

Protecting Worker's Life and Health

# KOSHA Newsletter

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## December 2010

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## **Four Strategies to Create Safer and Accident-Free Workplaces**

- MOEL announces tailored measures to reduce accidents in five accident-prone industries

November 25, 2010

Four strategies have been announced by the Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) to achieve a 15% reduction in the deaths and lost workdays arising from occupational accidents by 2012.

The announcement – ‘Four strategies to create safer and accident-free workplaces’ – was made on November 24 by the MOEL, and it aims to bring down occupational accident rate, which has remained stagnant for the past years.

The four strategies include: implementing tailored prevention measures for five accident-prone industries; helping SMEs to build up safety and health capabilities; strengthening response measures against illness-causing factors; and spreading the advanced culture of occupational safety and health.

To that end, the MOEL’s initial plans are to upgrade the protection for in-house subcontract workers and dispatched workers in the service industry. In addition, various accident prevention projects will be launched together with related organizations and government agencies. In the cases of automobile and steel manufacturing industries, a policy will be introduced requiring them to produce “risk and hazard prevention plan.” In the construction sector, patrol inspection of small-scaled and vulnerable sites (with construction projects with less than 2 billion KRW) will be reinforced. Lastly, there will be stricter safety standards and inspection for shipbuilding industry.

A separate task force will be organized to prevent accidents in SMEs and help the workplaces to set up risk assessment system. In addition, occupational accident grading system will be introduced in the current compensation scheme to reduce SMEs’ insurance burdens. Furthermore, the present safety and health management services will be upgraded to a comprehensive consulting service system.

To respond to newly arising factors that cause occupational illnesses, stronger health management measures will be taken especially for occupations that require longer hours of work. Also, technical support is to be extended to chemicals handling workplaces with the history of occupational diseases occurrences.

Under the overriding idea that the improvement in occupational safety and health is impossible without significant changes in public perception, the Ministry plans to implement a number of measures to raise awareness. They include: discovering people who are exemplary in accident prevention efforts; introducing occupational safety and health culture certification system, and ubiquitous promotion of safety and health.

For the smooth running of the four major strategies, the Ministry has set forward ‘Safety Workplace Creation Task Force’. The task force will be headed by the Minister of MOEL, and participated by related agencies, organizations, trade unions, and the representatives from multiple industries.

### **Sixth anniversary of “Safety Management Charter”**

- MOPAS holds a ceremony to celebrate the persons of merit together with best practice presentations to advance safety culture

November, 2010

On November 4, the Ministry of Public Administration and Security (MOPAS) organized a special occasion to renew its commitments to promoting the spread of safety culture, as well as to remind each other of the significance of “Safety Management Charter” declared in 2004. Together with The Korean Society of Safety and S·H·E Up Design for Human, the MOPAS held a ceremony, marking the 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Safety Management Charter. The Ceremony was held in the auditorium of an annex building of the Central Government Complex, attended by around 350 safety officials from central government ministries, local governments, public agencies, and private organizations.

The ceremony was divided into two sections. The first comprised of commemorative events, and awards were given to the people of national merit. The second part was the presentations of excellent cases, which were exemplary in advancing safety culture.

Vice Minister Yang-Ho Ahn of MOPAS said “the Safety Management Charter is a practical code of conduct to create a safe nation. Also, the charter has the historic significance as it seeks to realize a safe and livable nation for its people by putting the principles of the charter – safety is the utmost priority – into practice.” In addition Vice Minister Ahn called for the commitment of everyone to become “the guardians and watchmen for safety,” who practice safe lifestyles every day.

The key idea of the Safety Management Charter is the prioritization of safety in every aspect of life in local governments, public organizations, businesses and so on. Executive Director Seok-Hong Jang of Disaster & Safety Management Office, MOPAS said he will work to disseminate safety culture by encouraging the participation of government ministries and the general public, while actively utilizing the excellent cases in the policy-making process.

