

# Occupational Safety, Health & Environment (OSHE) Bulletin.

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*‘Bringing the OSHE messages to you.’*

## Sharing My Thoughts (SMT) on

# ONE OF THE VITAL GOAL FOR NEXT YEAR – CREATING AN OSHE-CULTURE AT WORK.

- Does your organization have an OSHE-friendly corporate culture?
- What is the 10-step model for establishing such a culture?
- What are the 6 indicators for measuring culture change at work?

When a workplace hazard or accident occurs, the term **OSHE corporate culture** often surfaces as part of the ensuing discussion and debate. Organizations that experience major health, safety or environmental failures are sometimes said to lack an OSHE culture. The term OSHE culture can be misleading because it implies that safety, health and environment are stand-alone, non-integrated concepts that are somehow separate and apart from an organization's broader corporate culture. For this reason, the term **OSHE-friendly corporate culture** is used to make the critical point that an organization's culture relating to OSHE must be an integral part of its overall corporate culture, not a separate and tacked-on appendage. Taking this approach, in turn, make it easier to help executives and managers who lead organizations understand that providing a safe and healthy work environment is just as much a competitive strategy as providing customers with superior cost, quality, and service. In fact, the concepts of health, safety, environment and competitiveness are inextricably linked. Without a healthy and safe work environment, employees cannot consistently do the things that are necessary to deliver superior cost, quality, and service.

To make the point that health and safety should be fully integrated components of any organization's overall corporate culture and competitive strategy, I **define an OSHE corporate culture** as follows: **An OSHE-friendly corporate culture exists when the tacit assumptions, beliefs, values, attitudes, expectations, and behaviors that are widely shared and accepted in an organization support the establishment and maintenance of a healthy and safe work environment – this environment which, in turn, supports peak performance, continual improvement, job satisfaction for the employees and maximum competitiveness.**

Hazardous working conditions will quickly rob personnel of the focus and energy needed to do what is necessary to consistently deliver superior cost, quality, and service (i.e., to innovate, think critically, take the initiative, work together in mutually supportive ways). Consequently, for organizations that do battle in the global business arena, providing a healthy and safe work environment can be a competitive advantage. Corporate cultures in organizations are established through the systematic

application of expectations, role-modeling, orientation, mentoring, training, monitoring, evaluation, recognition, and rewards.

**The following TEN (10) steps will help organizations to create an OSHE culture systematically.**

**1. Understand the need for an OSHE-friendly corporate culture.** All personnel in leadership positions in an organization, from the CEO to first-line supervisors, need to understand the need for and benefits of an OSHE-friendly corporate culture.

**2. Assess the current corporate culture as it relates to health, safety and environment.** To assess the current corporate culture as it relates to health and safety, survey all personnel in the organization (without attribution) and ask them to code the following questions as being completely true, somewhat true, somewhat false, or completely false: a) Health and safety are high priorities in this organization, b) Key decision makers view the work environment as a potential competitive advantage, c) Employees are considered to be valuable assets who should be properly protected from hazardous conditions, d) Employees are recognized and rewarded for working in a healthy and safe manner, e) Ceremonies are held to celebrate health and safety-related accomplishments, f) Health and safety are factored into the decision-making process at all levels, g) Managers make it clear by their words and actions that the safe way is the right way, h) Employees are encouraged to speak out when they have concerns about the work environment, i) Peer pressure in the workplace supports health and safety, and j) Personnel at all levels are dedicated to maximizing product safety for customers.

**3. Plan for an OSHE-friendly corporate culture.** Based on the tabulated results of the assessment from the previous step, develop a plan for making any necessary change and improvement. For example, if the survey results show that health and safety-related work behaviors are not considered when making decisions about recognition and rewards for personnel, an appropriate planning goal would be: Revise the recognition and reward system to include health and safety criteria.

**4. Expect appropriate health and safety-related behaviors.** If an organization wants its personnel to work safely, it must let them know safety is expected. This means that the job descriptions and performance appraisal instruments used for all personnel, from the CEO down, should contain items relating to health and safety. For example, one item in an employee's job description might read as follows: Employees in this position are expected to: a) comply with all applicable health and safety-related rules, regulations, and procedures; b) work safely and encourage other to do so; c) assist supervisors and managers in identifying and mitigating potentially hazardous conditions; and d) help the organization maintain a healthy and safe work environment.

