



GOVERNMENT OF GUYANA



NATIONAL POLICY ON **OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH 2018**



The Government of Guyana, Ministry of Social Protection

and

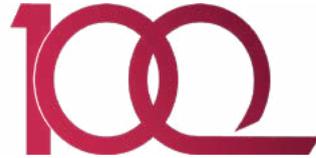


The National Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH)

in collaboration with



International
Labour
Organization



National Policy on Occupational Safety and Health 2018

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FOREWORD

The Co-operative Republic of Guyana has placed a premium value on its Human Capital from the prenatal stage to the stages of retirement and senior citizenship.



Toward that end, the principles and essence of Human Development are embraced so that a workplace which epitomizes Safety and Health can provide workers with a good working life and a healthy and happy retirement, hence Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is embraced as a functional discipline.

During the past two decades a number of new initiatives, beginning with the OSH Act of 1997, were enacted to promote the Safety and Health of workers and their families in a grand scheme of National Development which is now elevated to Human Development.

The OSH Act of 1997 was eventually converted to Chapter 99:06 of the Laws of Guyana and establishes a blueprint for Safety in every aspect of employment. Be that as it may it was not until a couple of years ago that with the assistance of local and international Stakeholders that supporting Regulations were developed to give efficacy to the Laws.

The Regulations were the end product of widespread consultation which enlisted the views of the Tripartite Social Partners as well as Civil Society. A similar process was followed in the generation of this Policy which is designed to transform the working environment in our Republic so that every worker can function safely without fear of exposure to injuries and illness.

It is not uncommon for Social Partners to focus primarily on workplace accidents while ignoring the possibility of work-related diseases and sickness, which can be far more detrimental and even fatal to workers.

However, the new dispensation which this Policy engenders requires that attention be paid to absolute workplace Safety and Health. One needs only to look at the contents outlined to glean the dynamism which this Policy brings to our milieu.

The Ministry of Social Protection wishes to place on record its appreciation to the International Labour Organization (ILO) for its support in this endeavour.

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Hon. Mr. Keith Scott, M.P.

Minister within the Ministry of Social Protection

Ministry of Social Protection

April 26, 2019



1. PREAMBLE

The Government of Guyana through the Ministry of Social Protection and partner agencies endeavour to improve working conditions and environment generally in Guyana by promoting the integration of safety and health principles in workplaces as an important prerequisite for the reduction of occupational accidents and diseases.

The Ministry of Social Protection recognizes that good safety and health practices in the workplace can save lives by reducing occupational hazards and their possible consequences. Good safety and health practices in the workplace also have positive effects on both the morale and productivity of workers.

It is acknowledged that when workers are exposed to occupational hazards their physical and mental health may eventually be affected. Contrarily, in the absence of hazards, persons tend to become interested and involved in their work. Satisfaction and enjoyment are increased and improvements in health and well-being can result.

Today, emphasis is placed on the creation of a preventative safety and health culture at work that includes information, consultation and training along with the joint responsibility system, whereby employers and workers must share the responsibility for their own safety, health and productivity at work.

The Ministry of Social Protection acknowledges that there remains an urgent need to train and equip persons to aggressively pursue the commitments of monitoring and enforcing the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act.

It is within this context that the National Policy on Occupational Safety and Health has been revised. This revision has been done with the full collaboration and participation of the social partners and other key stakeholders. The policy seeks to address existing as well as emerging

challenges related to the changes in the work environment. It provides for the inclusion of persons in the informal sector and a framework for addressing these issues in a collaborative and coordinated manner.

The main task of this policy is not only to eliminate or reduce hazards and the incidence of work-related injuries, fatalities and diseases; but to promote the positive development of factors in the working environment which enhance the social, mental and physical well-being of workers and the society as a whole.

Therefore, the roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders have been clearly articulated to ensure a practical implementation of the policy with clear direction for its administration. It provides an assurance that the stakeholders will be held accountable for their work and responsibilities.

In addition, this National OSH Policy sets out the tripartite vision for OSH, and identifies agreed priorities for action. This comes against the backdrop that Guyana is adopting the systems approach to OSH. This systems approach was advocated in the International Labour Organization (ILO) Global Strategy, which is premised on the “Plan-Do-Check-Act” Deming Cycle.

The strategy has four core elements at the national level. These elements are:

1. **Setting an OSH Policy:** To provide a framework for action at the national-level to improve OSH in and around the workplace.
2. **System:** To describe available infrastructure and resources.
3. **Profile:** To highlight current and emerging issues in OSH at the national level that informs the development of this policy.
4. **Plan of Action:** To provide a period over which the policy will be deemed applicable. This is three (3) to five (5) years. Over this period, OSH problems are to identified, objectives to address these problems, targets and indicators are to be clearly set out and implementation mechanisms are to be continuously developed.

