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NATIONAL

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

POLICY

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GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

Ministry of Planning, Development & Reforms



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NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

1. PREFACE

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan provides framework for fundamental and indiscriminate rights of all citizens and for securing the health and safety of all employees and others. The Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan contains a range of provisions for safeguard of employees/workers with regards to Labor rights. Fundamental Rights and Principles of Policy as given in the 2nd part of the constitution of Pakistan include:

- Article 11 of the Constitution prohibits all forms of slavery, forced Labor and child Labor;
- Article 17 provides for a fundamental right to exercise the freedom of association and the right to form unions;
- Article 18 proscribes the right of its citizens to enter upon any lawful profession or occupation and to conduct any lawful trade or business;
- Article 25 lays down the right to equality before the law and prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex alone;
- Article 37(e) makes provision for securing just and humane conditions of work, ensuring that children and women are not employed in vocations unsuited to their age or sex, and for maternity benefits for women in employment. It demands promotion of social justice and eradication of social evils.
- Article 38(a-d) Promotion of social and economic well-being of the people

On the basis of these principles as well as international instruments, Government is committed to regulate all economic activities for management of occupational health and safety (OHS) risks and to provide measures so as to ensure healthy and safe working conditions for every working man and woman in the nation. Government recognizes that health and safety of workers has a positive impact on productivity and economic and social development. Prevention is an integral part of economic activities as high health and safety standards at work is as important as good business performance for new as well as existing industries.

The formulation of policy, priorities and strategies in OHS, is undertaken by national authorities in consultation with social partners for fulfilling such



objectives. A critical role is played by the Government and the social partners, professional health and safety organizations in ensuring prevention and in also providing treatment, support and rehabilitation services.

Government of Pakistan firmly believes that without healthy as well as safe working conditions, social justice and economic growth cannot be achieved, and that safe and healthy working environment is recognized as a fundamental human right. Education, training, consultation and exchange of information and good practices are essential for prevention and promotion of such measures.

The changing job patterns and working relationships, the rise in self-employment, greater sub-contracting, outsourcing of work, homework and the increasing number of employees working away from their establishment, pose problems to management of OHS risks at workplaces. New safety hazards and health risks will be appearing along with the transfer and adoption of new technologies.

In addition, many of the well-known conventional hazards will continue to be present at the workplace till the risks arising from exposure to these hazards are brought under adequate control. While advancements in technology have minimized or eliminated some hazards at workplace, new risks can emerge in their place which needs to be addressed.

Particular attention needs to be paid to the hazardous operations and of employees in risk prone conditions such as migrant employees and various vulnerable groups of employees arising out of greater mobility in the workforce with more people working for a number of employers, either consecutively or simultaneously.

The increasing use of chemicals, exposure to physical, chemical and biological agents with hazard potential unknown to people; the indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals including pesticides, agricultural machineries and equipment; industries with major accident risks; effects of computer-controlled technologies and alarming influence of stress at work in many modern jobs pose serious health and safety risks.

The fundamental purpose of National OHS Policy, is not only to eliminate the incidence of work related injuries, diseases, fatalities, disaster and loss of national



assets and ensuring achievement of a high level of OHS performance through proactive approaches but also to enhance the well-being of the employee and society, at large. The necessary changes in this area will be based on a coordinated effort focused on clear national goals and objectives.

2. GOALS

The Government firmly believes that building and maintaining national preventive OHS culture is the need of the hour. With a view to develop such a culture and to improve OHS, it is essential to meet the following requirements:

- 2.1 providing a statutory framework on OHS in respect of all sectors of industrial activities including the construction sector, designing suitable control systems of compliance, enforcement and incentives for better compliance.
- 2.2 providing administrative and technical support services.
- 2.3. providing a system of incentives to employers and employees to achieve higher health and safety standards.
- 2.4 providing for a system of non-financial incentives for improvement in safety and health.
- 2.5. establishing and developing the research and development capability in emerging areas of risk and providing for effective control measures.
- 2.6. Focusing on prevention strategies and monitoring performance through improved data collection system on work related injuries and diseases.
- 2.7 Developing and providing required technical manpower and knowledge in the areas of OHS in different sectors.
- 2.8 Promoting inclusion of health and safety, improvement at workplaces as an important component in other relevant national policy documents.
- 2.9 Including OHS as an integral part of every operation.