**5. Role-model the desired health and safety-related behaviors.** One of the worst mistakes people in leadership positions in an organization can make is to tell employees (either verbally or through their actions), "Do as I say, not as I do." Nothing speaks more loudly to employees than the examples of supervisors, managers, and executives--both good and bad.

**6. Orient personnel to the organization's health and safety-related expectations.** The orientation provided for new employees gives organizations an excellent opportunity to get them started on the right foot.

**7. Mentor personnel concerning health and safety.** Once new personnel have completed their orientation, it is important to assign them a mentor who can help them understand, absorb, and internalize the organization's cultural imperatives (one of the most important of which is working in a healthy and safe manner). Personnel assigned as mentors to new employees should be carefully vetted. They should be walking, talking examples of what the organization expects--especially as these expectations relate to health and safety.

**8. Train personnel in the healthy and safe ways to work.** There are two fundamental principles of good management that apply when trying to establish an OSHE-friendly corporate culture. The first is that organizations should never expect employees to do anything they have not been trained to do. The second is that organizations should never assume that employees have had the necessary training.

**9. Monitor and evaluate the work habits of employees.** An important principle of supervision is this one: You get the behavior you accept. Supervisors who allow their direct reports to get away with

unhealthy and unsafe work behaviors are silently saying, "Your bad habits are acceptable to me." Letting unsafe work habits go unchallenged and uncorrected is the same as approving them. Consequently, it is critical that supervisors carefully monitor the work habits of their direct reports and correct all unsafe behavior immediately.

**10. Reinforce and maintain the OSHE-friendly corporate culture.** Just as employees should never stop working safely, no matter how good their team's safety record is, organizations should never stop doing what is necessary to maintain an OSHE-friendly corporate culture.

**By systematically applying the 10 steps presented above on an ongoing basis, organizations can establish and maintain an OSHE-friendly corporate culture that will contribute greatly to making them more competitive in the global marketplace.**

**Below are 5 (FIVE) strategies organizations can use to reinforce and maintain their OSHE-friendly corporate culture once it has been established:**

- Reward healthy and safe work behaviors by making them important factors when promoting personnel.
- Reward healthy and safe work behaviors by making them important factors when making decisions about wage/salary increases.
- Reward healthy and safe work behaviors by making them important factors when making decisions about performance incentives.
- Recognize healthy and safe work behaviors by making them part of the criteria for selecting employees for monthly, quarterly, and annual performance awards.
- Encourage supervisors to verbally and publicly acknowledge, on a just-in-time basis (right when it is happening), employees who do their jobs safely.

## **Measuring The Success of OSHE Culture Change: SIX (6) Vital Indicators**

How does one know when the culture has changed? Change has occurred when individual values, attitudes and behaviours are more aligned or consistent with those of the organization

These SIX (6) indicators can be used for measuring the success of OSHE culture:

- increased participation at OSHE meetings
- employees demonstrating more caring for themselves and others through the use of personal protective equipment (PPEs) both on and off the job
- an increase in receptivity and acceptance of feedback regarding OSHE procedures and behaviours
- an increase in employee willingness to provide feedback to co-workers and to initiate ideas regarding improving OSHE performance.
- an increase in reporting of observed hazards and incidents.
- employees working safely even when the boss is not around.

Let us ponder and embark on the necessary steps now.

**Best Wishes - Eid-UI Mubarak or 'Selamat Hari Raya Aidil-Fitri' to all respected Muslims around the world.**

**From:**

***Abdul Shukor, (prof.shukor@gmail.com)***



## How can I plan a PPE program at my workplace?

Often we heard the frustration that came from the OSH practitioners about lukewarm or poor receptions regarding the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) among the employees. Hence, better and effective strategies must be developed to ensure that employees are easily accepted to the idea of PPE as 'our friends in need' program at work.

