

2009 Newsletter

HOME > > In Focus > Newsletter > 2009 Newsletter



- **Top Issues**

- Korea Won the Bid to Host the 2015 ICOH Congress

At the 29th International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) Congress held in South Africa on March 26, Seoul won the bid for the 31st ICOH Congress in 2015, according to KOSHA (the Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency). Held triennially, the ICOH Congress is the largest international event for occupational health professionals. Through exchange of information and policies related to workers' health protection and prevention of occupational diseases, ICOH contributes to workers' health around the world.

On March 26, the ICOH board selected Seoul in Korea from the three candidates including, Australia and Ireland as the venue for the 31st congress. By holding the 2015 ICOH Congress Korea is expected to improve the international image of its occupational health field and also strengthen its national competitiveness. KOSHA had organized the bid secretariat and pooled all strength by conducting and various activities like forums with experts from the private, government, and academic sectors. KOSHA built a promotion booth at the 29th Congress in South Africa and carried out PR activities to help international health professionals understand the advantages of Korea as the congress venue.

At the 29th congress in South Africa, international occupational safety and health experts participated in seminars and academic events on the theme of 'Occupational Health ? Basic Rights in Workplace, Assets of Society.' The 30th congress will be held in Monterey, Mexico in 2012.

- Sweeping Regulation Reform - Improvement Occupational Safety Rules
- Ministry of Labor Announced a Plan to Detailed Systems in 2009

The Ministry of Labor is pursuing institutional improvements by devising comprehensive reform plans including practical rules of occupational safety and health and new applications for asbestos removal.

On March 9, the Ministry announced the '2009 Regulation Reform Plan in the Labor Sector' containing the 2008 performance and the 2009 plan.

According to the plan, they will rationalize the occupational safety and health standard system to come up with detailed rules by business types, hazards and risks.

To achieve this, the Ministry will complete the empirical surveys and studies this year and prepare the revised bill in December. The number of workplaces obligated to announce the accident rates will

also be practically changed. While there were many requirements of many workplaces under the obligation, the degree and scale of harm and danger in each workplace is not taken into consideration. This causes resistance from companies and reduces the impact of the official announcement. Against this backdrop, the Ministry will improve the system to reduce the number of workplaces under obligation to publicize the death rate and scales of harm.

The Ministry of Labor announced that the application process for the removal of asbestos will be changed from a license system to a report system. The Ministry reported that the license system was problematic as inspection and on-site investigation and on-the-spot confirmations, created delays and caused complaints. The new report system is expected to shorten the process and eliminate complaints as it introduces agents with public trust and expertise who can handle the operation simply.

To create a more flexible application of occupational safety and health training the Ministry will adjust training hours in consideration of the degree of risk of each work activity, the worker's skill, and the training method. The existing system has a one-size-fits-all schedule, and has been proven inefficient.

The Ministry also announced action plans related to a new scope of compensation for workers in the construction and machinery sectors, new compensation system for pneumoconiosis patients, the withdrawal of the report duty for assignment of safety and health managers, a one-stop report system for result of working environment measurement and special medical check-ups, expansion of workplaces to build OSH rules and abolition of limits on the scope of operation by proxy OSH management organizations.

- **Korea's OSH News**

- 13 Compulsory Certification Marks Integrated into KC Mark
 - Ministry of Knowledge Economy, New Certification System Starts from July.

By referring to a single certification mark, customers will be able to find high quality products.

Under the revision of the National Standards Act, the Ministry of Knowledge Economy announced on March 26 that they will introduce the 'National Certification Marks Integration System' which will unify the 13 compulsory certification marks previously operated by the Ministry and other organizations. The system will simplify the certification procedure managed by the Ministry and will commence in July this year.

The national certification marks integration system will be extended to cover all government departments from January 1, 2011.

According to the Ministry of Knowledge Economy, by unifying the 13 compulsory certification marks

into the KC mark, confusion over multiple certification marks attached to products will be eliminated. Customers will save time in choosing products and be able to select quality products by checking a single mark.

