

# 2006 Newsletter

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- **OSH Statistics**

- Fewer industrial accidents occur, thanks to risk assessment

- Boryeong branch announcing implementation of model projects

**Fewer industrial accidents occurred at workplaces when risk assessment techniques were used as a model project, according to surveys.**

**The Boryeong branch (branch head: Lee Byung-jik) of the Daejeon District Labor Administration came out with the results of a model project carried out using risk assessment techniques during a briefing held last November 16 at the conference room of Dymos Co., Ltd., in Seongyeon-myeon, Seosan City. Participants included officials from several safety and health institutions as well as some 20 officials from the Chungnam office of Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency. The results of applying risk assessment techniques to 3 large workplaces employing more than 500 workers -- Dymos Co., Ltd., Hyundai Powertech, and LG Chemical Daesan plant -- were presented during the briefing.**

**Each of the 3 workplaces reported a reduction of more than 15% in the industrial accident rate compared to the previous year. The analysis attributed this feat to the workers who have taken part in the application of the risk assessment techniques.**

**"Our surveys showed that all workers had knowledge of the risk assessment techniques and willingly participated in the program," an official from the Boryeong branch said.**

**(20 November 2006, Daily Safety News)**

- Industrial disasters involving migrant workers drop by 16.9%

- No casualties reported by the Daejeon District Labor Office; good result attributed to the improved awareness of employers

**Industrial accidents involving migrant workers in the Daejeon area dropped by 16.9 %, according to the Daejeon District Labor Office (headed by Kim Maeng-ryong).**

**Among the 2,104 migrant workers in the area, only 1.81% or 38 were involved in industrial accidents. This represents a 0.37% decrease compared to last year when 2.18% or 32 out of 1,467 migrant workers were affected.**

**In particular, no fatal case has occurred since 2004 when 2 migrant workers died in industrial accidents.**

**Following the implementation of the work permit system, the number of migrant workers grew by**

637 or 42%. Even with such increase, however, the accidents rate dropped, thanks to well-rounded management and improvement in less secure sites.

The Daejeon District Labor Office has provided technical support and safety checkup service for employers and employees and held seminars targeting migrant workers in cooperation with private labor organizations to improve safety compliance levels in various companies.

"More importantly, enhanced awareness of safety on the part of employers can help minimize industrial accidents involving migrant workers," a representative of the Daejeon District Labor Office said.

According to him, the Daejeon Office plans to focus on migrant workers who are working in less secure places.

(30 November 2006, Daily Safety News)

- **Main OSH Policy**

- MSDS to indicate substance by degree of risk
  - Ministry of Labor to introduce globally harmonized system (GHS) of classification



In the future, MSDS should indicate chemicals according to the degree of risk. From 2004 up to August this year, a total of 8 meetings were held regarding globally harmonized system (GHS) of classification by the joint promotion committee of the government. The Ministry of Labor disclosed last September 28 its plan to amend the standard for the classification and labeling of chemicals and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) based on the results of the meetings. The classification and labeling of chemicals were subdivided into 27 types including risks, health hazards, and environment hazards. Hazard and danger indicating methods should be indicated in detail; simple "Warning" labels for particularly hazardous chemicals was prohibited. When preparing MSDS, information on serious hazards and danger should be placed before the name of chemicals. Likewise, warning labels including preventive action phrases should be entered. The standard for the 27 types of hazards classifies the degree of hazard into 6 grades based on the characteristics. For example, although a "flammable liquid" refers to any liquid with flash point of less than 60iÆC under standard pressure (101.3 kPa), it can either be 1st grade (extremely flammable liquid) or 2nd grade (highly flammable liquid) based on the initial boiling point of 35iÆC. Owners are now required to enter the preventive phrases differently at each stage according to the degree of risks, e.g., Prevention, Counteraction, Storage, and Destruction. If a chemical falls under more than 3

types of hazards and danger, the owner may indicate only 3 types of hazard figures by priority; figures and characters indicating carcinogenic substance must be included, however.

(2 October 2006, Ministry of Labor News)

- Total ban on asbestos use to be pursued

- Ministry of Labor meets with concerned industries, checks preparations being made