3. OBJECTIVES

The policy seeks to bring the national objectives into focus as a step towards improvement in OHS.



The objectives are to achieve:

- a) Continuous reduction in the incidence of work related injuries, fatalities, diseases, disasters and loss of national assets.
- b) Improved coverage of work related injuries, fatalities and diseases and provide for a more comprehensive data base for facilitating better performance.
- c) Continuous enhancement of community awareness regarding OHS related areas.
- d) Continually increasing community expectation of OHS standards.
- e) Continually meeting International expectation in OHS compliance.
- f) Improving OHS for sustainable development.

4. ACTION PROGRAM

For the purpose of achieving the goals and objectives mentioned in sections 2 and 3 above, the following action program is drawn up and where necessary time bound action program would be initiated, namely:

4.1 Legislation

- 4.1.1 by making National OHS Act and setting up National OHS Council.
- 4.1.2 by amending expeditiously existing laws relating to OHS and bring them in line with the relevant international instruments
- 4.1.3 by developing appropriate rules, regulations, standards, codes of practices and guidelines on OHS for uniformity at the national level in all economic activities consistent with international standards and implementation by the stake holders in true spirit.
- 4.1.4 by ensuring stakeholders awareness of and accessibility to applicable policy, act, rules, regulations and standards.

4.2 Compliance

- 4.2.1 by providing an effective enforcement machinery as well as suitable provisions for compensation and rehabilitation of affected persons;



- 4.2.2 by effectively enforcing all applicable laws and regulations concerning OHS in all economic activities through an adequate and effective inspection system
- 4.2.3 by ensuring that employers, employees and others have separate but complementary responsibilities and rights with respect to achieving healthy and safe working conditions
- 4.2.4 by monitoring the adoption of national OHS laws, rules, regulations and standards through regulatory authorities
- 4.2.5 by facilitating the sharing of best practices and experiences between national and international regulatory authorities
- 4.2.6 by encouraging the appropriate Government to assume the fullest responsibility for the administration and enforcement of OHS, provide assistance in identifying their needs and responsibilities in the area of OHS, to develop plans and programs in accordance with the provisions of the applicable Acts
- 4.2.7 by calling upon the co-operation of social partners in the supervision of application of legislations and regulations relating to OHS
- 4.2.8 by continuous improvement of OHS by systems approach to the management of OHS including developing guidance on OHS management systems, strengthening voluntary actions, including mechanisms for self-regulatory concept and establishing auditing mechanisms which can test and authenticate OHS management systems
- 4.2.9 by providing specific measures to prevent catastrophes, and to co-ordinate and specify the actions to be taken at different levels, particularly in the industrial zones with high potential risks
- 4.2.10 by recognizing the best health and safety practices and providing facilitation for their adoption.
- 4.2.11 by providing adequate penal provisions as deterrent for violation of laws for the time being in force
- 4.2.12 by encouraging all concerned to adopt and commit to “Corporate Social Responsibility” to improve OHS performance;



- 4.2.13 by ensuring a suitable accreditation body to recognize institutions, professionals and services relating to OHS for uniformity and greater coverage as also authenticating safe management system;
- 4.2.14 by encouraging employers to ensure OHS management systems, establish them in efficient manner to improve OHS;
- 4.2.15 by specifically focusing on such occupational diseases like pneumoconiosis and silicosis; developing a framework for its prevention and control as well as develop technical standards and guidelines for the same;
- 4.2.16 by promoting safe and clean technology and progressively replacing materials hazardous to human health and environment;