This systems approach is cyclical, with regular reviews that capture new developments and revise priorities for action. Consequently this policy will form the basis for the National Occupational Safety and Health Plan of Action which will be developed by the Occupational Safety and Health Department within the Ministry of Social Protection in collaboration with representatives of the other social sectors, with emphasis on meaningful social dialogue, which will foster mutual understanding among stakeholders, good relations, and promote social justice in the state community.



2. DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accident: Refers to any unplanned event that may result in illness, injury, death and damage to property or the environment.

Accident Investigation: Refers to the process of systematically gathering and analyzing information about an accident. This is done for the purpose of identifying causes and making recommendations to prevent the accident from recurring.

Biohazard: Refers to any organism (biological material or organic matter) or product of organisms that present a risk to human health.

Employee: Refers to a person who has entered into or works under a contract of employment to do any skilled, unskilled, manual, clerical or other work for hire or reward, whether the contract is expressed or implied, oral or in writing or partly oral and partly written.

Ergonomics: Refers to the science of designing the workplace, keeping in mind the capabilities and limitation of the worker.

Exposure: Refers to the particular risk factor experienced by workers, with specific modifying factors of intensity, frequency and duration.

Green Economy: Refers to an economic environment that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing

environmental risks and ecological scarcities. It is low carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive as per (UNEP, 2011).

Green Jobs: Refers to work in agriculture, manufacturing, research and development, administrative and service activities that contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality. Specifically, jobs that protect ecosystems and biodiversity, reduce energy and water consumption through high efficiency strategies, de-carbonize the economy and minimize or altogether avoid generation of all forms of waste and pollution (UNEP, Green Jobs: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable, Low Carbon World, 2008).

Hazard: Refers to the potential to cause harm or an unwanted outcome. For example, asbestos is a hazard which can result in mesothelioma and working at heights is hazardous and may result in physical trauma from a fall.

Incident: Refers to any event with known causal factors, which could have led to injury, illness or damage to property.

Informal Sector: Refers to workers who are not registered with any State agency for the purpose of taxation, nation insurance or state assessments. This group may include home-based workers, informal construction or mining sites, small-scale farmers in subsistence agriculture, vendors, waste pickers, at landfills, grass-cutters, minibus operators; that part of an economy that is neither taxed or monitored by any form of government.

Near Miss: Refers to any event which had the potential to cause injury and/or damage and/or loss but which was avoided by circumstances.

Occupational Disease: Refers to any chronic ailment that occurs as a result of work or occupational activity caused by a person continuous exposure to unsafe or hazardous work / environment.

Occupational Health: Refers to a scientific approach in ensuring the protection of workers in their employment from risks resulting from factors

adverse to health and includes the prevention and control of occupational accidents and diseases.

Occupational Safety and Health: Refers to a cross-disciplinary area concerned with protecting the safety, health and welfare of people engaged in work or employment. The goal of all occupational safety and health programs to foster a safe and healthy work environment.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Refers to all equipment use by workers to protect themselves from exposure to hazardous materials or conditions. The basic types of PPE include respirators, eye protection, ear protection, gloves, hard hats, safety footwear and leg wear and protective suits.

Risk: Refers to the likelihood and consequences that exposure to hazards will result in injury or disease.

Risk Assessment: Refers to the thorough look at processes and workplaces / working environments to identify (those things) unsafe conditions, acts or omissions, situations, etc. that may cause harm, particularly to people. It also includes the formulation of mitigation plans.

Safe and Healthy Environments: Refers to social and physical surroundings or conditions that support the prevention of accidents, injuries, illnesses or diseases.



3. BACKGROUND

The ILO's Occupational Safety and Health Convention number 155 provides that "Each Member shall, in the light of national conditions and practice and in consultation with the most representative organizations of employers and workers, formulate, implement and periodically review a coherent national policy on occupational safety, occupational health and the working environment."

The journey towards achieving this ideal began some twenty-three (23) years ago when the first National Policy for OSH was drafted in September 1993, after the establishment of a Ministerial advisory tripartite committee made up of the Labour movement and employers' organizations within the then Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security. The tripartite committee was tasked with advising the Minister on Labour policy.

Within that context a National Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH) was also organized comprising the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, Guyana Fire Service, National Insurance Scheme, Guyana National Bureau of Standards, University of Guyana, Guyana Association of Professional Engineers, the Labour Movement and the Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry Limited. The National Advisory council was tasked with advising the Minister on Occupational Safety and Health Policy.

NACOSH in collaboration with the Department of Labour within the then Ministry of Labour, Human Services and Social Security produced the first policy paper. That policy received Parliamentary sanction in November 1993. The second draft was revised in March 1996.

Now 22 years later the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, through the Ministry of Social Protection, has updated this policy document in keeping with current developments and emerging trends both locally and globally.