**The Ministry of Labor met with personnel from related industries to push for the ban on asbestos use as early as possible. During the meeting held last October 20 at the conference room of the Gwacheon Government Office Building and attended by some 20 officials of asbestos manufacturers, users, and importers, the Ministry of Labor announced that it would ban the use of asbestos-based products such as gaskets before 2009, the original schedule for the ban. Although asbestos manufacturers, users, and importers were one in saying that the substitute materials for asbestos have already been developed, they had varying opinions regarding the disposal of the inventory of asbestos products and length of grace period. "It's all right to ban the manufacture of asbestos; since the price of the substitute material is approximately 10 times higher than asbestos, however, we cannot stop the importation of products from China. Unless imported products are fully regulated, we will be forced to continue producing asbestos products," an official from a manufacturing firm stressed. An official from a petrochemical industry added how the industry tends to use asbestos for facilities to obtain high pressure. According to him, equipment makers in particular also purchase spare parts for maintenance purposes when they import products. "It will take at least 30 years to consume all products," the official said. While it empathizes with the position of the industry, the Ministry of Labor advised companies to prepare for an earlier ban. Kim Byung-uk, head of the industrial health and environment team of the Ministry of Labor, stressed the need for the total ban on the use of asbestos as well as for related industries to make the necessary preparations when the use of asbestos is totally banned. Nonetheless, he promised to look into assertions of the need for longer grace period. According to the Ministry of Labor, Kim Dong-il, a professor at the college of medicine of Sungkyunkwan University, is scheduled to complete his research in time for the ban on the use of asbestos by the end of November.**

(23 October 2006, Ministry of Labor News)

- Tower crane operators to be required to have licenses by July next year

- Ministry of Labor to allow experienced operators to obtain licenses after completing training

**Starting July next year, persons wishing to operate tower cranes will be required to have tower crane operator licenses as well as authorization to install or disassemble tower cranes from pipe fabrication engineers and scaffolding engineers.**

**The Ministry of Labor announced last October 26 that it amended the regulation on restricting employment in dangerous and hazardous work to include the provision on the license for tower crane operation. Currently, crane operator license holders are automatically allowed to operate**

tower cranes; with the amendment taking effect, however, even licensed crane operators wishing to handle tower cranes must acquire tower crane operator licenses or complete the training offered by Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA).



For crane operator license holders with at least 3 months' experience in operating tower cranes, they only need to complete the 16-hour training course offered by KOSHA between now and December 2008 to acquire tower crane licenses. Those who do not have any experience in operating tower cranes must complete the relevant occupational skills development program and acquire licenses before July next year.

On the other hand, those with at least 3 months' experience in operating unmanned tower cranes need to complete a 16-hour training course between now and December 2007 to acquire licenses. Likewise, persons with at least 6 months' experience in installing or disassembling tower cranes only need to complete the 24-hour theoretical training provided by KOSHA or a training institute designated by the Ministry of Labor.

(27 October 2006, Ministry of Labor News)

- Draft Standard for Hazards Indication for Chemicals confirmed
- Ministry of Labor to implement GHS next year; GHS and existing system to coexist until 2008

**The draft standard for hazards indication for chemicals conforming to the Globally Harmonized System (GHS) has been confirmed. The Ministry of Labor ordered the revision and implementation of the "Public notification on the classification and identification of chemicals and MSDS" on the 12th to help users understand the hazard information indicated on the containers and packaging of chemicals.**

For crane operator license holders with at least 3 months' experience in operating tower cranes, they only need to complete the 16-hour training course offered by KOSHA between now and December 2008 to acquire tower crane licenses. Those who do not have any experience in operating tower cranes must complete the relevant occupational skills development program and acquire licenses before July next year.

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Toward this end, the 15 existing categories of chemicals shall be classified more precisely into 27 types. Hazard signals shall also be modified to promote better understanding.

MSDS shall focus mainly on hazard information rather than the specific names of chemicals to clarify potential hazards under particular conditions.

The Ministry of Labor also announced that it would establish a chemical classification and identification system for dissemination through the website and improve MSDS in accordance with the new standard on a step-by-step basis.

Nonetheless, the existing system will still be in use until June 30, 2008 to provide a buffer period for the new era.

Mr. Kim Dong-nam, Director of the Industrial Safety and Health Bureau of the Ministry of Labor, vowed to provide more precise data to prevent disasters. "Various government offices have had their own ways of delivering chemical-related data, in the process unwittingly causing confusion and redundancy," he noted.

(8 December 2006, Ministry of Labor News)

- **Update in KOREA**

- Serious accidents to be reported to 1588-3088 immediately
  - Ministry of Labor to receive reports on risk situation telephonically 24/7

Serious accidents should be reported immediately via 1588-3088, the special hotline to be installed for reporting. According to the announcement dated October 11 by the Ministry of Labor, the emergency hotline (1588-3088) has been reinstalled to make it available even at night and during holidays starting next year in keeping with the amendments of related laws, i.e., requiring the immediate reporting of serious accidents instead of "within 24 hours."

The Ministry of Labor explained that this was one of the measures taken to respond more

effectively to emergencies at night and during holidays by allowing reports to be received through the cell phone of the industrial safety manager at the local labor office.

The ministry also pointed out that the number of serious accidents reported for the past 3 years through such reporting system was extremely small. From 2004 to August this year, only 866 accidents were reported through the emergency hotline or less than 1 accident report received per day.

