

## Emergency Response of "Occupational Accident Trauma Management" to Tower Crane Collapse

Mitigation of Psychological Shock from Fatal Accident and Preventive Measure for Secondary occupational accident

- The Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) and KOHSA **conducts investigation into causes for fatal occupational accident by organizing a joint investigation task force (17 staff members)** concerning the tower crane collapse accident leaving 3 fatalities and 2 injured, which occurred at Uijeongbu construction site on October 10 (Tuesday).
- At the same time, the agency announced that it is currently taking **emergency responsive measures** in order to help the workers who either experienced or witnessed the devastating occupational accident **overcoming anxiety disorders caused by trauma** starting on October 11 (Wednesday) in parallel with preventive measures against significant occupational accidents of tower crane which is in the process of development by the MOEL along with relevant authorities.
- **The subjects for management**<sup>①</sup> are those who were found necessary for trauma management during the course of investigation into causes of fatal occupational accidents,

including **the workers engaging in disassembly work of tower crane, workers who witnessed the accident and personnel in charge of workplace safety and health;** and the **Trauma Management Program**<sup>③</sup> on occupational accidents is currently implemented through Gyeonggi Bukbu Regional Workers' Health Center<sup>②</sup>.

- ① A total of 19 people from the workers at the site: 2 survivors, 4 witnesses, 1 worker engaging in disassembly work of tower crane and other personnel of workplace safety and health management;
  - ② It is an organization that provides various occupational health services through full-time experts, including medical specialists, nurses, occupational environment experts, counseling psychologists and physical therapists. Currently, a total of 21 organizations are currently in operation nationwide where 165,000 people (135,000 workers from a workplace with 50 workers or less) were benefited from the center as of 2016.
  - ③ Structure of Program: Current state investigation (identification of subjects & decision on strategy of psychological consultation) → Preliminary consultation (examination of shock intensity from accident & psychological consultation) → Secondary consultation (reexamination, confirmation of improvement: referral to professional treatment & guidance on application for occupational accidents when necessary) → Follow-up management (telephone or visit) → Additional consultation if deemed necessary
- Most of all, in order not to miss out the **golden time for trauma management** depending on psychological response changes by periods\*, **medical specialists and psychological**

consultation experts were deployed to ensure initial stabilization of the subjects **within less than 7 days from the accident occurred**, and the program will continue its operation until December, 2017.

\* **Emergency response period** (within less than 7 days from occupational accident occurred: Training & guidance)→**Initial response period** (8 days to 1 month from occupational accident occurred: Evaluation & consultation)→**Intermediate response period** (1 to 3 months from occupational accident occurred: Observation, verification & consultation)→**Post response period** (3 months after occupational accident occurred: Follow-up observation)

□ Moreover, KOSHA currently conducts a **pilot operation of "Trauma Management on occupational accidents"** for workplaces at the region of Daegu, Gyeongbuk and Busan from September 12, and it plans to **expand the operation throughout the nation in November** after verifying for any concerning issues.

○ An official of KOSHA insisted the **importance of support for workers** to overcome shocks and anxiety disorders experiencing from devastating occupational accidents suffered by fellow workers and eventually **return to normal life**.

○ The official also said, "KOSHA plans to **manage mental health issues for workers** including prevention of trauma from occupational accidents **in addition to investigation into causes of fatal occupational accidents**."

Reference 1

Definition of Occupational Accident Trauma & Management System

What is occupational accident trauma (PTSD)?

❖ **Definition**

- Post-traumatic stress disorder (limited to the symptoms arising after occupational accident occurs), anxiety disorder that manifests after witnessing severe or extremely dangerous injuries or having first-hand experience of incident (accident)

❖ **Symptoms & Characteristics**

- Patients tend to repeatedly recall trauma from occupational accidents or disturbing scenes or to avoid or feel indifferent to the trauma-related situations.  
- Patients easily get startled due to consistent nerve arousal and show deteriorated focus, sleep disorder and sensitive reactions; and when becoming more serious, it could lead to panic disorder, seizure and extreme anxiety.  
- Onset of PTST mostly becomes apparent immediately after an accident occurs; however, there are cases where it outbreaks a few years or decades later, and PTSD has characteristics that it outbreaks constantly, repeatedly and complexly.

<Occupational Accident Trauma Management System>