The **SUCCESS** of the PPE program depends upon winning the cooperation and support of all those concerned. This can best be achieved by helping workers understand the need to wear the PPE, and by encouraging them to want to wear it rather than demanding that they do so. Success is more likely to be accomplished if it is shown that controls at the source and along the path have been addressed comprehensively and effectively. It may help to have an education program within the work environment, using seminars, films, and best of all, one-on-one discussions. The use of posters and envelope stuffers can assist in the promotion of the program, but should not be used as the only means of promotion.

Many of the safety equipment suppliers may be able to help with promotion as can safety associations and government agencies. Naturally, the education process should be supported by a clear company policy that assigns responsibility for the use of PPE and which is firmly backed.

### Why are there so many precautions about using PPE?

PPE programs are often plagued by the belief that once a piece of equipment is put on, the worker is totally protected. **This is a false sense of security. Basic safety principles, such as housekeeping and environmental controls, must not be ignored.**

PPE is designed to meet criteria which is only an approximation of real working conditions. PPE should not be used when hazards are greater than those for which it is designed. When it comes to the evaluation of potential hazards, uncertainties need to be taken into account. Unfortunately, PPE design criteria cannot cover all eventualities.



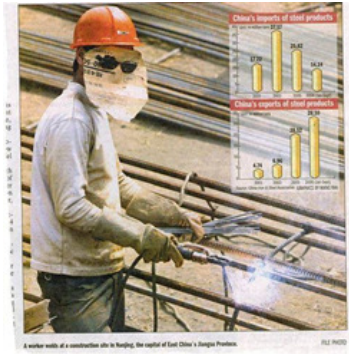
Above Photo: The Construction Site Safety Helmet.

**Using several types of protection at the same time such as hard-hats, ear muffs and goggles, must not increase the danger or decrease the worker's ability to do the assigned job. Wearing PPE should not in itself create a greater danger. Gloves prevent skin damage while working with moving equipment, but can create an entanglement hazard with a drill press or metal lathe.**

Since the goal of an occupational health and safety program is to prevent occupational injury and illness, PPE cannot be the first protection option. The use of PPE does not prevent an accident from happening. It does not eliminate the hazard. It does not influence any pre-contact activities. It only minimizes the exposure or reduces the severity of injury or illness. PPE is a good point-of-contact injury control strategy. However, even at its best, PPE cannot achieve its full-protection potential without worker



knowledge and cooperation. In practice, PPE is only to be used as the last line of defence.



Above Photo: The New Lightweight Welders Mask

### Example of PPE program checklist:

The PPE program co-ordinator should consider the following:

#### Designing a PPE Program:

- Ensure engineering controls are considered first. PPE is the last line of defence.
- Secure the active participation of all parties.
- Ensure that a program coordinator has been appointed.
- Observe the gradual phasing in of the PPE program on a pre-arranged time schedule.
- Re-evaluate program on an ongoing basis.

#### Promotional Strategy

- Publicize commitment to the program
- Ensure a clear, concise company policy has been formulated
- Examine the educational program

#### Workplace Survey

- Review work practices, job procedures, equipment and plant layout
- Use job hazard analysis techniques to integrate accepted safety and health principles and practice into specific operations

#### Selection

- Choose PPE to match the hazard
- Obtain advice on proper selection
- Institute workplace trials
- Consider the physical comfort of PPE
- Evaluate cost considerations of PPE usage
- Ensure PPE meets standards / certification (e.g., CSA, CGSB, NIOSH, ANSI)

#### Fitting and wearing

- Ensure program includes the individual fitting of PPE
- Survey users to ensure PPE is worn properly

#### Maintenance

- Ensure that workers know how to perform regular maintenance and inspection of their PPE

#### Training

- Verify that all users, supervisors, selectors, buyers, and storekeepers are trained

#### Auditing the Program

- Review the program at least annually
- Review and compare production and safety performance records



Above: The Dust and Particle Free Breathing Apparatus.

### Worker responsibilities include:

#### Use of proper PPE

- Make sure you are wearing the right PPE for the job. Check with your safety representative if you are not sure.