The reduction of 20 types of certification procedures into 9 that conform to international standards will benefit local businesses by reducing expenses, and also create an increase in sales totaling 7.3 trillion won and employment by 68,000 people.

Since the Ministry announced the detailed plan last August, it has been revising related laws. Seven out of eight certification systems of the Ministry are already prepared and the revision of Enforcement Regulation on Liquefied Petroleum Gas has also been completed, ready for implementation on July 1.

The safety certification and inspection systems managed by the Labor Ministry to cover harmful or dangerous machines and equipment will be introduced in July in accordance with the KC mark certification system.

- Inspection on 120,000 Workplaces
- from April to June by Labor Ministry & KOSHA

The government will survey the work environments of over 120,000 workplaces with dangerous facilities and hazardous chemicals.

The announcement was made by CEO, Min-ki Noh of KOSHA, at a briefing on the survey on the status of working environment held in the Labor Ministry on the 18th.

The survey on businesses nationwide will be carried out for six months period between April 1 and September 30. It will produce the general data required to implement an occupational accident prevention policy and program.

Survey agencies will visit and examine 120,000 hazardous workplaces covered by the industrial accident compensation insurance as of January 1, 2009.

The survey will cover eight types of hazardous operations including those with noise and dust, 18 types of dangerous machines and facilities, 710 harmful chemicals, work status, and the status of vulnerable workers.

The results will be developed into an integrated database along with results of special health examinations and work environment measurement to offer advanced occupational health services such as diagnose treat occupational diseases in early stages.

The database will help manage workplaces vulnerable occupational diseases, containing information on the degree of hazards in each workplace and results of workers' health examinations.

CEO Noh said, "The industrial accident rate has long been stagnant at around 0.7% and to lower the rate, we need to clearly understand the current status of workplaces." He added, "to this end, we ask for support by for our business owners work to build the comprehensive database for industrial

disaster prevention."

The survey has been held every five years since 1993 by the Ministry of Labor and KOSHA in accordance with the article 81 on survey on the status of exposure to hazards at work of enforcement decree of the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

- **Clean Project, Expanded Scope and More Responsibilities by Business Owners**
 - Ministry of Labor, Improved Regulations from the 13th

The Clean Project, which supports the improvement of work environments for small businesses with less than 50 employees, has been revised to bring greater benefits to more workplaces while asking for more responsibilities by business owners.

The Ministry of Labor will officially announce and execute these revised regulations on loan and support for accident prevention facilities on March 13.

The Ministry decided to push forward on the clean workplace support program in two directions: the Clean Workplace Certification and the Elimination of Risks of the Three Major Industrial Accidents. The former aims to reduce occupational hazards and risks in general and the later focuses on crushing, tripping and fall accidents.

The scope of the program was expanded from the manufacturing industry with less than 50 employees to all industries with less than 50 employees, covering whole industries except the construction. On the other hand, eligibility was changed from voluntary application to voluntary application among workplaces subject to monitoring, inspection, and technical supports designated by the Ministry of Labor, KOSHA, or private accident prevention agencies to improve efficiency. Limits on the fund and qualifications for the support have been newly established to prevent moral hazards among of business owners.

The support limit changed from a 'maximum 30 million won (40 million won for harmful and dangerous businesses)' to a maximum 30 million won for the Clean Workplace Certification and a maximum 10 million won for the Elimination of Risks of the Three Major Industrial Accidents. For the Clean Workplace Certification, the business owner must shoulder 20% of the expenses and for the Elimination of Risks of the Three Major Industrial Accident, 50%.

The minimum investment is the new condition made under this revision and, it is 5 million won for the Accreditation and 2 million won for the Elimination. Meanwhile, business owners will have to pay at least 1 million won.

The maintenance period for the clean workplace+ program was extended from 1 year to 2 years to offer more effective industrial disease prevention support.

