonomic design and the reduction of repeated strenuous movements or lifts.



- **Other occupational hazards include:**
 - Reproductive hazards;
 - Work environment factors, such as temperature, humidity, lighting, welfare
 - Particulate inhalation;
 - Prevention of fire often comes within the remit of health and safety professionals as well.

Safety Against Hazards



The degree of exposure to hazards or dangers differed greatly with each workplace or worker

Occupational Safety and Health concerns:

- the worker
- the employer
- the government

Why Occupational Safety and Health?



The reasons for establishing good occupational safety and health standards are frequently identified as:

- **Moral** – an employee need not be subjected to risk injury a work, or others associated with the work environment.



Economic – poor occupational safety and health performance results in:

- Huge costs to the State for example, through social security payments to the incapacitated, costs for medical treatment, and the loss to the “employability” of the worker especially in countries where the welfare of the citizens are taken as paramount to national development).
- Costs to employer in the event of an incident at work through payments for example, legal fees, fines, compensatory damages, investigation time, lost production, lost goodwill from the workforce, from customers and from the wider community).



- **Legal** – without extra “encouragement” of potential regulatory action or litigation, many organisations would not act upon their implied moral obligations.

Why Is Occupational Safety and Health Important?



According to the ILO Global Employment Trends 2017, an estimated 3.3 billion persons are engaged in the World of Work.

These workers spend a quarter of their lifetime, and up to half of their waking lives, at work or commuting. Despite improvements in occupational safety and health over the last several decades, workers continue to suffer work-related deaths, injuries, and illnesses. The workplace, therefore, provides a unique forum for public health action.



- Each year, an estimated two million women and men die as a result of occupational accidents and work-related diseases.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, an estimated 2 million deaths occur as a result of occupational disease and injuries.
- Globally, about 317 million accidents occur on the job annually, many of these resulting in extended absences from work.



- Many of these are also not reported. The silent, long term effects to noise, exposure to hazardous substances and ergonomically effects are all taking its toll on the workforce.
- Approximately 4% of the world's gross domestic product is lost with the cost of injury, death and disease through absence from work, sickness treatment, disability and survivor benefits.
- Hazardous substances kill about 438,000 workers annually, and 10% of all skin cancers are estimated to be attributable to workplace exposure to hazardous substances.

Legal Perspectives to Occupational Safety and Health in St. Kitts and Nevis



- Presently there is no OSH policy guidelines in St. Kitts and Nevis
- There is no legislative framework governing Occupational Safety and Health in St. Kitts and Nevis
- There is need to for us to commence work on a comprehensive review of our laws for the purpose of meeting the challenges that were imminent in Occupational Safety and Health in St. Kitts and Nevis.

The Way Forward



We cannot continue to play the role of firefighters; the creation of a preventative culture is **paramount**!

We need to **STOP** operating in silos... a cadre of occupational safety and health personnel including labour inspectors, nurses, physicians and educators who will work with employers, workers, social security, legal minds, social workers, toxicologists, fire and rescue in a multidisciplinary approach to health and safety in the workplace.



For occupational safety and health programmes to be effective there must be:

- A multi-disciplinary approach to the development of OSH Policy for the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis especially in the health sector.
- A strong OSH legislation that addresses compliance.
- Develop a culture of “safety” starting from the very young (school age) that will transcend into adulthood in the home, work and community.



- The development of a management system to produce baseline data to determine trends and solutions in relation to occupational hazards, risk, etc in the labour market.
- A collaborative promotional framework of programmes and activities for the creation of an OSH preventative culture in St. Kitts and Nevis.
- Capacity building in order to carry out effective labour and health inspections in the Federation.

Conclusion



Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is an important workplace behaviour - it is the joint responsibility of all: the government (labour, health, fire & rescue, education, finance, social security, legal), the employer and the worker. If we can prevent injury, illness and death at work then all Kittitians and Nevisians will benefit. That is why it is important for us now to create a preventative culture.



THANK
YOU