This revised policy will take a critical look at the working conditions in high-risk areas such as the mining sector which has recently seen an increase in mortality and morbidity rates. The policy will also revisit the effectiveness of policies relating to the protection of vulnerable groups by age, gender, sexual orientation, and those that are differently abled, e.g. in terms of making workplaces more physically accessible and non-discriminatory, including the prevention of discrimination in hiring and promoting employees and the payment of wages due to their disposition.

The thrust of the Government of Guyana towards a Green Economy,

attracting new investments, expanded eco-tourism, green jobs, agro-processing, and the decent work agenda, as well as the emerging oil and gas sectors, and incorporation of the informal sector, pose new challenges in occupational safety and health in Guyana.

It is against the backdrop of these socio-economic and historical underpinnings that the 1996 OSH policy on Occupational Safety and Health is herein revised and modified to address current and future challenges.



4. COMMITMENT

The Ministry of Social Protection recognizes that workers are the most valuable asset in any place of employment and that safety and health should be a fundamental guarantee of every worker. The Ministry therefore stands committed to protecting the safety, health and welfare of all employees from occupational or work related hazards and exposures, by equipping and expanding the capacity of the OSH department.

Further, the Ministry acknowledges the importance of occupational safety and health to the economic viability of Guyana and the need for the integration of good workplace safety and health principles and practices in the workplace. Such integration will ultimately realize improved wellbeing and productivity of workers.

The Ministry recognizes that collaboration with the social partners and other key stakeholders is critical to the successful implementation of this policy. The Government of Guyana has therefore adopted this position on the basis of the following principles:

1. All workers, in the formal and informal sectors, have a right to work under safe and healthy conditions by the application of Occupational Safety and Health principles.
2. Occupational Safety and Health is multi-disciplinary in its practice therefore collaboration is essential at the workplace, national, regional, and international levels.

3. Vulnerable workers (by age, sex/gender, race/ethnicity and general health status) are to be protected from the peculiar stresses and hazards of the work environment.
4. Work, working machinery and tools should be adapted to human physiological and psychological capacities, and limitations, based on the principles of ergonomics, summary, the adaptation of work to man and of each man to his job.
5. National expertise of professionals in various fields of Occupational Safety and Health shall be developed by continuous training and specialized education.
6. An Occupational Safety and Health culture will be of paramount consideration in the promotion of alternative sources of energy, solar, wind and hydro-electricity, oil and gas, energy saving technologies, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and the creation of green jobs, towards a good life in a green economy.
7. Continuous vocational training and education of safety and health professionals at the undergraduate, graduate/post-graduate and even doctoral level is fundamental in realizing the development of competent personnel, leading to an award of either a Certificate, Diploma or Degree in Safety and Health. Such training may be undertaken by the University of Guyana, Critchlow Labour College and/or other external learning institutions as may be required.



5. AIMS OF THE POLICY

To promote and improve the quality of life of workers by preventing social and economic losses, work-related accidents and injury to health by eliminating hazards, reducing the number of accidents, and injuries, and militating against stresses and incidence of occupational diseases.

The policy seeks to create safer and healthier working environments through the development of a positive national culture of prevention of occupational accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences.

Additionally, it provides policy orientations for the Ministry of Social Protection to modernize its policies and procedures.



6. POLICY OUTCOMES

The outcomes of the policy are the following:

1. Increase productivity in workplaces in Guyana as a result of a structured approach to OSH Management.
2. Decrease accidents, incidents, disabilities and diseases related to OSH and absenteeism resulting from OSH issues.
3. Improved employee morale resulting from an improved working environment and safe systems of work.
4. Increased level of compliance with the OSH Act and all other relevant legislation and codes of practice.
5. Encourage workplace health and safety culture.
6. Improve capacity to deal with OSH issues arising from the emerging oil and gas sector.
7. Work with secondary schools, tertiary institutions and other agencies in developing curriculum to integrate OSH into their programmes. This includes OSH in traditional agriculture sectors which also includes chemical management.



7. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the policy are the following:

1. Strengthen competitive advantage and productivity, and increase economic efficiency through information and meaningful social dialogue, tripartite consultation at the national level, and bipartite consultation at the enterprise level.
2. Improve data collection systems for effective analysis, interventions, planning and budgeting and for informed decision making in OSH.
3. Enhance the status of safety and health officers by continuous training, certification and accreditation under appropriate legislative frameworks.
4. Develop and reinforce specializations and standards in Occupational Safety and Health in keeping with international norms and best practices and build capacity in areas of research to efficiently and effectively control emerging areas of risk.

5. Enforce compliance with occupational safety and health legislation and regulations by providing technical support to employers, workers and organizations that represent them through ongoing collaboration and partnerships.
6. Specific measures shall be taken concerning physical, chemical, biological, ergonomic and psychosocial hazards at the workplace.
7. Boost the internal responsibility system for workplace safety and health by the establishment of the joint safety and health committees in workplaces.
8. Coordinate with local community leaders to promote the functions and objectives of the policy in order to enhance safety and health awareness.



8. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Policy is guided by principles that exist in the National Laws, Conventions of the International Labour Organization, codes of practice and guidelines in Occupational Safety and Health, and the Pan American Health Organization /World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and ILO Action Plans.

1. Protecting workers' right to sustained safe and healthy working conditions and environment, with the emphasis on prevention rather than curative measures, rehabilitation and compensation.
2. Identifying and assessing occupational risks and hazards, and controlling them at source.
3. Developing a national preventative safety and health culture that includes information, consultation, research and training.
4. Collaboration at all levels through Tripartite and or/ multipartite consultations. Social Partners and other relevant stakeholders must be consulted during formulation, implementation and review of all policies, systems and programmes at all levels.
5. Regulatory and implementing agencies, social partners and relevant stakeholders will Collaborate, coordinate and actively participate in OSH initiatives, to effectively integrate interventions.

6. Continuous improvement of standards and practice by evaluation and continued training.
7. Economic activity has the potential to damage the environment. Focusing on ways of Greening the economy implies that workplace operations will be managed sustainably, so as to protect the environment, workers and public health.
8. This policy will be applied in all workplaces and uniformly enforced. Comprehensive consideration of gender issues at all levels will promote equity and equality between men and women so that mainstreaming gender becomes a common practice in all OSH policies and programmes.



9. SCOPE

This National Policy on Safety and Health is applicable to all categories of workers and workplaces in all sectors and spheres of economic activity, in the field, factory, and office, private and public agencies, including the informal sector, and local and foreign investors. It is a guideline which expresses the aims and intentions of the government and it describes how to improve occupational safety and health in Guyana.

Physical constraints, age limitations and capabilities, and other peculiarities are considerations that dictate how we manage the work environment to make it safe and healthy for specific categories of workers. The policy will take into account vulnerable persons:

Women

1. Measures should be taken to ensure the identification of hazards, risk assessment, the elimination and or the mitigation of those risks assessment of any workplace risks related to the safety and health of pregnant and nursing women, and women's reproductive health.
2. Pregnant women should not be made to work extended hours or be made to do heavy lifting in the workplace. Or any other task that may be considered hazardous to the health of the mother and her unborn child given her peculiar health status.

3. Clear policies to protect women against sexual harassment, bullying, intimidation and violence should be articulated and disseminated to all workers and the unions.

Young Persons

In this policy the Ministry of Social Protection seeks to:

1. Provide for the young who are employed, safe and healthy work environments where they are not subject to work which may cause actual physical, mental and psychological harm.
2. Limit exposure of young people to radioactive materials, chemicals, such as pesticides, glues, fumes, gases and dust particles at their places of work.
3. Provide counseling, career guidance and mentorship services for youths at the workplace.

The Elderly

Within human resource development, it is necessary to implement measures towards increasing the working life of persons in higher age categories.

1. Through preventive health protection of employees throughout their productive life, e.g. annual medicals check-ups, eye, dental and hearing checks, company health insurance.
2. Through the implementation of important ergonomic principles when designing workplaces, in organization of work, and in adapting workplaces to the individual needs of older employees.
3. Where limitations exist, the elderly should be assigned jobs according to their capabilities and workplaces should be made easily accessible to the elderly.

Persons With Disabilities

The ultimate aim of persons with disabilities is independent living, however this achievement is only possible with increase intervention from Central Government. In this regard, the Ministry of Social Protection shall:

1. Promote the right of persons with disability to equally access work and to be engaged in safe working environments.
2. Ensure adequate protection of persons with disabilities from risks and hazards in the working environment,
3. Promote reducing exposures to dangerous chemicals, machinery and equipment, as well as environmental pollution and other risks at work, by adequately training the disabled, and enforcing the provision and use of personal protective clothing and equipment.
4. Adapt the work environment to suit persons with disability, having regard to their aptitude and capabilities.

Mentally Ill Workers, Persons Affected by Drug Addictions, Persons Living With HIV/AIDS

Mental illnesses, drug addictions and HIV/AIDS status of workers may not be easily recognizable, and should ideally be confidential. Fear of exposure may cause those suffering to do so in silence for fear of losing their jobs. A culture of openness, confidentiality and caring should be nurtured in the working environment so that persons with these illnesses could obtain the help they need to operate at their maximum productive levels and not pose a threat to themselves, their co-workers or their families.

It is therefore imperative that the following measures be adopted:

1. Workers and supervisors should be educated about the signs and symptoms of mental health illnesses, drug addictions and HIV/AIDS.
2. A list of available services in the society can be posted on the notice board or other conspicuous place.
3. At least one trained counselor should be available either internally or externally, to assess and counsel those affected by any one of the above conditions.
4. All staff should be sensitive, patient and compassionate to co-workers suffering in order to render assistance when needed.

