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Safety and Health Practices in the Construction Industry: 2008

(Third of a series on Industrial Relations Practices)

The Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics (BLES) in coordination with the DOLE Regional Offices conducted the 2007/2008 BLES Integrated Survey (BITS) covering 6,460 non-agricultural sample establishments employing 20 or more workers nationwide. The main objective of the survey is to generate integrated data sets on employment of specific group of workers, occupational shortages and surpluses, safety and health practices, occupational injuries and diseases and labor cost of employees.

This issue presents the survey highlights of the safety and health practices adopted and implemented by establishments in the construction industry as of June 30, 2008. It provides information on the safety and health of persons at work, as well as on the protection of other individuals against risk to their safety and health in connection with or as affected by activities of persons at work.

OVERVIEW

Safety is one of the first things considered in the construction industry especially that work-related injuries and accidents are inevitable and usual occurrences.

Information regarding the safe and healthy practices on this industry is highly useful in the evaluation of safety performance of the industry and in the assessment of the effectiveness of accident preventive measures being implemented.

Under the law, every employer is mandated to keep and maintain his workplace free from work hazards that are causing or likely to cause physical harm to the workers or damage to property.

SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

This issue discusses the health and safety practices common to the construction industry. Here are some of these practices:

... as to facilities available/provided

Facilities provided by almost all establishments in the construction industry were adequate supply of safe drinking water (99.4%); adequate space that allow sufficient freedom of movement to perform duties (99.2%); and access to clean and hygienic comfort rooms (99.0%). Only few establishments (7.1%) provided facilities for persons with disabilities. (Table 1)

Reasons provided by some establishments for non-provision of other safety and health facilities were as follows: not applicable or suitable in the industry (60.2%); and not needed or not necessary for the industry (52.3%). A few cited that the facilities were too costly (4.5%) and no available space (3.7%).

... as to occupational health programs/services implemented

Almost all establishments conducted regular inspection and

maintenance of equipment (97.4%). Many provided first-aid kits (86.7%) and had program for accident prevention (81.9%).

Only 2 out of 10 establishments had physical fitness program while a very few had HIV/AIDS policy/program (10.4%) and family planning program (8.6%). (Table 2)

... as to preventive and control measures on safety and health implemented

Nine out of 10 establishments in the construction industry observed proper operational procedures in doing the job and regularly maintained mechanical and electrical facilities.

On the other hand, only 3 out of 10 establishments used video camera or alarm system and 2 out of 10 establishments had available Material Data Safety Sheets (MDSS) for chemicals. (Table 3)

... as to occupational safety and health trainings and seminars provided

A large percentage of the establishments provided safety management trainings (80.1%), first-aid seminars (73.9%) and safe work procedures (72.0%).

Only few establishments provided family planning and reproductive health seminars (4.2%) to their employees. (Table 4)

DOLE Regional Offices (42.1%) and Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC) (35.6%) were the agencies most identified by construction establishments which provided them assistance in the conduct of occupational safety and health trainings and seminars. Others tapped the services of the DOLE Accredited Safety

Training and Consultancy Organizations (24.9%); NGOs/Universities/Academic Institutions (19.3%) and the Bureau of Working Conditions (18.6%).

DOLE Regional Offices	42.1%
Occupational Safety and Health Center	35.6%
DOLE Accredited Safety Training and Consultancy Organizations	24.9%
NGOs/ Universities/Academic Institutions	19.3%
Bureau of Working Conditions	18.6%
Industry Associations	13.3%
Association of Safety Practitioners of the Philippines, Inc. (SOPI)	13.3%
Employers Associations	5.2%
Trade Unions/Federations	1.9%

... as to person responsible in the overall implementation/monitoring of safety and health practices

Almost half of the establishments in construction industry had their safety and health practices monitored and implemented by the Owner/Managing Proprietor (46.8%) and Human Resource Manager (44.2%). Nearly one-third were monitored by the General Manager (31.9%) and Production or Operations Manager (31.6%).

Managing Proprietor/Owner	46.8%
Human Resource Manager	44.2%
General Manager	31.9%
Production/ Operations Manager	31.6%
Health and Safety Committee/ Officer	14.1%
Health Associate Professionals	9.1%
Industrial Relations Manager	1.0%

... as to the health personnel in the establishments

About three-fourths of the construction establishments did not have any health personnel. Majority made use of the services of the clinic or hospital (71.7%) in the vicinity of the establishment. Below are the health personnel available:

Trained first-aider	35.6%
Registered nurse	16.5%
Physician	15.7%
Others	0.6%

... as to occupational safety and health records maintained

Almost half of the establishments kept records of Employees Work Accident/Illness Report (46.4%). Many establishments also had Annual Medical Report (41.6%), Annual Work Accident/Illness Exposure Data (20.1%) and Minutes of Meeting of Health and Safety Committee (12.0%).