Since reporting serious accidents "immediately" once their occurrence is known is now required, workplaces must report any serious accident immediately using the emergency hotlines even when the accident occurs at dawn to avoid facing sanctions.

Nonetheless, concerns were raised regarding the labor supervisors' ability to proceed to the scene of accident immediately for investigation at night and during holidays even if a serious accident is reported through the emergency hotlines.

"Emergencies usually occur at construction sites. Since almost no construction work is done at night, and most manufacturers do not work at night and during holidays, we do not expect any major problem," an official from the Ministry of Labor said.

(9 June, Daily Safety News)

- Workplaces warned of legal sanctions if number of accidents involving foreign workers does not drop
  - MOL Daegu Bukbu branch to impose severe sanctions on workplaces failing to fulfill obligations

**Workplaces experiencing accidents involving foreign workers will be slapped with legal sanctions if their accident rates do not drop, according to the Daegu Bukbu branch (branch head: Kim Jung-ho) of the Daegu District Labor Administration.**

From October 23 to November 3, the Daegu Bukbu branch plans to inspect 24 workplaces employing foreign workers to evaluate matters related to safety and health and to provide training in cooperation with Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency in October for the employees of the 149 workplaces experiencing accidents involving foreign workers since last year up to the end of September this year.

The accidents recorded in 2006 occurred in 24 of these workplaces. Thus, they will be inspected to determine whether they have established plans to prevent the recurrence of such accidents, taken protective measures on dangerous machines including presses, and conducted safety and health training for foreign workers as well as whether their employees have undergone medical checkups. Workplaces persistently failing to take appropriate safety and health measures will be slapped with severe legal sanctions.

(18 October 2006, Daily Safety News)

- Ministry of Labor announces partial amendment on office organization
  - "Safety and health" in industrial safety and health policy, PR activities on industrial health to be strengthened

The Ministry of Labor announced last October 23 the partial amendment of the regulation on office organization, which prescribes the new job allocation related to industrial safety and health.

Based on the amendment on office organization, the assignments of the three teams under the Industrial Safety and Health Bureau (safety and health policy team, industrial safety team, and industrial health and environment team) will be readjusted. In particular, "Other matters related to the health of workers" was added to the works of the industrial health and environment team for comprehensive application.

An official from the Ministry of Labor noted how supervisory work used to focus on safety. Thus, the amendment seeks to promote affairs related to health given the increasing desire of workers for better health, he said.

"Establishment and adjustment of plans related to industrial safety and health training," which used to be assigned to the safety and health policy team, was expanded to "Training and PR activities on industrial safety."

"We changed the content to strengthen PR activities targeting people at the government levels even as KOSHA is involved in such activities," the Labor Ministry official added.

Since health affairs are now comprehensively prescribed, other related health projects are expected to be boosted by the increase in the number of supervisors for doctors and at regional industrial health centers.

Based on such amendment on office organization, the 8 persons stationed at the headquarters will be increased, with the 9 persons at the local government offices decreased.

(25 October 2006, Daily Safety News)

- **Update in KOSHA**

- KC Tech awarded the 4000th S Mark certification
  - Recent sharp increase in the number of applications for certification indicating immense popularity of the system, according to the Ministry of Labor and KOSHA

**KC Tech, a firm operating in Anseong, Gyeonggi Do, was awarded an S mark certification for its LCD cleaning system. Its latest S Mark was the 4000th certification granted since the system was introduced to ensure the safety of machines, equipment, and protective gear**



The Ministry of Labor and Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA; president: Gil-sang PARK) disclosed last October 17 that 1,553 companies have acquired 4000 certifications since the S Mark system was introduced in 1997.

According to KOSHA, KC Tech has already acquired S mark certifications for 76 products including its gas supply system.

The 4000th S mark certification suggests the rapid increase in the number of applications for the S mark certification. In fact, a total of 1,000 products have already acquired S Mark certifications a mere 1 year after the S Mark certification acquired by Japanese Company Omron at the end of last year, a remarkable increase considering the approximately 1,800 products that received S mark certifications until the end of 2003.

KOSHA attributed the immense popularity of the S mark certification to the resulting reduction in accidents and productivity improvement. The agency also pointed out that no accidents involving any S Mark-certified product or equipment have been reported, and that the S Mark has cut down after-sales service costs by 20~30%.

The number of foreign enterprises applying for the S Mark certification has constantly been on the rise. As of the end of September this year, 267 companies from 8 countries including Japan, Britain, France, and Germany applied for the S Mark certification; a total of 814 certifications have been granted.

Meanwhile, KOSHA will hold the 4000th S Mark certification awarding ceremony today. Awardee KC Tech and KOSHA President Gil-sang PARK are expected to grace the event.

