

Protecting Worker's Life and Health

KOSHA Newsletter

October 2010

Gathering of Global Safety and Health Experts in Busan, on Oct. 20
KOSHA and KOSOS co-host ICAP 2010 from Oct. 20~22 in Westin Chosun Hotel, Busan

October 23, 2010

○ Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA), jointly with the Korean Society of Safety (KOSOS), held the 1st International Conference on Accident Prevention (ICAP 2010) in Busan where information on accident prevention and safety and health in major advanced countries was exchanged.

- The ICAP 2010, sponsored by the Ministry of Employment and Labor and the Scientific Committee on Accident Prevention of the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH-SCAP), was held from October 20 to 22 at the Westin Chosun Hotel located in Busan.

○ The theme of the ICAP 2010 was ‘Accident Prevention through the Implementation of the Seoul Declaration on Safety and Health at Work.’ Well-known safety and health experts from Korea, England, U.S. and Japan made keynote addresses and special lectures.

- The ‘Seoul Declaration on Safety and Health at Work’ is the first international charter on safety and health, which states the commitments of 46 representatives from the labor, business and government around the world to improve safety and health in their respective areas. The Seoul Declaration was signed in Seoul, Korea, during the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in 2008.

○ About 120 papers on 13 different subjects and topics were presented during the 15 technical sessions, while 55 excellent posters were displayed at the poster session.

○ The ICAP 2010 offered pre- and on-site registration. In total, approximately 315 participants from home and abroad in the field of occupational safety and health attended the Conference.

○ On the first day (Oct. 20), President Kazutaka Kogi of ICOH delivered a keynote speech on “Practical hints from work improvement initiatives for promotion of accident prevention”, Chairman Keith Scott of ICOH-SCAP on “Risk Assessment in Europe”, and President Yutaka Maeda of National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, Japan (NIOSH) on “Research strategy on industrial safety in Japan.”

In addition, President Min-Ki Noh of KOSHA made a keynote speech on “Accomplishments and Challenges of Korea’s Occupational Safety and Health”, and Director General Jae-Yul Lee of Disaster and Safety Control Bureau of the Ministry of Public Administration and Security on “Policy directions of disaster and safety management.”

○ On the last day of the Conference (Oct. 22), five safety and health experts made special lectures.

- Dr. Hongwei Hsiao of the US National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) made a special lecture on “Occupational Injury Prevention Research in the US”, Dr. Takehiro Matsunaga of the Asia Pacific Association of Safety Engineering Societies (APASES) on “Introduction of Safety Research Institutes in Japan and Development of the International Cooperation System”, and Dr. Su Wang of the International Institute of Risk and Safety Management (IIRSM) on “Re-launch of Scientific Committee on Accident Prevention: Re-union of Health and Safety – A case study.”

- In addition, Director General Seong-Kyu Kang of Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute at KOSHA delivered a lecture on “Understanding the Occupational Injury Statistics of Korea”, and professor Doo-Yong Park of Hansung University on “Regulation by Directives and Performance Based Regulation.”

○ Other program of the ICAP 2010 included General Meeting of ICOH-SCAP and technical visits to workplaces with excellent safety and health practices. During the Closing Ceremony, awards were given to the authors of excellent papers.

○ ICOH-SCAP sponsored the ICAP 2010 and it is one of the 35 scientific committees in ICOH, which is an international, non-profit organization on occupational health. ICOH is an organization with 100 years of history with approximately 2,000 members from 93 countries. Korea will host the ICOH Conference in 2015 in Seoul.

○ “We expect that ICAP 2010, attended by experts with advanced knowledge in safety and health as well as accident prevention, will provide a good opportunity to upgrade Korea’s safety and health level and strengthen international safety and health networks,” said Director Joon-Won Lee of the ICAP 2010 Secretariat.

KOSHA-KOSOS co-host ICAP 2010

KOSHA President says “outdated prevention measures failed to reduce the accident rate,
which remain at 0.7%”

October 23, 2010

“The Korean Society has gone through many changes in the past 10 years. However, innovations to the accident prevention system were delayed. As a result, the accident rate remained at 0.7%,” said President Noh, Min-Ki of KOSHA.

In his keynote address during the opening ceremony of the ICAP 2010 held on October 20 at Westin Chosun Hotel in Busan, President Noh pointed out 5 changes in the labor market following the financial crisis in the late 1990s that were not addressed in the occupational safety and health policy.