- **KOSHA News**

- **Discount to Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Subscribers with Less Than 20 Employees**
 - KOSHA, Full Support for Businesses with Less Than 10 Employees within 200,000 won Limit

KOSHA is supporting fees for the safety inspection of 12 types of hazardous mechanical equipment including presses.

On March 19, KOSHA announced that it will exempt or reduce safety inspection fees in proportion to the size of the workplace in order to relieve the financial burden on small businesses with less than 20 employees.

The exemption or reduction of safety inspection fee applies to 12 types of machines, equipment, and facilities, including presses, cutters, cranes, lifts, pressure vessels, gondolas, local ventilation systems, centrifuges, chemical facilities, drying facilities, rollers, and injection molders. Enterprises with industrial accident compensation insurance are eligible for the support.

The total amount of the safety inspection fee will be exempted within the limit of 200,000 won for businesses with less than 10 employees and a 50% discount within 200,000 won for businesses with 10 to 20 employees.

When applying for the exemption or discount of safety inspection fees, the company shall have all dangerous machines, equipment, and facilities inspected. The applications should be sent to KOSHA, Korea Industrial Safety Association, and Korea Elevator Safety Technology Institute.

The safety inspection system makes sure that businesses with dangerous machines, equipment, and facilities are maintaining safety. The inspection is applied to 12 types of machines including presses and cranes. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Act, any business installing dangerous machines, equipment, and facilities in its workplace must have the first safety inspection within three years.

Cranes, lifts, and gondolas used on construction sites must have a safety inspection every six months from the date of initial installation.

- Mothers' Safety Patrol - 'Safety Mamma Mia' Established
- Gyeongin Regional Office and Incheon Citizen's Coalition for Safety Support 5000 small businesses

Mothers' safety patrol, 'Safety Mamma Mia' was launched to reduce industrial accidents in Seoul and Incheon regions.

The patrol is comprised of women who are the members of the Incheon Citizen's Coalition for Safety and they will visit small businesses to provide education on safety and health.

The Gyeongin Regional Office of KOSHA held the organization's inaugural ceremony of 'Safety Mamma Mia' on March 26.

The ceremony was held in accordance with the agreement of cooperation between KOSHA's the Regional Office and Incheon Citizen's Coalition for Safety to prevent industrial accidents in Incheon regions. Members received Safety Patrol Member Identification Cards and materials required for patrol. Members will also have safety and health training to prepare for their visit to companies. Director General Yong-guk Kim of the office said, "Mothers, who offer endless love, will provide help. This is a new approach in accident prevention programs, and it will make a great contribution to establishing a culture of safety in Incheon."

- Over 400 Contents to Prevent Accident on Construction Sites

- KOSHA Decides to Develop Contents with 14 Large Construction Companies

KOSHA and 14 large construction companies are going to develop over 400 content materials on accident prevention at construction sites.

On March 12, KOSHA held the content development workshop with about 30 participants large construction companies.

The workshop was held to encourage construction companies to participate in the joint efforts to create the content with KOSHA in the joint contents development. It included the evaluation of the contents co-developed in 2008 and discussions on a constructive body.

At the meeting, the participants discussed ways of expanding the program in 2009. In addition, four of the participants were awarded for their contributions to creating useful content.

This year, KOSHA is planning to add another four large construction companies to the existing 10 companies in the program and to create more than 400 educational materials. To this end, the agency is planning to invite enterprises nationwide to contribute content on safety and health at work.

Last year, the council consisting of major construction companies developed 36 videos and 48 educational publications.

- Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute Designated as Co-operating Organization for Standards Development in 2 Areas Including Explosion Proof Electrical Facilities

- National Standards for the Safety of Explosion Proof Electrical Facilities and Machineries

As of March 10, the Korean Agency for Technology Standards (KATS) designated the Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute (OSHRI) of KOSHA as the Co-operating Organization for Standards Development (COSD) for Explosion Proof Electrical Facilities and Machinery.

Co-operating Organization for Standards Development (COSD) is an organization entrusted to develop and manage national standards, and KATS designates as COSD organizations with expertise and representation in related areas.