Employees Work Accident/Illness Report	46.4%
Annual Medical Report	41.6%
Annual Work Accident/Illness Exposure Data	20.1%
Minutes of Meeting of Health and Safety Committee	12.0%

... as to communication method used

Safety and health practices were discussed largely to employees during general assemblies/meetings (77.7%) and through posters in conspicuous places in the establishments (30.9%). Others conducted drills (13.8%) while less than 10.0% communicated safety and health practices through the following:

Daily "walk-through" the establishment by Senior Officials	10.8%
Newsletter/Staff bulletin	9.9%
Quality circles/Productivity improvement group meetings	8.6%
Labor Management Cooperation/Council meetings	4.0%

.... as to frequency of management consultation

Implementation of safety and health programs will always be easy and effective when highly supported by the management and its employees.

Nearly half of the total number of establishments (47.4%) "always" consulted employee representatives or union officers on occupational safety and health matters while the other half (46.6%) conducted the consultation "sometimes". The rest believed that consultation is "not applicable" (6.0%).

... as to ISO certifications held

Noticeably, only few of the establishments in the construction industry had certifications from the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). Of the certified establishments, 3.6% (22) were on Quality Management System (ISO 9001:2000) while 3.2% (20) got Occupational Health and Safety Management Standard (OHSAS 18001) certifications. Only 10 (1.2%) were certified on ISO 12006 (Building Construction).

ISO 9001:2000 – Quality Management System	3.6%
OHSAS 18001 – Occupational Health and Safety Management Standard	3.2%
ISO 12006 – Building Construction	1.6%
ISO 14001 – Environmental Management Standard	0.8%
Others	0.3%

FOR INQUIRIES:

Regarding this report contact **LABOR RELATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION at 527-3000 local 319**
 Regarding other statistics and technical services contact **BLES DATABANK at 527-3000 local 317**
 Or Write to BLES c/o **Databank, 3/F DOLE Bldg. Gen. Luna St., Intramuros, Manila, 1002**
 Fax **527-55-06** E mail: bles_lrsd@yahoo.com or visit our website at or <http://www.bles.dole.gov.ph>

TABLE 1 – Number and Percent Share of Establishments Employing 20 or More Workers in the Construction Industry by Type of Facilities Available/Provided, Philippines: June 2008

FACILITIES AVAILABLE/PROVIDED	Number	% Share
Total	618	100.0
Adequate supply of safe drinking water	614	99.4
Adequate space that allow sufficient freedom of movement to perform duties	613	99.2
Access to clean and hygienic comfort rooms	612	99.0
Availability of water tank and functioning fire extinguishers within reach	583	94.3
Proper ventilation in work areas	571	92.4
Separate toilets for men and women	563	91.1
Parking space for employee	557	90.1
Pantry (small room used as eating area of employees)	545	88.2
Adequate lighting (in work areas, aisles, passageways) including emergency lights	544	88.0
Adequate aisles/passageways	502	81.2
Adequate exhaust system	487	78.8
Well-maintained office building	474	76.7
Unobstructed fire exits at the workplace	455	73.6
Proper waste (including chemicals, pesticides & hazardous materials) disposal system	452	73.1
Washing facilities and facilities for changing/storing working clothes	437	70.7
Ergonomically designated seats/tools/machines (to prevent musculoskeletal disorders and related injuries)	401	64.9
Designated smoking area/s	394	63.8
Comfortable rest area for workers	388	62.8
Clean canteen for employees	213	34.5
Sports/recreational facilities	188	30.4
Separate locker rooms for men and women	181	29.3
Medical/dental clinic or treatment room	172	27.8
Pipe-in music at the workplace	160	25.9
Elevator for building with at least four floors	94	15.2
Facilities for persons with disabilities	44	7.1

Note: Details may not add up to respective totals due to multiple responses.

Source of data: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, 2007/2008 BLES Integrated Survey.