The 5 changes pointed out by President Noh are: high job mobility due to the government’s flexible employment policy; reduction in the size of workplaces due to outsourcing sought by enterprises; the growing importance of service industry; the increase in the number of workers vulnerable to occupational accidents (female, aged, and foreign workers); and increasing interest in well-being rather than focusing on occupational diseases by the labor and management. President Noh stressed the need to advance safety and health management system at workplaces and to build a tailored policy service with a fundamental safety and health management system.

Major changes to 5-Year Plan for Occupational Accident Prevention

MOEL Minister urges changes to the plan after 7 months of implementation

October 6, 2010

“The 3rd Five-Year Plan for Occupational Accident Prevention is going through an overall change and a dramatic measure will be taken to bring down the accident rate from the current 0.7% to 0.6% by the end of the year” said Bahk, Jae-Wan the Minister of Employment and Labor (MOEL) on October 5.

Minister Bahk’s remarks came during the audit hearing of the MOEL. The Environment and Labor Committee of the National Assembly rebuked the MOEL saying “no measures are being taken despite the fact that occupational accidents are still very serious.” In response, Minister Bahk said, “the amendments to the occupational accident

prevention plan is almost complete and his Ministry will announce the changes very soon.”

The MOEL organized a task force for establishing amendment plans and held the first meeting on the 28th of September. Headed by Deputy Minister Lee, Jae-Kap of Labor relations Policy Office, MOEL, the task force will convene another meeting soon to decide on the details.

The main ideas of the “3rd Five-Year Plan for Occupational Accident Prevention” are to improve laws and systems, to encourage new ideas from the employers and workers, and to focus on the support for vulnerable sectors, such as smaller enterprises or those with many non-regular workers. Mr. Kim, In-Gon of Occupational Safety and Health Policy Division of MOEL pledged to “strengthen regulation policies so that the existing plans can effectively be adopted at the site, and operate user-based accident prevention activities.”

ILO Workshop to Improve Working and Employment Conditions

KOSHA holds a joint workshop with the ILO starting on Sept. 27

September 27, 2010

With the topic “Improving Working and Employment Conditions”, Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA) held a joint workshop with the International Labor Organization (ILO) from Sept. 27 to Oct. 1. The workshop was held in the conference room of KOSHA headquarters in Bupyeong-gu, Incheon.

A total of 8 speakers presented 15 themes at this workshop, introducing various domestic and overseas cases for improving work environment and conditions. In addition, Work Improvements in Small Enterprise (WISE) program, which aims to enhance work environment in small-scale workplaces, is also introduced.

Three ILO experts gave presentations about the ILO’s standards on occupational safety and health, as well as working conditions. In addition, presentations were made on small construction sites, stress of domestic workers, working hours, work environment enhancement plans, etc.

- From Korea, KOSHA experts and safety and health specialists gave lectures about Korea’s industrial safety and health systems, technical support systems, and risk assessment methods. There was a photo exhibition to demonstrate excellent cases of working and employment conditions improvements.

The Mongolian Government Expresses Appreciation toward Korea for Safety and Health Efforts

President Noh, Min-Ki of KOSHA receives a Medal from Mongolia on Sep. 3

September 3, 2010

○ The Mongolian government expressed gratitude to Korea for helping to improve the country’s occupational safety and health level.

○ President Noh, Min-Ki of Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA) received a Medal on September 3 from the Mongolian government’s General Agency for Specialized Inspection (GASI) in Ulan Bator, Mongolia.

○ This Medal was given in recognition of the meritorious service provided by KOSHA in supporting Mongolia’s industrial safety and health.

- In particular, technical support and consultations provided by KOSHA to build Mongolia's occupational safety and health system, as well as KOSHA's contribution in enacting Mongolia's Occupational Safety and Health Act were highly recognized.

○ As part of the international cooperation project, KOSHA concluded an MOU with Mongolia's National College of Medicine in 1999, and another cooperative arrangement with Mongolia's Ministry of Social Welfare and Labor in 2003, which takes charge of establishing safety and health policies. So far, KOSHA has provided 9 technical consulting services in Mongolia and has invited a total of 82 industrial safety and health experts on eight occasions to Korea to give them safety and health trainings.

○ During the visit, KOSHA concluded an MOU with GASI – a Mongolian government agency in charge of labor inspection – and agreed to further expand its technical support toward Mongolia.

