

Government of India
Ministry of Labour and Employment

**NATIONAL POLICY ON SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT AT WORK
PLACE**

1. PREAMBLE

1.1 The Constitution of India provide detailed provisions for the rights of the citizens and also lays down the Directive Principles of State Policy which set an aim to which the activities of the state are to be guided.

1.2 These Directive Principles provide

(a) for securing the health and strength of employees, men and women;

b) that the tender age of children are not abused;

c) that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength;

d) just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief are provided; and

e) that the Government shall take steps, by suitable legislation or in any other way, to secure the participation of employee in the management of undertakings, establishments or other organisations engaged in any industry.

1.3 On the basis of these Directive Principles as well as international instruments, Government is committed to regulate all economic activities for management of safety and health risks at workplaces and to provide measures so as to ensure safe and healthy working conditions for every working man and woman in the nation. Government recognizes that safety and health of workers has a positive impact on productivity and economic and social development. Prevention is an integral part of economic activities

as high safety and health standard at work is as important as good business performance for new as well as existing industries.

- 1.4 The formulation of policy, priorities and strategies in occupational safety, health and environment at work places, is undertaken by national authorities in consultation with social partners for fulfilling such objectives. A critical role is played by the Government and the social partners, professional safety and health organizations in ensuring prevention and in also providing treatment, support and rehabilitation services.
- 1.5 Government of India firmly believes that without safe, clean environment as well as healthy working conditions, social justice and economic growth cannot be achieved and that safe and healthy working environment is recognized as a fundamental human right. Education, training, consultation and exchange of information and good practices are essential for prevention and promotion of such measures.
- 1.6 The changing job patterns and working relationships, the rise in self employment, greater sub-contracting, outsourcing of work, homework and the increasing number of employees working away from their establishment, pose problems to management of occupational safety and health risks at workplaces. New safety hazards and health risks will be appearing along with the transfer and adoption of new technologies. In addition, many of the well known conventional hazards will continue to be present at the workplace till the risks arising from exposure to these hazards are brought under adequate control. While advancements in technology have minimized or eliminated some hazards at workplace, new risks can emerge in their place which needs to be addressed.
- 1.7 Particular attention needs to be paid to the hazardous operations and of employees in risk prone conditions such as migrant employees and various vulnerable groups of employees arising out of greater mobility in the

workforce with more people working for a number of employers, either consecutively or simultaneously.

- 1.8 The increasing use of chemicals, exposure to physical, chemical and biological agents with hazard potential unknown to people; the indiscriminate use of agro-chemicals including pesticides, agricultural machineries and equipment; industries with major accident risks; effects of computer controlled technologies and alarming influence of stress at work in many modern jobs pose serious safety, health and environmental risks.
- 1.9 The fundamental purpose of this National Policy on Safety, Health and Environment at workplace, is not only to eliminate the incidence of work related injuries, diseases, fatalities, disaster and loss of national assets and ensuring achievement of a high level of occupational safety, health and environment performance through proactive approaches but also to enhance the well-being of the employee and society, at large. The necessary changes in this area will be based on a co-ordinated national effort focused on clear national goals and objectives.
- 1.10 Every Ministry or Department may work out their detailed policy relevant to their working environment as per the guidelines on the National Policy.

2. GOALS:

The Government firmly believes that building and maintaining national preventive safety and health culture is the need of the hour. With a view to develop such a culture and to improve the safety, health and environment at work place, it is essential to meet the following requirements:-

- 2.1 providing a statutory framework on Occupational Safety and Health in respect of all sectors of industrial activities including the construction sector, designing suitable control systems of compliance, enforcement and incentives for better compliance.
- 2.2 providing administrative and technical support services.

- 2.3. providing a system of incentives to employers and employees to achieve higher health and safety standards .
- 2.4 providing for a system of non-financial incentives for improvement in safety and health.
- 2.5. establishing and developing the research and development capability in emerging areas of risk and providing for effective control measures.
- 2.6. Focusing on prevention strategies and monitoring performance through improved data collection system on work related injuries and diseases.
- 2.7 Developing and providing required technical manpower and knowledge in the areas of safety, health and environment at workplaces in different sectors.
- 2.8 Promoting inclusion of safety, health and environment, improvement at workplaces as an important component in other relevant national policy documents.
- 2.9 Including safety and occupational health as an integral part of every operation.

