

Productivity is tied to occupational health

THE Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) formulates a strategic plan every five years to improve the safety and health of the workforce in the country. The plan is known as the Occupational Safety and Health Master Plan (OSHMP). The current plan is OSHMP2025 for the period from 2020 to 2025.

Currently, industries are more aware of the outcomes and effects of poor occupational safety when people get injured in the workplace rather than how it could affect workers' well-being. Occupational health is the science and art of anticipating, recognising, evaluating and controlling workplace environmental factors or stresses that may cause sickness, injuries or significant discomfort to workers.

Occupational health is important

because it can prevent potential problems which can have short and long-term effects on the health and well-being of the worker.

Management should recognise the occupational health hazards in their workplaces. To do so, they could seek the services of occupational hygienists to conduct a workplace analysis. The occupational health hazards identified by the hygienist should then be made known to the workers through worker awareness sessions.

Good occupational health awareness is the habit of thinking about the possibility that one could get ill or suffer an injury before starting a task. It is the proactive practice of self-protection. Being constantly aware of how the work is executed and being able to recognise hazards is critical in mitigating health-related risks.

Under OSHMP2025, DOSH has formed an Industrial Health Catalyst Committee (IH2C) with representatives from various industries. IH2C is now working to improve worker awareness of the health effects of, for instance, exposure to chemicals and noise, as well as ergonomic issues through its awareness programmes.

Effective occupational health in the workplace is important because it contributes to a healthy workforce which is more productive as workers are less likely to fall ill. When employees are absent from work because of illness or injury, employers would suffer productivity and economic losses.

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