ILO World Day for Safety and Health at Work
## 28 April 2011

OSH management system:
A tool for continual improvement

What is an Occupational Safety and Health Management System (OSHMS)?

Is a comprehensive and systematic method of assessing and improving performance in the prevention of workplace incidents, accidents and diseases.

Based on the principle of the Deming Cycle (PDCA) « Plan-Do-Check-Act » designed in the 1950's monitors business' performance on a continual basis:

> Plan: allocation of resources, skills, organization of the system, hazard identification and risk assessment

> Do: implementation of the OSH programme

> Check: measure both the active and reactive performance of the programme

> Act: review of the system in the context of continual improvement
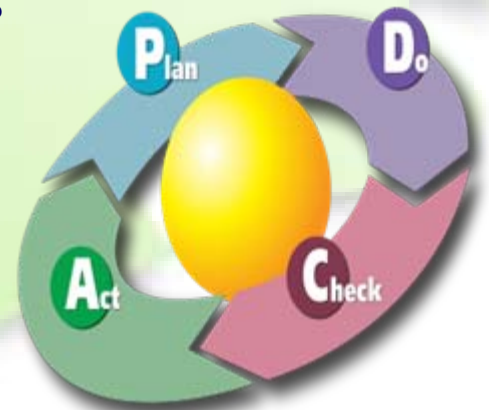
OSH risk assessment and management: The basis

The main purpose of occupational safety and health (OSH) is the management of occupational risks for the prevention of occupational injuries and diseases.

Occupational risk assessment and management implies the anticipation recognition, evaluation and control of hazards and risks that can impair the health and well-being of workers.

Risk management is an integral part of an occupational safety and health management system (OSHMS).

Risk assessment and management: 5 steps for prevention

Step 1   **Identify the hazards**

Step 2   **Decide who might be harmed and how**

Step 3   **Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions**

Step 4   **Record your findings and implement them**

**Step 5**   **Review your assessment and update if necessary**

A systematic approach to the management of OSH: Tailoring to the needs of the enteprise

➤ A risk assessment procedure should be tailored to the size and activity of the enterprise, available resources and skills.

➤ Small scale enterprises can carry out an effective risk assessment through:

  ➢ the use of safety data sheets prior to purchase of products and equipment,
  ➢ Hazards and risks management,
  ➢ Adequate training.

➤ Industrialization has lead to more complex and sophisticated risk assessment and management methods such as the OSHMS.

➤ A major hazard installation, such as a petrochemical plant will require highly complex risk assessment methods and mobilize a high level of resources and skills.

The path to safety and health management systems (OSHMS)

➢ **The Robens Report (1972, UK) on OSH: Shift from industry-specific regulations to framework legislation for all industries and workers (more systemic approach to OSH);**

➢ **ILO OSH Convention, 1981, (No.155) and Recommendation (No.164):Emphasis to the tripartite participation in the implementation of OSH policy and practice at national and enterprise level;**

➢ **ILO Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO-OSH 2001): Unique international model, compatible with other standards and guides on management systems reflecting the ILO's tripartite approach;**

➢ **Many countries develop their own OSHMS guidelines linked to regulatory frameworks or for voluntary application.**
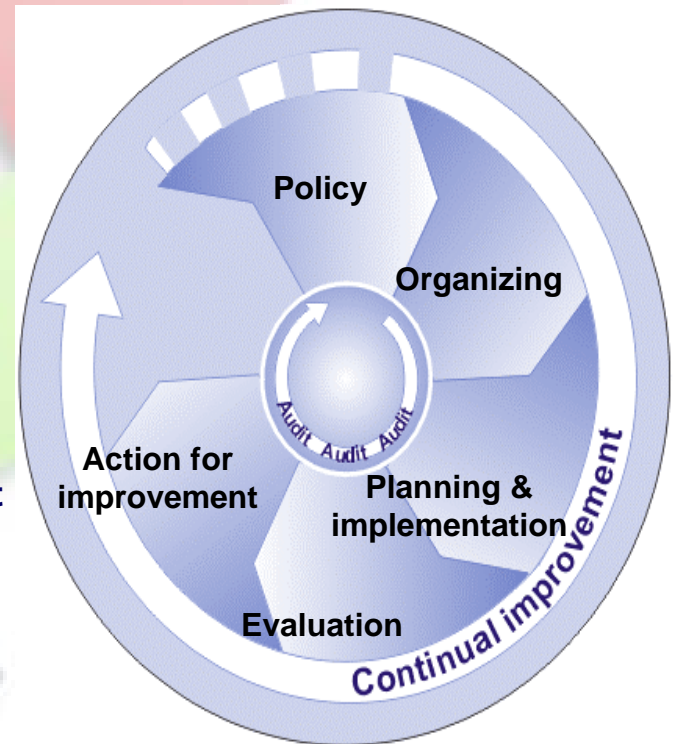
OSHMS at national level