OSHRI will develop and manage national standards including the preparation, establishment, and revision of standards and guidelines in the areas of explosion proof electrical facilities and safety of machinery.

- KOSHA - Korea Land Corporation, Agreement on Accident Prevention at Construction Sites

- Expected to Enhance Safety Level

KOSHA, which is responsible for safety and health at work, has entered into a cooperative relationship with the Korea Land Corporation(KLC), which is in charge of large-scale construction

orders.

Considering the influence of clients on construction sites, the partnership between the two organizations is expected to bring great synergy effects.

KOSHA and the KLC (CEO Jong-sang Lee) signed a cooperation agreement for prevention of accidents among construction workers at the Land and Urban Institute in Daejeon on March 5. CEO Min-ki Noh of KOSHA and his counterpart Lee expected that the agreement would help the KLC manage construction sites in a more systemic way.

According to the agreement, KOSHA and the KLC will cooperate to ▲ analyze and provide accident data related with constructions ordered by the KLC ▲ perform joint safety and health inspections and training ▲ develop and distribute technical data on accident prevention ▲ organize meeting on best practices of safety activities and ▲ promote the introduction of the KOSHA 18001 certification system, which certify worksites with good management system of safety and health.

The two organizations will also promote joint campaigns and safety activities to enhance the levels of safety on construction sites.

CEO Noh said, "through this agreement, we expect that Korea Land Corporation will be able to make a substantial contribution to industrial accident prevention through full support for safety and health of construction companies in which they engage." He added, "we will continue to expand this type of cooperation to reduce industrial accidents further."

In November last year, KOSHA also signed an agreement for construction accident prevention with the Korea Expressway Corporation which is in charge of expressway construction in Korea and is currently promoting joint safety inspection and campaigns.

- **Statistics**

- Emergency - Sharp Increase of Deaths This Year
 - Labor Ministry Announced Industrial Accidents Status as of End of January

This year's first record of industrial accidents has been released.

The number of victims and accidents has decreased compared with the same period last year.

However, the prospects are gloomy due to a higher death rate and a fatality rate per 10,000 people.

The Ministry of Labor announced these statistics as of the end of January on the 6th.

The number of victims was 6,942 which is a 1,260 drop from the same period last year and the accident rate was 0.05% which also stepped down by 0.01%P.

On the other hand, the deaths by accident increased by 15 to 117 and deaths by both accidents and disease went up to 168 - an increase of 30 persons or a 21.7% rise compared year on year.

The death rate by accident was 0.09 which increased by 0.01P. The death rate including death by disease was 0.13, an increase of 0.02P. Death by occupational disease was reduced by 191 to 573.

The manufacturing industry produced the largest number of victims last year. However the number of victims in the sector fell by 748 while industries with relatively stagnant rates such as agriculture, forestry, finance and insurance produced the largest number of victims totaling some 2,571 at the

end of January.

Workplaces with the number of employees between five and 49 accounted for 44.2% of the total accidents, while those aged from 45 to 49 took the lion's share. And back pain was the most common ailment.

The largest number of deaths by accident, 40.2%, took place in the construction industry. Meanwhile, the non-metal mineral manufacturing and metal production sectors recorded the highest rate in the manufacturing industry.

The largest number of deaths from falls occurred in the construction industry, 35% of all types of deaths. The largest number of victims were found in Seoul, followed by Incheon, Busan, Gwangju, Daejeon, and Daegu.

- **Special Events**

- Kids Safety School Opened Exhibition on Safety
 - Cyber Safety Training of Preschool Children

On March 24, Kids Safety School (Principal Eok Huh) held the opening ceremony with an exhibition on child safety. About 300 attended the ceremony held in the auditorium and the playground of Yunjung Elementary School in Yeoju along with chairperson Tae-hee Yim of National Assembly Traffic Safety Forum. Deputy Director Jin-hang Kim of the Disaster and Safety Management Office of the Ministry of Public Administration and Security, Vice Chairperson Choon-geun Lee of the General Insurance Association of Korea, and Dean Jae-moo Won of Hanyang University Graduate School of Urban Studies.