TABLE 2 – Number and Percent Share of Establishments Employing 20 or More Workers in the Construction Industry by Occupational Health Programs/Services Implemented, Philippines: June 2008

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH PROGRAMS/SERVICES IMPLEMENTED	Number	% Share
Total	618	100.0
Regular conduct of inspection and maintenance of equipment	602	97.4
Availability of first-aid kits	536	86.7
Accident prevention program	506	81.9
Regular monitoring of hazards such as fumes, dust, noise level and heat in work areas	424	68.6
Emergency response preparedness program	417	67.5
Drug-Free workplace policy/program	378	61.2
Free health and/or accident insurance by a private insurance company	340	55.0
Free/subsidized medical care other than those provided thru the HMO or private insurance (includes medicines, special laboratory exams for ancillary procedures on top of annual physical examination, hospitalization)	261	42.2
Tuberculosis prevention and control policy	257	41.6
Substance abuse and employee assistance program	255	41.3
Free health plan coverage by health maintenance organization (HMO)	219	35.4
Random drug testing	204	33.0
Anti-sexual harassment program	141	22.8
Physical fitness program	122	19.7
HIV/AIDS policy/program	64	10.4
Family planning programs	53	8.6

Note: Details may not add up to respective totals due to multiple responses.

Source of data: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, 2007/2008 BLES Integrated Survey.

TABLE 3 – Number and Percent Share of Establishments Employing 20 or More Workers in the Construction Industry by Preventive and Control Measures on Safety and Health Implemented, Philippines: June 2008

PREVENTIVE AND CONTROL MEASURES ON SAFETY AND HEALTH IMPLEMENTED	Number	% Share
Total	618	100.0
Observance of proper operational procedures in doing the job	567	91.7
Regular maintenance of mechanical and electrical facilities	554	89.6
Proper posting of safety signages	529	85.6
Security measures to reduce violence	526	85.1
Portable/built-in fire extinguishers	507	82.0
Provision of protective clothing/equipment to employees (e.g. gloves, head gear, footwear, etc.)	498	80.6
Information or advisory services on occupational safety and health	466	75.4
Emergency evacuation plan	447	72.3
Appropriate number of trained health and safety officer	441	71.4
Availability of safety manuals, labels or maintenance procedures	440	71.2
Proper storage and labeling for chemicals, pesticides and hazardous materials	417	67.5
Instruction/training on health and safety	416	67.3
Provision of adequate machine guarding/railing or casing on moving parts	378	61.2
Correction action programs and performance audits	347	56.1
Regular pest control treatment	312	50.5
Institutionalization of health and safety committee	286	46.3
Conduct of emergency drills (fire, earthquake, chemical spills, etc.)	260	42.1
Conduct of process analysis for potential problems	239	38.7
Availability of safety measures to reduce exposures to radiation and airborne contaminants (e.g. solvent, heavy metals, mineral dust, virus, bacteria)	207	33.5
Sewage treatment plan	200	32.4
Use of video camera or alarm system	167	27.0
Availability of Material Data Safety Sheets (MDSS) for chemicals	123	19.9

Note: Details may not add up to respective totals due to multiple responses.

Source of data: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, 2007/2008 BLES Integrated Survey.

TABLE 4 – Number and Percent Share of Establishments Employing 20 or More Workers in the Construction Industry by Type of Occupational Safety and Health Trainings/Seminars Provided to Employees in Establishments Employing 20 or More Workers, Philippines: June 2008

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH TRAININGS/SEMINARS PROVIDED	Number	% Share
Total	618	100.0
Safety Management	495	80.1
First Aid	457	73.9
Safety Work Procedures	445	72.0
Accident Investigation	416	67.3
General Safety and Health Provisions	385	62.3
Safeguarding the Environment	358	57.9
Safety Drills (e.g. fire, earthquake, etc.)	339	54.9
Handling of Hazardous Materials	319	51.6
Safety Audit	319	51.6
Health Hazard Evaluation	308	49.8
Emergency Preparation to Work Hazards (provides overview of health and safety guides to various emergencies)	304	49.2
Good Housekeeping (e.g. 5S + 1)	295	47.7
Prescribed Basic Occupational Safety and Health (BOSH) Training	283	45.8
Prohibited Drugs	268	43.4
Total Quality Management	233	37.7
Principles of Ergonomics (to address musculoskeletal disorders/injuries in the workplace)	150	24.3
Stress Management	102	16.5
Conflict Management	97	15.7
Other OSH training/seminars on safety and health	35	5.7
Family Planning and Reproductive Health	26	4.2

Note: Details may not add up to respective totals due to multiple responses.

Source of data: Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics, 2007/2008 BLES Integrated Survey.