#### Maintenance and inspection

- Inspect PPE before and after each use
- Take care of PPE at all times
- Clean all PPE after use
- Repair or replace damaged or broken PPE
- Store PPE in clean dry air - free from exposure to sunlight or contaminants

#### Training

- Ensure you have been trained in how to fit, wear, and maintain PPE
- Ensure training program includes information that explains when and what PPE should be worn, and why it should be worn.

## A shocking incident that begs immediate response regarding **proper protection** of highly dangerous areas.

### A man **electrocuted** while stealing cables in Perlis.

([http://besonline.rtm.gov.my/details.php?id=3231&pageno=10&field=na\\_Title&order=ASC&title=National](http://besonline.rtm.gov.my/details.php?id=3231&pageno=10&field=na_Title&order=ASC&title=National))

**Date of incident: 16th September 2008**

**Padang Besar, Malaysia** - A man was electrocuted while another was slightly injured while stealing cables from a Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) substation in Bukit Keteri, Perlis early Tuesday.

Padang Besar Police Chief Superintendent, Che Man Md Dros said police found the charred body of a 27 year old at the substation which had **the capacity of delivering 3,300 kilowatts of energy**.

He said another thief was caught by a security guard of a cement factory opposite the substation as he tried to flee the scene with a motorcycle. The thief has a burnt mark on his shirt.

According to Police Superintendent Che Man, **the thieves climbed a power transmission pole** at the substation and an explosion occurred as they were cutting the cables.



#### **Some (OSHE) questions that need urgent responses:**

- Was a correct fencing structure erect by the company or something that can be cut by pliers?
- Was an alarm or a motion detecting system install by the company at this dangerous area?
- Were proper warning signages with real photos available at the area?

Probably, the company should consider a new improved design for the perimeter fence at their electricity substations! See photo below.

### **News alert!** Suspected thief impaled on fence spike for TWO HOURS.



Ouch! This suspected thief was impaled on fence spike for TWO hours after losing his footing while trying to clamber into a museum in South Africa.

The 32-year-old was eventually hoisted off and, despite how painful the picture (left) looks, told police he hadn't been in any pain - because he'd been drunk!

**Source:** [www.mirror.co.uk](http://www.mirror.co.uk) (Date: 2 Oct 2008)

# Protecting young workers from workplace hazards.

(Source: <http://www.safetysolutions.net.au/articles/1480-Protecting-young-workers-from-workplace-hazards>)

Statistics show that over 1000 workers between 15 and 25 years old suffer permanent disability and over 8400 young workers are injured at work every year in New South Wales, Australia, most occurring in manufacturing and retail industries.

The five (5) most common injuries to young workers are:

1. Sprains and strains
2. Open wounds
3. Fractures
4. Bruising and crushing
5. Burns

The top five (5) critical injuries to young workers are:

1. Broken bones
2. Severe loss of blood
3. Head injuries
4. Amputation
5. Severe burns or scalds

The top five (5) causes of injury to young workers are:

1. Manual handling
2. Slips, trips and falls
3. Being hit by moving objects
4. Falls from a height
5. Hitting moving objects

Some hazards can cause an immediate injury. For instance, young workers could slip and fall on a greasy floor, or get splashed by a chemical, such as sulphuric acid or ammonia, and get a burn. A fire or an explosion can cause serious injury or death. Burns, cuts, muscle strains and broken bones are acute injuries that can be felt as soon as the

accident happens. Some hazards can cause young workers to become sick or injured over a period of time. For instance, if they work with certain hazardous chemicals, the damage that happens in their bodies may not be noticed right away.

Additionally, young workers could injure themselves lifting boxes, stocking shelves or repeating actions over and over. These chronic injuries sometimes are not noticed for years. Similarly, long-term exposure to noise can lead to hearing loss when older. Some minor injuries are often 'laughed off' as part of the job. They are not. Such an attitude is unacceptable.

To protect young workers, employers must know the range of hazards in their workplace, and they must apply the necessary controls to ensure that people are not injured or made ill because of their work.