➤ **ILO Convention, 2006, (No.187) on a Promotional Framework for OSH:**
  Two fundamental concepts:

  • **Development and maintenance of a preventative safety and health culture,**
  • **Application at the national level of a management systems approach to OSH.**

A national management system incorporates an integrated mechanism for continual improvement:

  • **A national OSH policy formulated in consultation with representative organizations of employers and workers;**
  • **A national OSH system to implement the policy and strategy;**
  • **A national OSH programme to implement them based on a profile (national diagnostic);**
  • **A mechanism to review the outcomes of the national programme and improve its implementation.**

An OSHMS approach at national level can only be successful if government, employers, workers and their representatives participate fully in its implementation through social dialogue and cooperation.

OSHMS at the organization (enterprise level)

➢ **The implementation of an OSHMS is effective in:**

- • **meeting the organization's OSH policy and objective;**

- • **enabling the organization to achieve compliance with relevant national laws and regulations;**

- • **fulfilling the goals of continual improvement and best OSH practice.**

➢ **The success in the implementation of an OSHMS depends in the full participation of workers and their representatives in the management of OSH measures, through effective social dialogue and cooperation in the context of bipartite safety and health committees or collective agreements.**

OSHMS and high risk sectors

➢ **Construction industry: An OSHMS is an effective tool for the coherent integration of the OSH measures involving all enterprises and all workers in a worksite.**

➢ **Chemical and energy industries: An OSHMS formalizes the tools to identify potential failure modes, predict consequences, and to develop preventive measures and effective emergency plans.**

➢ **Nanotechnologies: The application of an OSHMS allows to evaluate the impact on health and the environment of nanomaterials, design hazards' classification, risk assessment and management measures; and to establish regulatory measures for industrial production and use.**

Strengths of OSHMS

- Integrating and aligning OSH requirements and objectives into the organization systems

- Harmonizing OSH requirements with other requirements such as environment requirements;

- Providing a framework to establish an OSH programme;

- Improving communication mechanisms, policies, procedures, programmes and objectives.

- Establishing an environment for a preventative safety and health culture;

- Strengthening social dialogue;

- Distributing OSH responsibilities among managers, employees and workers;

- Adapting to size & activity of organizations and types of hazards encountered.;

- Establishing a continuous improvement framework;

- Providing an auditable baseline for performance evaluation;

Limitations of OSHMS

An OSHMS will not be effective when:

➢ It focuses on the paperwork requirements of a formal OSHMS rather than people needs.

➢ There are imbalances between the measures of the quality, OSH and environment systems with the consequent inequalities in focus.

➢ Careful planning and communication for the introduction of an OSHMS programme is lacking as it raises suspicion about it and resistance to changes.

➢ The greater emphasis on safety rather than health in certain OSHMS raises the risk of missing the onset of occupational diseases.

➢ Resources required to set up an OSHMS are not object of a realistic appraisal of overall costs concerning the implementation, such as time, skills and human resources necessary to install and run the system.

Key elements of a good OSHMS

➢ **A careful assessment of the organization's needs carried out in relations to its means;**

➢ **Adaptation of the OSHMS accordingly;**

➢ **System focused on performance of preventive and protective measures;**

➢ **System designed to improve rather than to justify itself;**

➢ **Audits contributing to the continual improvement process;**

➢ **OSHMS including a review of regulatory requirements and updated regularly to integrate them;**

➢ **Training for the implementation of the OSHMS is carried out on a continuous basis at all levels;**

➢ **Communication channels go both ways to be effective;**

➢ **Social dialogue is effective;**

➢ **Responsibilities of stakeholders to run the system are defined;**

➢ **Labour inspectors are adequately trained to ensure that OSHMS conform to national laws and regulations;**

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Join us in the celebration of the World Day for Safety and Health at Work!
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