○ “At a time when Korea's national standing is being heightened partly thanks to the hosting of G20 Summit, the Medal received by the Mongolian government is very meaningful as that proves Korea's higher status in the area of occupational safety and health. Through continued international cooperative projects, KOSHA will further enhance the capability of safety and health across the globe,” said an official from KOSHA.

Korea Joins Hands with China to Improve Occupational Safety and Health

KOSHA concluded an MOU with China on Aug. 30 for mutual cooperation
in occupational safety and health

September 2, 2010

○ Korea and China will cooperate to improve the safety and health of workers in the two countries.

○ On Aug. 30 (Mon), Korea Occupational safety and Health Agency (KOSHA; President: Noh, Min-Ki) signed an MOU for technical cooperation in occupational safety and health at the State Administration of Work Safety (SAWS; Vice Minister: Liang Jiakun) in Beijing, China. The MOU is aimed at improving the safety and health level of workplaces in the two countries.

* SAWS: A Chinese agency in charge of general supervision of occupational safety and health.

○ Based on the agreement, the two countries agreed to expand the exchange of industrial safety and health experts to promote the level of safety and health. Also they will cooperate to jointly develop related training materials and to share technical information.

- In connection with this, the two countries will designate persons who will be responsible for such work areas. Also, evaluation meetings will be held to assess the progress on the cooperative project, which will in turn raise the effectiveness of the collaboration between China and Korea.

○ Previously, KOSHA invited Chinese safety and health experts to Korea for training programs and workshops. In addition, experts were dispatched to China to provide technical consultations. However, all of the collaborative activities of the past have been done as a part of international cooperation projects of the ILO.

- The signing of this agreement has provided a foundation for KOSHA to pursue direct and systematic cooperative projects with China.

Korea's First International Journal on Occupational Safety and Health

OSHRI-KOSHA publishes the first volume of "SH@W"

September 30, 2010

○ An international journal was published in Korea, which contains information and trends on the latest safety and health research across the globe.

○ Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute (Director General Kang, Seong-Kyu) of Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHRI-KOSHA) published the first edition of 「SH@W」 on Sep. 30, Korea's first international journal on safety and health.

○ 「SH@W」 is the abbreviation for 'Safety and Health at Work,' and various research reports, trends, and case studies will be featured in the journal.

○ This international journal is published in English on a quarterly basis and each issue will present approximately 12 research papers.

- Key members of the editorial board include: Director General Harri Vainio of the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH), Professor David Koh of the National Singapore University for Occupational Medicine section, Director Jukka Takala of EU OSHA for Occupational Safety section, Dr. Nils Plato from the Scientific Committee on Industrial Hygiene of International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) for Occupational Hygiene section, and Dr. Max Lum of National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) for Risk Communication section.

○ The Editorial Board is composed of 58 safety and health experts around the country and examines the professionalism and scientific significance of the contributed papers. OSHRI launched its website (www.e-shaw.org) to facilitate an online search for papers. Also, the contribution of the papers and the reviews are also available through the website.

Significant Annual Increase in Occupational Accidents in Service Industry

150% increase during the past decade – Service industry accounts for 1/3 of all occupational accidents

September 20, 2010

Occupational accidents in the service industry are on the rise every year. Of all occupational accident casualties last year (99,800), service industry accounted for 33,900 or 34.7% of the total. Compared with 13,100 casualties recorded in 2000, accidents in the service industry increased 159.2% during the past 10 years.

The service industry's share in the overall occupational accidents was the highest compared to other industries. It was 1%p higher than the manufacturing industry (33.7%), and 13.2%p higher than the construction industry (21.5%).

The service industry, having close relations with people's daily life, has grown. The industry employs 6 million workers, accounting for 43% of the total workforce. Also, there are 970,000 service industry workplaces, which take up 62% of all workplaces.

However, behind the growth of the service industry, which provides convenience and affluence to the public, is a rapid increase in the number of accidents. The fact that the service industry accounts for more than one-third of all

casualties indicates a major flaw in occupational safety.

“The main cause of the rise in accidents is the lack of systematic safety and health support. It is difficult to offer safety and health services as many workplaces suspend or shutdown their business quite often,” said an official from KOSHA.

Furthermore, since 2000 when the coverage for occupational accident compensation widened to all workplaces with one or more workers, many accident cases from small-sized service industry workplaces are being reported to the authorities.

Only recently, the government started accident prevention activities for the service industry. The Korea Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) and Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA) have just started to realize that aggressive interventions are necessary to reduce the number of overall occupational accidents in the country.