(18 October 2006, KOSHA News)

- International seminar on participatory industrial accident prevention to be held today

An international safety and health seminar seeking to promote participatory industrial accident prevention activities, examine cases in foreign countries, and establish effective directions suitable for the domestic situation will be held today at the conference room of Kukmin Ilbo by the Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute of Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA) in cooperation with Korea Labor Institute and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

Yun Jo-duk, a research staff from Korea Labor Institute, will give a presentation on the participatory system related to safety and health and problems in Korea. On the other hand, a professor from Alfred Oppolzer University in Hamburg, Germany will talk about the changes in the structure of Germany's industrial safety and health. The presentation of another professor from Bernd-Jurgen Vorath University in Wuppertal, Germany will deal with the participatory system related to safety and health in Germany. Finally, Kim Yung-mun, a professor at Chonbuk University, will talk about the improvement directions for the participatory system related to safety and health in Korea.

A total of 12 panelists will exchange opinions on the presentations: Chung Yung-suk, bureau chief at the Federation of Korean Trade Union; Kim Tae-hyun, department head from the Korean



Confederation of Trade Unions; Kim Jung-tae, managing director from the Korea Employers Federation; Kim Dong-nam, head of the Industrial Safety Bureau of the Ministry of Labor, and; Kim Yong-su, a professor from the Seoul National University of Technology.

On the other hand, a lecture on safety and health management and policy directions in the shipbuilding industry and mental load at workplaces will be given by a safety and health expert from Germany on November 8 at the seminar room on the 5th floor of the KOSHA building.

(7 November 2006, KOSHA News)

- KOSHA to Focus on Disaster Prevention in 2007

- Seeks to enhance security and improve hazardous workplaces as primary goals

**For 2007, Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA) shall focus on accidents prevention to achieve its management goals, pursue safety management and improve hazardous workplaces, create pleasant work environments, and establish a system for preventing major industrial accidents. The Ministry of Labor and KOSHA held a business plan establishment workshop for 2007 on the 11th and discussed plans for next year in detail. For its plans for 2007, KOSHA shall endeavor to create clean workplaces, provide support for self-regulated safety, and strengthen training alongside the introduction of the Safety Certification System as part of the main goal of "achieving management goals by focusing on accidents prevention." On the other hand, in the construction field, KOSHA plans to provide technical support to prevent falls and overturns, enhance the quality of hazard prevention plan review and checking, strengthen on-site self-regulated safety and health activities, and expand KOSHA 18001's Safety and Health Management System. For the occupational health field, KOSHA shall pursue the more precise management of hazardous chemicals, improve work environments with potential hazards, support health leaders on-site, and provide material support for the improvement of environments where hazardous processes are carried out to "strengthen health management for disease prevention." The Easy Access Safety Education System (EASES) seeks to enhance the level of satisfaction with trainings. Specifically, EASES shall develop learner-oriented curricula, improve learning quality by using realistic materials, and revise the study materials based on the result of the customer demand analysis.**

**(12 December 2006, KOSHA News)**

- **New OSH Materials**

- Safety training materials for small and medium enterprises now available online

- Training materials covering 4 types of accidents including electric shock distributed to workplaces nationwide

**Training materials developed for small and medium enterprises and construction sites experiencing difficulty in conducting training on-site are now available online. Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA; president: Gil-sang PARK) announced that it developed and distributed to**

some 21,000 workplaces nationwide training materials covering the 4 types of jobs that are vulnerable to accidents



The training materials cover 4 areas: electric shock prevention, safety in working in closed areas, fall prevention, and prevention of form or post collapses. The program also presents examples of typical cases involving the 4 topics together with information on causes and prevention to enable each workplace to conduct training depending on each situation. Specific information on the safety of working in closed areas are also provided, with examples of accidents occurring while working inside manholes, food storage tanks, and reactors used at chemical plants presented. The teaching materials are provided to all safety and health managers at workplaces via the email marketing system (EMS). Interested persons may download the materials through WiSH (<http://wish.kosha.net>), the online safety and health materials center operated by KOSHA. (30 December 2006, KOSHA News)

- Accident prevention posters and stickers distributed to foreign workers
- KOSHA distributed occupational disease prevention posters and stickers in 10 languages to foreign workers.

The agency disclosed that it printed and distributed 105,300 copies of industrial accident prevention posters and stickers to foreign workers as part of an accident prevention program targeting some 420,000 foreign workers.



**Considering the percentage of foreign workers by country, the posters and stickers were translated into 10 languages including Chinese and English.**

**In particular, the posters focused on 16 prohibitions, warning, and directional signs foreign workers should know from among the safety and health signs and stickers and on preventing electric shock, occupational diseases, and overturning as well as being caught in a machine.**

**(17 November 2006, KOSHA News)**