4.3 Awareness

- 4.3.1 by increasing awareness on OHS through appropriate means;
- 4.3.2 by providing forums for consultations with employers' representatives, employees representatives and community on matters of national concern relating to OHS with the overall objective of creating awareness and enhance productivity;
- 4.3.3 by encouraging joint labor-management efforts to preserve, protect and promote national assets and to eliminate injuries and diseases at work;
- 4.3.4 by raising community awareness through structured, audience specific approach;
- 4.3.5 by continuously evaluating the impact of such awareness and information initiatives;
- 4.3.6 by maximizing gains from the substantial investment in awareness campaigns by sharing experience and learning;
- 4.3.7 by suitably incorporating teaching inputs on OHS in schools, technical, medical, professional and vocational courses and distance education program;



- 4.3.8 by securing good liaison arrangements with the International organizations;
- 4.3.9 by providing medical criteria wherever necessary which will assure insofar as practicable that no employee will suffer diminished health, functional capacity, or life expectancy as a result of his work place activities and that in the event of such occupational diseases having been contracted, is suitably compensated;
- 4.3.10 by providing practical guidance and encouraging employers and employees in their efforts to reduce the incidence of OHS risks at their places of employment and to impress upon employers and employees to institute new programs and to improve existing programs for providing healthful and safe working conditions, requiring employers to ensure that workers and their representatives are consulted, trained, informed and involved in all measures related to OHS;

4.4 Research and Development

- 4.4.1 by providing for research in the field of OHS, including the social and psychological factors involved, and by developing innovative methods, techniques and approaches for dealing with OHS problems which will help in establishing standards;
- 4.4.2 by exploring ways to discover latent diseases, establishing causal connections between diseases and work environmental conditions, updating list of occupational diseases and conducting other research relating to OHS problems;
- 4.4.3 by establishing research priorities as per national requirements; exploring partnerships and improving communications with various national and international research bodies;
- 4.4.4 by ensuring a coordinated research approach and an optimal allocation of resources in OHS sector for such purposes;



4.5 OHS Skills Development

- 4.5.1 by providing for training programs to increase the number and competence of personnel engaged in the field of OHS;
- 4.5.2 by providing information and advice, in an appropriate manner, to employers and employees organizations, with a view to eliminating hazards or reducing them as far as practicable;
- 4.5.3 by establishing occupational health services aimed at protection and promotion of health of employee and improvement of working conditions and by providing employee access to these services in different sectors of economy;
- 4.5.4 by integrating OHS into vocational, professional and labor related training programs as also management training including small business practices;
- 4.5.5 by adopting OHS training curricula in workplace and industry programs;

4.6 Data collection

- 4.6.1 by compiling statistics relating to OHS, prioritizing key issues for action, conducting national studies or surveys or projects through governmental and non-governmental organizations
- 4.6.2 by reinforcing and sharing of information and data on OHS information amongst different stake holders through a national network system on OHS
- 4.6.3 by extending data coverage relevant to work-related injury and disease, including measures of exposure, and occupational groups that are currently excluded, such as self-employed people
- 4.6.4 by extending data systems to allow timely reporting and provision of information
- 4.6.5 by developing the means for improved access to information



4.7 Review

- 4.7.1 An initial review and analysis shall be carried out to ascertain the current status of OHS and building a National OHS profile
- 4.7.2 National OHS Policy and the action program shall be reviewed at least once in five years or earlier if felt necessary to assess relevance of the national goals and objectives

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The National OHS Policy and program envisages total commitment and demonstration by all concerned stake holders such as Government and social partners. Goals and objectives will be achieved through dedicated and concerted efforts, consistent with the requirements of OHS, thereby improving the quality of work and working life.
- 5.2 There is a need to develop close involvement of social partners to meet the challenges ahead in the assessment and control of workplace risks by mobilizing local resources and extending protection to such working population and vulnerable groups where social protection is not adequate.
- 5.3 Government stands committed to implement and review the National OHS Policy and legislations through tripartite consultation, improve enforcement, compilation and analysis of statistics; develop special programs for hazardous operations and other focus sectors, set up training mechanisms, create nation-wide awareness, arrange for the mobilization of available resources and expertise.
