

‘WORLD DAY FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK’
28TH APRIL 2008

On this day every year, government, employers and workers’ organizations worldwide are encouraged to conduct awareness-raising activities within their areas of influence in efforts to reduce accidents and ill-health at the workplace.

World’s Day for Safety and Health at work is also an annual event to increase awareness about how to make work safe and healthy as well as to raise the profile of occupational safety and health.

The theme for this year’s World Day for Safety and Health at work is: ‘My Life, My Work, My Safe Work-Managing Risk in the Work Environment’.

This theme was chosen by International Labour Organisation (ILO) to strongly encourage workers to examine the risks related to their own jobs.

The objective of the World Day for Safety and Health at Work is to focus international attention on promoting and creating a safety and health culture that can help to reduce the number of work-related deaths each year. Safety, after all, is the responsibility of all concerned.

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is of worldwide concern to governments, employers, workers and their families. While some industries are inherently more hazardous than others, groups such as migrant or other marginalized workers are often more at risk of experiencing work-related accidents and ill health, since poverty frequently forces them into unsafe occupations.

Work-related accidents and ill-health place intolerable human and economic burdens on workers and their families as well as on enterprises and on society as a whole.

In Malaysia, PERKESO estimates that the related economic costs due to compensation, lost working time, interruption of production, training and medical expenses are considerably high. Last year, the total compensation costs paid out by PERKESO for industrial accidents and occupational diseases was over RM 900 million.

Conversely, there is clear evidence that a healthy workforce can enhance business productivity, benefit enterprises and national economies by reducing the number of accidents and diseases and lowering the number of insurance and compensation claims.

The overall responsibility for providing a safe and healthy working environment rest with the employers who should demonstrate their commitment to OSH.

This can be done by building and maintaining a preventative safety and health culture that address the principles of prevention, hazard identification, risk assessment and control, information and training.

Workers on the other hand have a duty to cooperate with the employer in implementing this OSH programme. They should respect and apply procedures and other instructions designed to protect them and others present at the workplace from exposure to occupational hazards.

It is estimated that more than 2 million people die from work-related illness or accidents each year.

The World Day for Safety and Health at Work, celebrated worldwide including Malaysia, is an international campaign to promote safety and health at work.

Preserving human health is a key objective of social security, promoting and creating a safety and health culture can save lives and reduce costs to society.

Parking Lots - Fall Prevention

Do parking lots pose special hazards?

Parking lots are a special adjunct to many workplaces. Even though you may not be conducting your job there (unless you are a parking attendant or maintenance worker), there is still a possibility that you can be injured. Besides the risk of violence, the major risk includes falls resulting from slips and trips.

What factors contribute to fall incidents on a parking lot?

A smooth, even, flat surface is ideal for walking because it reduces the likelihood of twisted ankles or loss of balance which can lead to falls and other painful mishaps. In fact, guidelines require that parking areas be level and even, with cracks, holes and lumps not exceeding 1 cm.

However, heavy use by both pedestrians and vehicle traffic both cause a parking surface to deteriorate. Figure 1 shows examples of damage to look for: broken pavement, and gratings.

Leaks and spills of engine oil or antifreeze, which commonly occur wherever cars are parked, can further add to risks of slips and falls.

In outdoor parking lots, severe weather conditions additionally aggravate even slight damage to the parking surface. As a consequence the risk for falls due to slips and trips is relatively high in this environment.

Are speed bumps a fall hazard?

Speed bumps and tire stops are usually not necessary in a well-designed parking lot. Besides potentially causing damage to vehicles, they create a yet another hazard for tripping - see Figure 2. The layout of the parking area should make it impossible to drive unsafely or fast. Otherwise, if speed bumps or tire stops are absolutely necessary:

- locate them away from pedestrian traffic (such as at entrance and exit areas).
- use a speed bump sign and post the recommended speed wherever such bumps have to be used
- speed bumps should be designed according to the provisions of American National Standards Institute (ANSI) or Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) standards

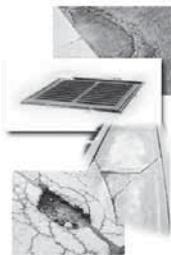


Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Are tire stops hazardous?

Tire stops are serious tripping hazards particularly when parking slots are occupied. When tire stops are present, a few precautions are advised:

- they should no wider than the width of the vehicle
- they should be marked with a contrasting colour
- special attention should be paid to their regular maintenance because they deteriorate faster than other elements of the parking area - see Figures 3 and 4

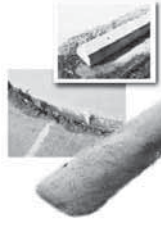


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

How can you prevent falls?

Falls can be prevented through a number of steps:

- good lighting
- good housekeeping
- good quality walking surface in the parking area
- paying attention to where you are going
- selection of proper footwear - see Figure 5
- appropriate walking pace: walk, don't run

What does good housekeeping me-an in terms of parking lots?

Good housekeeping includes:

- cleaning all spills and oily spots immediately
- marking oily or icy spots and wet areas - see Figure 6
- clearing ice or snow as soon as possible
- removing clutter, debris and any obstacles from walkways

What responsibilities do workers have?

Safety is everybody's duty, so workers as much as employers should:

- clean or report spills right away
- clear away clutter and debris, if they can
- report hazardous conditions to their supervisors
- remain aware that falls can happen anywhere, anytime