



INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANISATION

**ACT/EMP**

PUBLICATIONS



# **Developing and Establishing an Occupational Safety and Health Service in an Employers' Organization**

**A Practical Guide and Training Programme for Small or Developing Employers'  
Organizations**

(Irish Business and Employers Confederation - IBEC)

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Every development which an employers' federation considers in the context of introducing new services for its membership needs to be underpinned in some part by the following considerations.

These principally include such matters as the purpose of the service and the accompanying benefits to federation members. What is to be achieved must also be carefully considered to ensure it is relevant to the mission of the organization. How it will be achieved must also be examined in order to maintain a standard of professionalism consistent with the quality of its other services. It is therefore useful to undertake a simple analysis of these factors as part of the planning process. Chapter 1, "Why Introduce an Occupational Safety and Health Service" of this report analyses these issues in some detail and outlines a S.W.O.T. analysis to assist with this type of examination.

Sometimes the needs of members are clearly evident in the context of employer relations. Most federations are keenly aware of their members' generic needs and provide such core services as economic information, industrial relations, legal and certain information e.g. wages, conditions of employment etc. In some cases, health and safety at work is included in the information service on a limited basis. When it comes to understanding needs arising in occupational health and safety the picture may not be as clear as it is with other existing services. Chapter II, "Needs Analysis", examines in detail some of the opportunities as well as the pitfalls with mismatching needs against type of service. A *sine qua non* for a successful service is to maintain a high degree of membership exposure to the service combined with satisfaction. This must be balanced against resources.

An employers' federation must show leadership by advancing appropriate services, as well as providing services which fulfil members' needs.

Once we have considered needs we may then commence the prioritisation of those services which best fit these needs. It would be impossible to predict how every federation would select priorities. However, in Chapter III "Establishing Priorities", examples are given based on the Irish experience. In this context, it should be noted that IBEC employed only one full time executive for the first two years of operation who, in addition to providing OHS services, had other duties concerned with national and European representation. This in effect meant the service was initially of a part time nature, and expanded as it developed.

IBEC is typical of a federation which served business in an economy which, in a very short space of time, has developed from conservative and stagnant to dynamic and growing. As such, the IBEC Health and Safety Service experience is a most appropriate one for this type of initiative in a developing economy.

Essentially the IBEC Service falls into five discrete elements, comprising;

- Consultancy
- In-Company training
- Public Training programmes
- Information and Advice
- Products

Each of these key elements is outlined in Chapters IV to VI. The author also has a representation role but, recognising that legislation and formal consultation arrangements will vary significantly in each country depending on national arrangements, this aspect of the OHS policy work is not discussed in the document.

The report also provides in later chapters advice concerning personnel selection and finance.

References to OHS and IBEC in this report mean Occupational Health and Safety and Irish Business and Employers Confederation respectively.

**(This Guide and Training Programme is available with the Bureau for Employers' Activities)**

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*For further information, please contact Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP)*

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