10. ORGANIZATION

The Ministry of Social Protection, through its Labour Occupational Safety and Health Department, is the regulatory authority responsible for the guiding, directing and coordinating the implementation of this policy. In order to expedite this policy, the Ministry will collaborate with other sectors involved in this area of activity.

The following organizations/agencies will have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and will work together with all other agencies involved in OSH for the improvement of working conditions and the environment in Guyana.

1. The National Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health
2. The Ministry of Public Health
3. The Consultative Association of Guyanese Industries Limited
4. The Representative Organizations of Workers
5. The Guyana Trades Union Congress
6. The Federation of Independent Trade Unions
7. The National Insurance Scheme
8. Guyana National Bureau of Standards
9. The Guyana Fire Service
10. Bureau of Statistics
11. The University of Guyana
12. Ministry of Natural Resources
13. The Guyana Geology and Mines Commission
14. The Environmental Protection Agency
15. Guyana Forestry Commission
16. National Parks Commission
17. Guyana Civil Aviation Authority
18. Maritime Administration Department MARAD
19. Local Government Organs - Mayor and City Councils and the Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (Responsibilities for Waste Management)
20. Critchlow Labour College

11. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Ministry of Social Protection

The Government provides advisory, supervisory, regulatory and information services to assist employers, workers and trade unions in improving working conditions and the environment, consistent with the policy. Consequently, the Ministry will do the following:

1. Conceptualize and formulate policies for various sectors of economic activity, e.g. agriculture, mining, forestry, etc., in accordance with Central Government's mandate of a green economy and the decent work agenda, and periodically update them as new challenges and developments arise.
2. In collaboration with the stakeholders, develop a comprehensive and reliable system for reporting, collecting, recording, analyzing, storage, retrieval and dissemination of information in occupational safety and health.
3. Provide guidelines in identifying recognizing, preventing and controlling hazards at work, and facilitate collaboration among key stakeholders.
4. Develop, implement and evaluate safety and health programmes, plans and projects.
5. Conduct workplace inspections, accident investigations and complaints, and promote the training of workers in workplace safety and health practices, and green technologies.
6. Increase the capacity and awareness of the various agencies and organizations in occupational safety and health, to effectively assess risks and hazards in working environments.
7. Conduct routine risk assessments to identify hazards and potential hazards and the opportunities to mitigate such hazards in keeping with all laws and regulations, including ISO 18001:2015 or any other such future standard.
8. Review OSH legislation periodically, promote legislative reforms and develop codes of Practice in consultation with the social partners.
9. Recommend specific measures for the prevention of fatalities/disasters in high risk areas where there is high incidence of occupational injuries and illnesses to workers.

10. Collaborate with local and international institutions for the purpose of sharing information on occupational safety and health.

National Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH)

NACOSH is an Advisory Body to the Ministers of the Ministry of Social Protection. In this regard NACOSH will do the following:

1. Advise and make recommendations to the Minister of Social Protection on matters relating to occupational safety and health policy, procedures, plans and programmes.
2. Encourage tripartite and bipartite negotiations from State to workplace level, by strengthening stakeholder collaborations for the development and implementation of occupational safety and health systems.
3. Advocate for implementation of legal Acts which promote workers' rights.
4. Promote inter-sectoral collaboration with key stakeholders including the private sector, (Pan American Health Organization) PAHO and the (International Labour Organization) ILO in the implementation of the National Policy on OSH.
5. Develop public awareness and educational programmes in occupational safety and health and the green economy.
6. Create a system of awards for best performing companies and individuals, as well as sanctions for poor performance.
7. Balance economic and social goals by seeking a system of tax waiver or exemption on equipment used for ensuring safety and health conditions will be enhanced.
8. Facilitate a review of the Policy at least every five years or as is necessary.
9. Undertake to do a general survey of the working environment.

Ministry of Public Health

The Ministry of Public Health will serve on the National Advisory Council for Occupational Safety and Health (NACOSH) and provide technical support to the Occupational Safety and Health Department in fulfillment of its mandate. In addition, the Ministry of Public Health will do the following:

1. In coordination with the Ministry of Social Protection and Regional Health Authorities, develop programmes to visit and survey workplaces, and workers' health, in all sectors, to determine their health status, and detect risks of diseases in order to arrest the conditions at an early stage, enabling recovery and preventing disability.
2. Health education and health promotion at work, to improve their general health, by the practice of good personal hygiene, routine physical exercise, healthy eating, good environmental health practices, eating a balanced diet and getting adequate sleep, the cessation of smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, drug abuse avoidance, safe social behaviours/practices, stress management, anger, violence and avoidance of other behaviours which are detrimental to life.
3. Deliver primary occupational health care in workplaces, provide specific medicals for pre-employment, pre-placement, along with and periodical medical examinations for workers, including eye examination, dental care, ear, nose and throat, and treatment for chronic and communicable diseases.
4. Provide rehabilitation services for workers after disabling occupational illnesses/ injuries, and counsel on alternative job placements.
5. Work towards strengthening the existing laboratory facilities to provide special tests for workers exposed to toxic substances for example lead, pesticides, and mercury.
6. Provide statistical data on causes of death, epidemic and endemic diseases and occupational diseases.
7. Employ occupational health physicians who will establish services in relation to occupational medicine, industrial hygiene, occupational therapy, ergonomics and psychology (to effectively deal with mental illness and addictions) and improve the capability for diagnosis of the aforementioned occupational diseases.
8. Provide medical care generally and vaccination in accordance with the Ministry's Protocol.