## **Easily Accessible Safety and Health News on PCs**

- KOSHA develops and distributes “Safety and health media Widget”

November, 2010

Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA) launched a mini-program to facilitate the access of latest safety and health information such as breaking news on serious accidents, warnings on hazardous chemicals, and guides on safety and health signs.

“Safety and health media Widget” can be easily installed on PCs and it provides real-time access to latest information and news.

Widgets are mini computer programs, enabling the users to received news feeds, games, and stock information of their choice in a convenient manner.

Anyone who have “Safety and health media Widget” installed on their computers can check safety and health information without having to visit KOSHA website.

The Widget is comprised of breaking news, media information, and notice board. The breaking news section provides contents about the latest serious accident cases. The media information section links users to updated materials by each medium type as well as the list of most popular safety materials. Finally, the notice board gives updated information on the activities of KOSHA.

In addition to the above main sections, the Widget also offers regional weather information, safety messages, and biorhythms, which help users' outdoor activities.

## **Guidance Manuals for Preventing MSDs in the Service Industry**

- MOEL and KOSHA give easy safety guidance to protect aged workers

November, 2010

The Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL) and Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA) co-developed a guidance book to prevent musculoskeletal diseases (MSDs) in service industry workers. On November 4, MOEL and KOSHA announced the development and distribution of safety work manuals to protect aged workers, especially those in different occupations in the service industry such as cleaners, security guards and food preparers.

The manual contains safe work rules and guidance photos, which are easily applicable in workplaces.

The manual, targeting workers in the service industry, is developed against the backdrop of high average age of workers as well as rising MSDs cases in the industry, according to the officials of the MOEL and KOSHA.

The manual states that aged workers in the service industry should be assigned to their tasks based on their physical and physiological characteristics. In addition, physical workloads of these workers should be managed by allowing them to alternate intensive and relatively easier tasks.

When using work equipment, the workers should be given enough training before commencing their tasks. Also, tasks that require quick decision-making or complex memorizations should be simplified.

Occupational doctor Jeong-Yeon Kim of the MOEL said, “Skilled labor of aged workers is directly linked to higher competitiveness of companies. Therefore, not only the aged workers themselves, but also the employers should pay special attention to the protection of health.”

Furthermore, workplaces can get on-demand support for the prevention of MSDs through KOSHA’s Area Offices, which include technical consultations and on-site lectures. Other related training materials and technical information are also available through the MOEL’s website at [www.moel.go.kr](http://www.moel.go.kr).

## **Better Asbestos Analysis with Electron Microscopes**

- OSHRI-KOSHA opens electron microscope analysis lab

November, 2010

On November 1, 2010 (Mon), Occupational Safety and Health Research Institute of Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (OSHRI-KOSHA; Director General: Seong-Kyu Kang) held an opening ceremony of “Electron Microscope Analysis Lab” at the headquarters of KOSHA in Bupyeong-gu, Incheon.

Against the backdrop of rising interest in asbestos, Electron Microscope Analysis Lab was established to upgrade the capabilities of asbestos analysis in OSHRI-KOSHA. Transmission Electron Microscopes (TEMs) and Energy-dispersive X-ray Analyzer (EDXAs) were newly introduced to improve the level of asbestos analysis in the research institute.

In 1995, OSHRI had used electron microscopes in “Center for Chemicals Safety and Health” in Daejeon, and they have been widely used in various research. With the new Electron Microscope Analysis Lab established in the KOSHA headquarters and a new system of analyzing method in place, OSHRI-KOSHA can now meet the growing demand for asbestos analysis, and have the capabilities to conduct more precise analysis.

In August this year, OSHRI received an international accreditation from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in the US, for asbestos analysis using electron microscope, which made OSHRI a credible research institute at the international level.

The introduction of electron microscopes will overcome many limitations of polarization microscopes and phase microscopes, which have been commonly used in Korea for the analysis of asbestos.