3. OBJECTIVES:

3.1 The policy seeks to bring the national objectives into focus as a step towards improvement in safety, health and environment at workplace. The objectives are to achieve:-

- a) Continuous reduction in the incidence of work related injuries, fatalities, diseases, disasters and loss of national assets.
- b) Improved coverage of work related injuries, fatalities and diseases and provide for a more comprehensive data base for facilitating better performance and monitoring.
- c) Continuous enhancement of community awareness regarding safety, health and environment at workplace related areas.
- d) Continually increasing community expectation of workplace health and safety standards.

- e) Improving safety, health and environment at workplace by creation of “green jobs” contributing to sustainable enterprise development.

4. ACTION PROGRAMME

For the purpose of achieving the goals and objectives mentioned in paragraphs 2 and 3 above, the following action programme is drawn up and where necessary time bound action programme would be initiated, namely:-

4.1. Enforcement

- 4.1.1 by providing an effective enforcement machinery as well as suitable provisions for compensation and rehabilitation of affected persons;
- 4.1.2 by effectively enforcing all applicable laws and regulations concerning safety, health and environment at workplaces in all economic activities through an adequate and effective labour inspection system;
- 4.1.3 By establishing suitable schemes for subsidy and provision of loans to enable effective implementation of the policy;
- 4.1.4 by ensuring that employers, employees and others have separate but complementary responsibilities and rights with respect to achieving safe and healthy working conditions;
- 4.1.5 by amending expeditiously existing laws relating to safety, health and environment and bring them in line with the relevant international instruments;
- 4.1.6 by monitoring the adoption of national standards through regulatory authorities;
- 4.1.7 by facilitating the sharing of best practices and experiences between national and international regulatory authorities;
- 4.1.8 by developing new and innovative enforcement methods including financial incentives that encourage and ensure improved workplace performance;
- 4.1.9 by making an enabling legislation on Safety, Health and Environment at Workplaces;

4.1.10 by setting up safety and health committees wherever deemed appropriate;

4.2 National Standards

4.2.1 by developing appropriate standards, codes of practices and manuals on safety, health and environment for uniformity at the national level in all economic activities consistent with international standards and implementation by the stake holders in true spirit;

4.2.2 by ensuring stakeholders awareness of and accessibility to applicable policy, documents, codes, regulations and standards;

4.3 Compliance

4.3.1 by encouraging the appropriate Government to assume the fullest responsibility for the administration and enforcement of occupational safety, health and environment at workplace, provide assistance in identifying their needs and responsibilities in the area of safety, health and environment at workplace, to develop plans and programmes in accordance with the provisions of the applicable Acts and to conduct experimental and demonstration projects in connection therewith;

4.3.2 by calling upon the co-operation of social partners in the supervision of application of legislations and regulations relating to safety, health and environment at work place;

4.3.3 by continuous improvement of Occupational Safety and Health by systems approach to the management of Occupational Safety and Health including developing guidance on Occupational Safety and Health management systems, strengthening voluntary actions, including mechanisms for self-regulatory concept and establishing auditing mechanisms which can test and authenticate occupational safety and health management systems;

- 4.3.4 by providing specific measures to prevent catastrophes, and to co-ordinate and specify the actions to be taken at different levels, particularly in the industrial zones with high potential risks;
- 4.3.5 by recognising the best safety and health practices and providing facilitation for their adoption.
- 4.3.6 by providing adequate penal provisions as deterrent for violation of laws for the time being in force;
- 4.3.7 by encouraging all concerned to adopt and commit to “Responsible Care” and / or “Corporate Social Responsibility” to improve safety, health and environment at workplace performance;
- 4.3.8 by ensuring a suitable accreditation machinery to recognise institutions, professionals and services relating to safety, health and environment at workplace for uniformity and greater coverage as also authenticating safe management system;
- 4.3.9 by encouraging employers to ensure occupational safety and health management systems, establish them in efficient manner to improve workplace safety and health;
- 4.3.10 by specifically focusing on such occupational diseases like pneumoconiosis and silicosis; developing a framework for its prevention and control as well as develop technical standards and guidelines for the same;
- 4.3.11 by promoting safe and clean technology and progressively replacing materials hazardous to human health and environment;

4.4 Awareness

- 4.4.1 by increasing awareness on safety, health and environment at workplace through appropriate means;
- 4.4.2 by providing forums for consultations with employers’ representatives, employees representatives and community on matters of national concern