National Insurance Scheme (NIS)

The NIS shall play a more active role in preventative and rehabilitative measures in relation to workers' health by the following:

1. Administer employment injury benefits in accordance with statutory requirements.
2. The NIS Inspectors will inform the regulatory authority of any unsafe or unhealthy working conditions they may observe on routine visits to workplaces.
3. Share with the regulatory authority monthly reports on industrial injuries and prescribed diseases.
4. Collaborate in funding public awareness and educational programmes and OSH activities.
5. Conduct seminars and lectures, in collaboration with the regulatory authority, to sensitize workers on sickness, injury and death benefits.
6. Provide rehabilitation services which are designed to prepare incapacitated and disabled persons for resumption of work, or alternative employment, having regard for their aptitude and capacity.
7. Establish and maintain a communication channel with the Ministries of Social Protection and Public Health.
8. Collaborate with all stakeholders to reduce the number of employment injuries and illnesses through awareness programmes and research activities.

Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry Ltd. (CAGI)

CAGI will institute measures to assist employers and their representatives in the development of OSH policy documents, and develop programmes at the level of the workplace to implement same.

CAGI will do the following:

1. Promote the integration of OSH into management systems, by advocating for compliance with specific provisions of the OSH Act which sets out roles and responsibilities for employers.
2. Promote the integration of OSH into management systems, at the workplace, by making businesses worker friendly, business friendly and environment friendly.
3. Evaluate the efficacy of the measures adopted and apply appropriate improvement measures.

4. Advocate for the use of appropriate technology, modern equipment, current technology, and modernized systems; while taking into account the varying impacts these may have on the environment.
5. Promote and support the establishment of joint workplace safety and health committees as is required by sections 22 to 23 (inclusive) of the OSH Act, at the level of the workplace and inter-agency communication and collaboration.
6. Establish and maintain an OSH information and research resources e.g. a website and/or other facilities for members.
7. Collaborate with the Ministry of Social Protection and other organizations on all aspects of the National OSH policy and programmes.
8. Give technical support to its membership in drafting policies and programmes for continuous improvement in the workplace.

Representative Organization of Workers.

The Guyana Trades Union Congress (GTUC).

The Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana (FITUG).

GTUC and FITUG will defend workers' interests, especially in small to medium scale enterprises, by tripartite and bipartite collaboration at the national, local and enterprise levels.

The unions will therefore undertake the following:

1. Initiate action to ensure the involvement of all trade unions in the formulation of OSH policies and programmes at their levels as well as at the level of the workplace.
2. Expand members' knowledge and understanding of labour protection and employment matters, and train representatives in negotiating skills.
3. Advocate and encourage the active participation of workers and unions in the joint workplace safety and health committees, or as workers' representatives.
4. Draw to the attention of the Ministry of Social Protection, Department of Labour, complaints and deficiencies observed in workplaces.
5. Ensure that their workers understand and complies with the provisions of the OSH policy of their respective organizations.

6. Maintain an information Centre or library facilities for the use of their membership.
7. Organize educational and training programmes in safety and health at work.
8. Promote the inclusion of improvement clauses in collective bargaining agreements in relation to OSH.
9. Actively participate in tripartite negotiations in OSH issues arranged by the Ministry of Social Protection.

Employers

The legal responsibility for safe and healthy working conditions rests with the employer. The implementation of favourable working conditions, and adapting work to the needs of employees, ultimately has an influence on worker motivation, and dedication to produce work of a high standard of efficiency and quality; and prevents diseases, disability and early retirement caused by adverse conditions at work. Employers are required to do the following:

1. Have a written policy on safety and health at work, and a plan to implement the policy.
2. Implement risk assessment and mitigation practices to identify the hazards, who might be harmed and how, evaluate the risk (identify and decide on the safety and health risk control), implement measures, and monitor and review the risk assessment.
3. Ensure responsibilities for safety and health are detailed in job descriptions, and in performance reviews.
4. Make provisions for pre-employment and periodic medical examinations for employees when required by the regulatory authority.
5. Ensure that employees are appropriately trained in the procedures and precautions that ought to be taken to prevent occupational injuries and illnesses, emphasizing compliance with standards, and conformance with departmental policies and best practices.
6. Maintain a culture of workplace safety and health at work, including personal accountability by developing and implementing systems to encourage employees to adopt this policy into practice and report any

safety and health concerns to management, in addition to ensuring that joint workplace safety and health committees are established.

7. Ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, that workplace violence, bullying, sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation are eliminated.
8. Integrate OSH principles in the overall planning and decision making process of the company.
9. Train internal emergency staff who are capable of administering first aid, and capable of fighting simple fires, know how to evacuate people from the building quickly and safely.
10. Comply with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and supporting regulations made therein.

Workers

Good working conditions can only be achieved when employers and their workers collaborate.

While the employer is ultimately responsible for working conditions policy, consultation with the workers is compulsory. Workers have the responsibility to comply with, and observe all safety and health rules in the workplace. They have rights as well as responsibilities in the workplace as follows:

1. The right to refuse unsafe work.
2. To participate in the workplace health and safety activities through the joint safety and health committees, or as a workers' representative.
3. Be provided with adequate information on safety and health at work and encouraged to share their views and ideas with respect to control and/or preventive measures.
4. Be informed of inherent dangers in work processes and be provided with adequate personal protection and/or equipment when required.
5. Benefit from pre-employment and periodic medical examination as prescribed by the regulatory authority.
6. Participate in inspections and accident investigations and be informed of observations and recommendations made by the regulatory authority.

7. Be familiar with applicable policies, procedures and programmes related to their workplace, especially green technology, energy saving, and conservation.
8. Develop and practice good habits of personal hygiene and housekeeping and use personal protective clothing and equipment as required by the job.
9. Report any threats, risks or hazards in the workplace and in the event of an incident or accident report immediately to the supervisor or police, as necessary.
10. Request and be supplied with information pertaining to the conditions under which they work.

Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS)

1. The GNBS will prepare, modify and amend specifications, standards and codes of practice related to OSH.
2. Establishment of general standards which can play a significant role in achieving good working conditions, as employers voluntarily accept these standards.
3. Adopt international and regional standards, e.g. ISO standards, and best practices in OSH for dissemination to all stakeholders and social partners.
4. Monitor the quality of all types of safety equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) imported and locally manufactured to ensure compliance with local national standards.
5. Collaborate and conduct training with agencies in education programmes and public awareness in OSH.

Guyana Fire Service (GFS)

The Guyana Fire Service shall place Greater Emphasis on enforcing the legislation that govern its operations with the ultimate aim of preventing loss of life, limb and property, and ensuring the prevention of injuries and death and the loss of Economic Resources. The services will include:

1. Establishing written Fire Prevention and Protection Policies and Programmes that is organic to every individual workplace to ensure the safety of all workers.

2. Conducting annual Fire Safety Inspections for the issuance of Fire safety Certificates to Companies, Organizations and Establishments. This must be a prerequisite for insurance of which a processing fee will be attached.
3. Ensuring that adequate Fire Protection is provided for all Establishments.
4. Providing Fire Safety & Life Saving Training to Companies, Organizations and Establishments.
5. Establishing a robust and proactive 'Fire Safety/Prevention' Public Education Strategy.
6. Network and partner with key stake holders and agencies to ensure the success of its mandate.

Ministry of the Presidency, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Agencies Which Administratively Fall Therein:

- The Guyana Geology and Mines Commission
- The Environmental Protection Agency
- Guyana Forestry Commission
- National Parks and Protected Areas Commission

The mining, agriculture and forestry sectors are high risk sectors for fatalities. There is also a high incidence of malaria in the interior. Other health conditions affecting many workers and officers of these various sectors include kidney, urinary and respiratory diseases as a result of humid and dusty environments, and musculoskeletal disorders from carrying excessive loads.

Many artisanal miners develop rheumatism and varicose veins as a result of cold and wet working environments. Due to dust and air pollution eye infections are also prevalent. In this regard the Ministries will be responsible for:

1. Creating clear policies for the mining, agricultural, forestry and national parks sectors.
2. Conducting, in collaboration with Ministry of Social Protection, risk assessments and hazard analyses, with guidelines for the reduction,

elimination and control, at the source, of the accidents, diseases and loss of lives, and for continuous improvements.

3. An effective data collection and reporting system for all mining, forestry and agricultural activities, accidents and illnesses.
4. A comprehensive register of all workers in the mining sector including the informal sector (small and unregulated mining activities)
5. Collaboration with the Ministry of Social Protection, Natural Resources, the Unions and all stakeholders involved with these sectors.
6. Developing policies in the oil and gas sector crafted to prevent environmental pollution due to oil spills and air pollution, and the subsequent damage to productive lands, crops and livestock. Air pollution can lead to respiratory diseases affecting both workers and the community.

