

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (OSH)



Concepts

Worker

Any **employee**, as well as **trainees, interns, apprentices and self-employed workers** economically dependent of the beneficiary of the activity

Employer

Any **natural or legal** person who has an employment relationship with a **worker** and has responsibility for the undertaking/ establishment, hosts **trainees/interns/apprentices**, or benefits from the activity of an economically dependent **self-employed person**

Workers' representatives in the undertaking

Persons who are recognized as such under national law or practice

Workers' representative with specific responsibility for the safety and health of workers

Any **person elected, chosen or designated** in accordance with national laws and/or practices to represent workers in relation to OSH

Workplace

All places where workers need to be or go due to their work and which are under direct/indirect control of employer

Material components of work

Workplace, working environment, tools, machinery, equipment, chemical, physical and biological substances and agents and work processes

Occupational safety and health (OSH)

Multidisciplinary science focused on the anticipation, recognition, assessment and control of risks in the workplace that can impair workers' safety, health and well-being

Occupational hazard

A **property inherent to an object, activity, mechanism, equipment, agent, situation or other material or environmental component** of work, with potential to damage workers' health or life

Occupational risk

The **combination of the likelihood of a hazardous event arising out of or during work** and the **severity of its damaging consequences** to workers' health

Risk assessment

The **process of evaluating the risks to safety and health** arising from hazards at work

OSH management system

A **set of interrelated or interacting elements** to establish an **OSH policy** and **objectives**, and to **achieve** those objectives

Health

The **absence of disease or infirmity**, as well as **physical and mental elements affecting health** which are directly related to safety and hygiene at work

Occupational health services

Preventive services that advise employers, workers and their representatives in the undertaking about the **requirements for establishing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment** that improves the physical and mental health of workers, and on the adaptation of work to the capabilities of workers considering their state of physical and mental health

Occupational accident

An **occurrence arising out of, or during work**, which results in **fatal or non-fatal injury**

Occupational disease

Any **disease contracted as a result of an exposure to risk factors during work**

Dangerous occurrence

An **event which may cause an injury or disease to persons** at work or to the public

Commuting accident

An **accident resulting in death or personal injury occurring on the way** between the place of work and the worker's place of residence, of taking meals, or of receiving the wage

Incident

Unsafe event at work which could have, but did not, cause personal injury

Prevention

The **set of public policies and programmes, as well as all steps or measures taken or planned** at all stages of work in the undertaking, **to prevent or reduce occupational risks**

National preventive safety and health culture

A **culture where the right to safe and healthy working conditions is respected at all levels**, where government, employers and workers secure a safe and healthy working environment through a system of defined rights, responsibilities and duties, and where the principle of prevention is given the highest priority

► General principles of prevention (GPP)

- 1 To avoid risks
- 2 To assess the risks that cannot be avoided
- 3 To combat the risks at source
- 4 To adapt the work to workers (e.g., in workplace's design, choice of work equipment, definition of work processes and production methods)
- 5 To adapt to technical progress
- 6 To replace the dangerous by the non-dangerous or less dangerous
- 7 To develop and implement a coherent overall prevention policy (covering technology, work organization, working conditions, social relations and working environment)
- 8 To give collective protective measures priority over personal protective measures
- 9 To give appropriate instructions to workers

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (OSH)



National OSH framework

► National policy on OSH

National policy aimed at improving OSH and developing a national preventive safety and health culture that includes the observance of the general principles of prevention, information, consultation, training and health surveillance, to prevent occupational injuries, diseases and deaths, advance workers' well-being and minimize occupational risks

► National system for OSH

Network of public, private or cooperative entities engaged in different areas (e.g., regulation, licensing, certification, standardization, research, training, information and technical advice, consultation, technical services of prevention, health surveillance and inspection) **aimed at enduring the right to safe and healthy working conditions**

► National programme on OSH

National programme to improve OSH, that includes objectives to be achieved, indicators, targets deadlines, resources and means to assess progress



OSH at the level of the undertaking

► Employer's general obligation

Non-transferable obligation to ensure the safety and health of workers in every aspect related to work, by taking (and continuously adjust to changing circumstances) the necessary measures, with observance of the sequential and hierarchical GPP

► Employers' specific obligations

1. **To manage occupational risks: avoid, assess, and control risks** through the implementation of appropriate preventive and protective measures
2. **To provide workers with preventive and protective OSH services**
3. **To make arrangements for first aid, fire-fighting and evacuation** of workers

4. **To provide workers with adequate information** and training on OSH
5. **To ensure workers' consultation, participation**
6. To ensure **workers' health surveillance**
7. To record and notify **occupational accidents and diseases**

► Workers' obligations

1. **To take care, as far as possible, of their own safety and health** and that of other persons affected by their acts or omissions
2. **Make correct use of work equipment, tools, substances** and other means of production
3. **Make correct use of the personal protective equipment**
4. **Refrain from disconnecting, changing or removing arbitrarily safety devices** and use them correctly
5. **Immediately inform employer and/or workers with responsibilities on OSH of any work situation that may represent a serious and immediate danger** to safety and health and of any shortcomings in protection arrangements
6. **Cooperate with employer and/or workers with responsibilities on OSH, within her/his field of activity, as may be necessary:**
 - **to carry out tasks or requirements to protect the safety and health of workers**, imposed by the competent authority
 - **for the employer to ensure safe and healthy working conditions**

► Workers' rights

1. **To safe and healthy working conditions**, provided by the employer
2. **To information and training on OSH**
3. **To be consulted and participate in the decisions** regarding OSH
4. To benefit from **OSH services**, including **health surveillance**
5. **Not to pay any costs related to OSH**
6. **Not to be placed at any disadvantage and to be protected against any harmful and undue consequences if:**
 - **designated to perform activities related to the prevention of and protection against occupational risks**, and be allowed adequate time to perform such activities
 - **designated to implement the measures for first aid, fire-fighting and evacuation** of workers
 - **they leave their workstation and/or a dangerous area** in the event of serious, imminent and unavoidable danger
 - **they have taken the appropriate steps to avoid a serious and imminent danger** to them and/or to others when the immediate superior could not be contacted

- **for having reported** an occupational accident/disease, dangerous occurrence, commuting accident or suspected occupational disease
7. To ask/submit **proposals to employer to take measures to reduce/eliminate occupational risks**
 8. **If workers' representative with specific responsibilities for workers' OSH, be granted with adequate time off work**, without loss of pay, and provided with the necessary means
 9. **To appeal to competent authority if employers' measures are inadequate or insufficient** to ensure their OSH and to submit observations during inspection visits
 10. **To undergo OSH training within working hours**
 11. **To be protected against specific dangers**, in case of particularly sensitive risk groups

► Key International and EU Labour Standards on OSH

- [Convention No. 187](#)
- [Convention No. 155](#)
- [Protocol of 2002 to the Convention No. 155](#)

- [Convention No. 161](#)
- [Council Directive 89/391/EEC](#)

► Additional resources

- [Background paper](#)
- [Power Point Presentation](#)