“Only when the general public show interest in the safety of service industry, on top of the safety practices of employers and workers, the industry’s accidents can be reduced,” said Director Rhee, Kyu-Nam of Service Industry Department at KOSHA.

Safety and Health Leadership Management in Steel Industry

MOEL and KOSHA launch “Steel Industry Safety and Health Leadership Group” with key leaders in the industry

September 14, 2010

○ Amidst the growing importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR), what grabbed the eyes of public attention is the participation of the corporate leaders in the safety and health management activities.

○ Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA; President: Noh, Min-Ki) held a ceremony to launch ‘Steel Industry Safety and Health Leadership Group’ at POSCO Center in Daechi-dong, Seoul at 10:30 on September 15. The ceremony was attended by the leaders of Korea’s five major steel makers (POSCO, Hyundai Steel, Dongkuk Steel Mill, Dongbu Steel and Hyundai HYSCO), Korea Iron & Steel Association, and the officials from the Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL).

* Members of the 5 Leadership Group steel makers: POSCO’s Pohang and Gwangyang steel mills, Dangjin mill of Hyundai Steel, Pohang steel mill of Dongkuk Steel, Asan Bay mill of Dongbu Steel and the Dangjin, Suncheon and Ulsan mills of Hyundai HYSCO.

○ The ‘Steel Industry Safety and Health Leadership Group’ is composed of the plant managers and officers in charge of safety in the five steel companies. Representatives from the workplaces and the government will create the partnership and the CEOs will make joint efforts to improve the level of safety and health.

- To this end, the Leadership Group will hold annual meetings jointly with the Korea Iron & Steel Association, which has 35 domestic steel makers and other related companies as its members. During the annual meetings, accident prevention measures, related activities, and future plans will be discussed.

○ Every year, more than 3,000 casualties occur in Korea’s steel industry. In 2009, accident rate of the industry was 1.63%, which is almost 2 times the average accident rate (0.7%) of all industries.

- In particular, the number of casualties recorded as of July, 2010 was 1,802, a year-on-year increase of 177 persons.

○ During the launching ceremony that day, participants presented the “Declaration for Steel Industry Safety and Health Leadership” and promised to cooperate in the making and development of the safety and health management system.

○ The participation of corporate leaders in the safety and health management activities is spreading to many industries. On September 9, representatives from 11 manufacturing plants of the five major finished carmakers launched ‘Auto Industry Safety and Health Leadership Group’. Also, in March and July this year, seven institutes including those in the chemical industry announced ‘Process Safety Leadership’, while 9 major shipbuilders, including Hyundai Heavy Industries declared ‘Shipbuilding Industry Safety and Health Leadership’.

○ “Participation by the management or leaders is essential to improve the safety and health level of industries in Korea. The declaration of the management’s safety and health leadership and the inauguration of the group are expected to contribute to the advancement of the domestic safety and health management system,” said an official from KOSHA.

Korean-made Chemical Safety Data available to industrial sites

OSHRI-KOSHA works to improve MSDS

September 20, 2010

○ Information on chemical substances used at industrial sites will be provided in an easy-to-understand format.

○ The Occupational Safety & Health Research Institute of Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHRI-KOSHA; Director General Kang, Seong-Kyu) will improve the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), covering 11,377 types of chemicals used at various industrial sites, into a standard Korean style and provide the information to industrial sites through the internet.

※ MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet): A manual on the handling of chemical substances. This contains information about the name, hazards, risks, handling care, and emergency measures.

The Article 41 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act stipulates that workplaces that deal with chemical substances are required to produce MSDS and make it available to workers.

○ Up to now, Korea used the same MSDS produced in other countries, which made it difficult to adopt them in domestic industrial sites. However, the MSDS has been localized to better suit the situation in Korea.

○ For example, the previous MSDS simply states ‘in case of contact with chemical substances, wash in flowing water’. However, the improved version gives more detailed advice as ‘when in contact with a chemical substance, immediately wipe it out from the skin and wash your skin and eyes in flowing water for at least 20 minutes’.

- In addition, the MSDS in Korean language is free from any international disputes concerning copyright issues. The MSDS Korea used in the past had information published in other country, which may trigger disputes over copyright issues. However, that is no longer the case when Korea uses the MSDS in its own language.

○ Furthermore, the Korean MSDS standards will be of help to chemical substance manufacturing, importing,

exporting and distributing companies by enabling the texts to be written in connection with the UN transport number, a grade mark granted by the United Nations to ensure safe distribution of chemical substances.