Principal Eok Huh said, "we will build 13 kids safety classrooms in cyber space in March, and from April, we will invite preschool children along with their parents to the classes, which benchmark French programs, and issue diplomas after course."

Deputy Director Jin-hang Kim said, "we will fully support the school zone improvement program, the children's playground safety securing program, and the kids safety training program to reduce the child accident death rate by 10 % each year from the current 600 deaths down to 300 deaths in 2012."

- Sharing the Latest Technology for Preventing Laboratory Explosion
 - KOSHA, Seminar with 100 Participants

KOSHA held a seminar for corporate subsidiary research institutes on safety measures against fire and explosion by chemicals and laboratory equipment at the Riviera Hotel in Daejeon on March 27. Over 100 people participated in the seminar with delegates from corporate research institutes, academic circles, and other related organizations. Deputy Director Geun-won Lee of Chemicals Hazard Research Team of KOSHA made a presentation on the characteristics of pilot plant facilities for chemical process and the safety issues in the design phase.

In addition, Manager of the Central Research Institute of the Korea Petrochemical Industry

Association, Jae-hyeok Choi introduced the checklist for environmental safety in developing a pilot plant for R&D, and professor of Chungju National University Jong-bae Baek presented a case study on safety management in university laboratories.

Director of the Technical Experts Department of KOSHA Hyuk-myeon Kwon said, "laboratories inside research complexes use various chemicals and equipment that can expose researchers to the risk of fire and explosion." He added, "laboratories must give special attention to the hazards of fire and explosion that can lead to major accidents."

- **New Publications**

- English Fire Statistics Distributed to Overseas Fire Prevention Agencies
 - Korea Fire Protection Association Published 2007 KOREAN FIRE DATA

The summarized English version of fire statistics of Korea for 2007 has been published.

On March 17th, the Korea Fire Protection Association (President and CEO Jeong-mu Je) announced that it published the English version of 2007 KOREAN FIRE DATA which is the summary of Korean fire statistics for 2007. It is going to distribute the statistics to the academia, government agencies such as National Emergency Management and other related organizations in addition to 16 overseas fire prevention agencies including the National Fire Protection Association of America.

KOREAN FIRE DATA presented the analysis and statistics of fire outbreaks in Korea using graphs and charts that are easy to understand. It also describes major fire incidents including a warehouse in Icheon and Namdaemun.

The Association explained that KOREAN FIRE DATA has been published every year since 1997 in accordance with the Agreement of Cooperation with the National Fire Protection Association of America. It will be utilized by 16 foreign fire prevention agencies including America's Society of Fire Protection Engineers (SFPE) and England's Fire Protection Association to understand the status of Korea.

- Safety and Health Information Mailing Service
 - Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency's Safety and Health Webzine, WISH, Renewed

KOSHA categorized the subscribers to its safety and health webzine into manufacture and construction to provide relevant information that can be applied to each field.

WISH is KOSHA's online magazine on safety and health. KOSHA added more content and announced the commencement of the mailing service for each business category.

Previously, the mailing service had targeted subscribers in general, but KOSHA has now categorized subscribers into manufacture and construction to provide customized safety and health information to each category with a new series of cartoon on safety and health, Accident-Free Family.

The customized mailing service will provide information to construction businesses on preventing collapses during the thawing season as well as information to manufacturing businesses on preventing musculo-skeletal disorders during plating operations and so on.

The cartoon series on safety and health, Accident-Free Family, depicts everyday accidents to give more useful and practical information in an interesting way.

The new mailing service will start from April, offering relevant materials every 15th of each month. Those who are interested in the service can go to the 'Wish to You' menu at the website (<http://wish.kosha.net>) and apply.

A KOSHA official said, "we added a variety of information including accident cases at work, child accident prevention, safety in daily life along with a lot of intriguing stuff and customized information. We expect the site to be more useful in improving safety and health."