

Safety Corner

What is 'prevention safety culture'?

Globally, an estimated 2.3 million workers die every year from work-related accidents and occupational diseases while millions more suffer non-fatal injuries and illnesses. To lower the injury statistics, many countries establish occupational safety and health (OSH) regulations, the goal of which to ensure that employers provide workers with a work environment free from recognized safety and health hazards. However, this goal cannot be achieved solely by technological improvement or more regulations and supervision. To effectively move towards the goal of an accident free workplace, the need for promulgate a prevention safety culture among workers and their employers is both obvious and urgent because the majority of workplace accidents and diseases are preventable.

In OSH, a 'prevention safety culture' can be recognised by an integrated, consistent pattern of behaviors in the workplace for prevention of work-related accidents and diseases where workers clearly understand the importance of accident prevention through the promotion of health, safety and well-being at work. At the organisational level, it requires the implementation of preventive and promotional activities to raise the awareness of accident prevention into the mindset and behaviour of managers and employees.

A culture of prevention requires a much broader understanding of 'prevention'. The policies, concepts and measures related to safety and health preservation and promotion should not be limited to the workplace but extended to include the "off duty" life of workers because the environment and the risk factors in their private lives as well as the workplace have an impact on well-being and the occurrence of diseases.

Everyone agrees that prevention is the best fire safety strategy for avoiding damages or injuries caused by a fire. The same thinking must be extended to OSH. Prevention safety culture should be part of employees' daily lives as preventive action pays off and is more than worthwhile.

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