- relating to safety, health and environment at work place with the overall objective of creating awareness and enhancing national productivity;
- 4.4.3 by encouraging joint labour-management efforts to preserve, protect and promote national assets and to eliminate injuries and diseases arising out of employment;
- 4.4.4 by raising community awareness through structured, audience specific approach;
- 4.4.5 by continuously evaluating the impact of such awareness and information initiatives;
- 4.4.6 by maximizing gains from the substantial investment in awareness campaigns by sharing experience and learning;
- 4.4.7 by suitably incorporating teaching inputs on safety, health and environment at work place in schools, technical, medical, professional and vocational courses and distance education programme;
- 4.4.8 by securing good liaison arrangements with the International organisations;
- 4.4.9 by providing medical criteria wherever necessary which will assure insofar as practicable that no employee will suffer diminished health, functional capacity, or life expectancy as a result of his work place activities and that in the event of such occupational diseases having been contracted, is suitably compensated;
- 4.4.10 by providing practical guidance and encouraging employers and employees in their efforts to reduce the incidence of occupational safety and health risks at their places of employment and to impress upon employers and employees to institute new programmes and to improve existing programmes for providing safe and healthful working conditions, requiring employers to ensure that workers and their representatives are consulted, trained, informed and involved in all measures related to their safety and health at work;

4.5 Research and Development

- 4.5.1 by providing for research in the field of safety, health and environment at workplace, including the social and psychological factors involved, and by developing innovative methods, techniques including computer aided Risk Assessment Tools, and approaches for dealing with safety, health and environment at workplace problems which will help in establishing standards;
- 4.5.2 by exploring ways to discover latent diseases, establishing causal connections between diseases and work environmental conditions, updating list of occupational diseases and conducting other research relating to safety, health and environmental problems at workplace;
- 4.5.3 by establishing research priorities as per national requirements; exploring partnerships and improving communications with various national and international research bodies;
- 4.5.4 by ensuring a coordinated research approach and an optimal allocation of resources in Occupational Safety and Health sector for such purposes;

4.6 Occupational safety and health skills development

- 4.6.1 by building upon advances already made through employer and employee initiative for providing safe and healthy working conditions;
- 4.6.2 by providing for training programmes to increase the number and competence of personnel engaged in the field of occupational safety, health and environment at workplace;
- 4.6.3 by providing information and advice, in an appropriate manner, to employers and employees organisations, with a view to eliminating hazards or reducing them as far as practicable;.
- 4.6.4 by establishing occupational health services aimed at protection and promotion of health of employee and improvement of working conditions and by providing employee access to these services in different sectors of economic activities;

4.6.5 by integrating health and safety into vocational, professional and labour related training programmes as also management training including small business practices;

4.6.6 by adopting Occupational Safety and Health training curricula in workplace and industry programmes;

4.7 Data collection

4.7.1 by compiling statistics relating to safety, health and environment at work places, prioritising key issues for action, conducting national studies or surveys or projects through governmental and non-governmental organisations;

4.7.2 by reinforcing and sharing of information and data on national occupational safety, health and environment at work place information amongst different stake holders through a national network system on Occupational Safety and Health;

4.7.3 by extending data coverage relevant to work-related injury and disease, including measures of exposure, and occupational groups that are currently excluded, such as self-employed people;

4.7.4 by extending data systems to allow timely reporting and provision of information;

4.7.5 by developing the means for improved access to information;

4.8 Review

4.8.1 An initial review and analysis shall be carried out to ascertain the current status of safety, health and environment at workplace and building a national Occupational Safety and Health profile.

4.8.2 National Policy and the action programme shall be reviewed at least once in five years or earlier if felt necessary to assess relevance of the national goals and objectives.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 There is a need to develop close involvement of social partners to meet the challenges ahead in the assessment and control of workplace risks by mobilising local resources and extending protection to such working population and vulnerable groups where social protection is not adequate.
- 5.2 Government stands committed to review the National Policy on Safety, Health and Environment at Workplace and legislations through tripartite consultation, improve enforcement, compilation and analysis of statistics; develop special programmes for hazardous operations and other focus sectors, set up training mechanisms, create nation-wide awareness, arrange for the mobilisation of available resources and expertise.
- 5.3 The National Policy and programme envisages total commitment and demonstration by all concerned stake holders such as Government and social partners. Our goals and objectives will be that through dedicated and concerted efforts consistent with the requirements of safety, health and environment at work place and thereby improving the quality of work and working life.

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