The University of Guyana

The University of Guyana, with its mandate as the nation's premier institution of learning will foster the implementation of this policy by:

1. Providing research and Investigation in the fields related to Occupational Safety and Health.
2. Establishment of a Department specific to Occupational Safety and Health within Institute of Distance and Continuing Education.
3. Improve Occupational Safety and Health Skills and Human Resources Capacity through formal programmes.
4. Improve Research Capacity of Occupational Safety and Health Practitioners.
5. Participate in Occupational Safety and Health Commissioned Research.
6. Offer Specially Designed Programmes to address: Issues of Mental Health, Issues related to Addiction.

Other Agencies Not Specifically Mentioned

Notwithstanding the specific mandates of the Ministries and Agencies above, the following Agencies shall, as far as is reasonably practicable, aggressively take steps to incorporate and implement this Policy:

1. Guyana Civil Aviation Authority
2. Maritime Administration Department MARAD
3. Mayor and City Council and the Neighbourhood Democratic Councils (Responsibilities for Waste Management)
4. Critchlow Labour College

Guyana Civil Aviation Authority

The Guyana Civil Aviation Authority, herein referred to as the Authority, is the State Agency responsible for the regulatory oversight of civil aviation safety and security in Guyana. Consequently, it regulates all aviation safety related matters, including accidents and incidents; and security to safeguard civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference. In this regard the Authority will do the following.

1. Increase its staff efficiency and effectiveness by providing/facilitating training programmes at both the national and international levels.
2. Develop a State Safety Programme or policy document as well as safety related regulations and monitor their implementation. This will be done for the purpose of ensuring that key aviation stakeholders/operators establish or develop their own Safety Management System or Programme to enable them to identify safety related threats, risks and hazards; and to help in mitigating against these at their workplace, or their facility and establishment.
3. Introduce several awareness training initiatives that will be tailored to sensitize the aviation community on safety requirements pertaining to Safety Management Systems.
4. Host several safety related course, conferences and workshops for the purpose of advocating and promoting safety standards and practices amongst aviation stakeholders as well as aiding them in achieving compliance with respect to laws and requirements governing civil aviation operations in Guyana.
5. Continue its annual surveillance programme to ensure stakeholders' compliance with safety and security requirements; and issue directives and advisory circulars as may be required.

6. Continue to provide assistance to the Guyana Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation Unit in conducting investigations into aircraft accidents and incidents and ensure that all aviation accidents and incidents are reported and investigated in keeping with national and international requirements.
7. Implement monitoring systems to ensure that operators record and maintain all records of workplace accidents, incidents, hazards identified; and the mitigating actions and techniques used to eliminate or put in place to prevent future occurrences, etc.
8. Ensure the reports from past aviation related accidents whose investigations have been successfully completed and granted the appropriate approvals, are made available in the public forum. This will give researchers and safety practitioners the opportunity to study cases where unsafe situation may have contributed to adverse outcomes such as aircraft accidents and incidents.

Other agencies from time to time may be invited to consider and adopt this policy.

12. PUBLIC AWARENESS, TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Training and education in occupational health and safety is one of the most effective means in improving working conditions and the working environment and is part of general human resource development. Appropriate training improves the possibilities of both detecting and analyzing problems, and finding the technical and economic means most suitable for solving the problems. The implementation of this OSH Policy will consider the following:

1. Specific training and education would target safety and health specialists, inspectors, employers, managers, non-management and trade union representatives, will be done by the regulatory authority and other partners by way of seminars, workshops, lectures and discussions.

2. The Government and partner agencies ensure that relevant training and educational opportunities are made available to all categories of workers through the relevant competent authorities.
3. Formal training and education of safety and health professionals leading to a Certificate, Diploma or Degree in Safety and Health will be done by the University of Guyana, The Critchlow Labour College and/ or other external learning institutions as may be required.
4. Essential level of training and education in OSH should be a common part of the curricula at secondary schools, universities, institutes of medicine and other technical and vocational schools. This will be done in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.
5. Persons in the informal sector can transition into the formal sector, through public awareness programmes, social dialogue, and strategic educational projects, in conjunction with incentives, compliance and enforcement measures.
6. Progressive development of procedures for including self-employed persons in the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases.
7. Sensitization of workers.



13. GOVERNANCE OF THE POLICY

The formulation of this policy followed a participatory approach in which social partners and other relevant stakeholders provided inputs for its development. The policy, while being consistent with other national policies and priorities, seeks to promote the right of workers to decent, safe and healthy working conditions and environment.

The OSH Policy will be supported by an OSH Plan of Action which will include priorities, objectives and targets to achieve the objectives of this policy.

The implementation of this policy demands effective coordination between the various authorities and stakeholders.

The implementation of the goals of this National Policy on OSH will be monitored and assessed by NACOSH continuously and the findings thereof shall form part of NACOSH's annual report which shall be submitted to the Government and laid before Parliament before the expiration of every calendar year. In addition, the findings shall inform NACOSH's yearly plan of activities.

The Policy shall be revised every five (5) years or as deemed necessary based on changes in:

1. Legislation
2. Technology
3. International standards and Conventions and/or
4. Any other conditions that may warrant review.