**Common workplace hazards include:**

- Manual handling (pushing, pulling, carrying, lifting)
- Work environment (floor surfaces, noise, temperature, ventilation and access)
- Machinery (powered and non-powered equipment)
- Heat (burns and scalds)
- Electricity (electrocution)
- Hazardous substances (chemicals, fumes)
- Biological waste
- Skin-penetrating injuries (knife or syringe injuries)
- Noise

- Confined spaces

**How can employers prevent young workers being injured at work?**

Employers must give young workers the information they need to undertake their work safely. **There is no substitute for thorough training and careful supervision until the new worker is competent to do the tasks required.**

To effectively manage workplace hazards, employers need to work with employees to:

- Identify all hazards in the workplace
- Assess the potential for harm each hazard presents for workers and explore options for control
- Control the hazards

For example, a young worker in a manufacturing environment may be asked to move some heavy crates. Without the correct training or procedures in place, the young worker could strain their back or shoulders, trip while carrying the crates or injure themselves or others if they drop the load. The employer should identify these potential hazards in moving the crates; assess the situation and available options for controlling these risks; and control the situation by providing a more effective solution to moving the load, ie, using a trolley, getting assistance from another employee or reducing the size and weight of the load to a more manageable level.



## EXAMPLES OF OSHE CAMPAIGN FOR YOUNG WORKERS IN CANADA.

**Workplace health and safety leaders issued a call to strengthen awareness around young worker safety, noting that young workers are over five times more likely to get injured on their first four weeks on the job.**

The **Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA)** spearheaded the launch today of the Young Worker Safety Awareness campaign, which coincided with the first day of the observance of the Healthy Workplace Month. Maureen Shaw, president and CEO of the IAPA, stressed the need to raise awareness about the resources and support available for young workers to help reduce workplace injuries.

Starting a job is often a very exciting time for many new and young workers, said Shaw. And too often, the fear of being fired or letting the employer down takes precedence over their own well-being. **Workers aged 15 to 24 make up 15% of the Canadian workforce, Shaw said.** In 2006, more than 11,300 young workers suffered injuries on the job that prevented them from performing work for at least one day. In the same year, 10 young workers were killed as a result of a work-related accident or injury.

Sarah Wheelan, a young worker ambassador and an intern at the IAPA, related **her own experience a few years ago as a young worker working at a deli store, where she was forced to take shortcuts in cleaning the meat cutter exposing her to risks of injury.** Wheelan said that while she was aware that she's being subjected to unsafe work practices at the time, **she didn't know how to address her concern. And when she tried to tell her supervisor about her concern, it was dismissed as part of the job.** "Risk is inherent to life but why do we allow the same predictable tragedies to

happen over and over again?" Wheelan said. Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) chair Steve Mahoney, who delivered a message at the Young Worker Safety Awareness launch event, urged young workers to take responsibility of their own safety at work.

**"We need to get the message across to young workers that they in fact have the right to refuse UNSAFE WORK,"** Mahoney said. "It's against the law for them to be fired for doing so and they in fact have the responsibility to do it so that they can point out any unsafe conditions."

The WSIB chair also warned employers against ignoring or rejecting young workers' safety concerns, saying they will be dealt with "very harshly."

"We have zero tolerance for that kind of attitude in the workplace," he said. Mahoney said that in the last three years, an average of 10 young workers was killed in the workplace every year. He said protecting young workers should not only be a concern for employers, but also for parents, teachers and the whole community.

"Prevention is truly the only solution ... How about if we start them young?" Mahoney said, citing various programs by the WSIB that targets young children to raise awareness around workplace safety.

### **Response from Prof. Shukor.**

✿ I do believe that companies throughout the country must develop strategies and approaches to assist our **young workers** in their early twenties to learn OSHE matters as well as to practise the correct ways of doing work. Effective campaigns and on-going training programmes should be carried out consistently with the view of creating an OSHE culture among these young workers. ✿

## BENEFITS OF PROF. ABDUL SHUKOR'S IN-HOUSE OSHE COURSES FOR THE PARTICIPANTS.

For more information on the range of OSHE courses, please contact Prof. Shukor via the email or mobile phone.

### **Refresh:**

- OSHE and Ergonomics principles and guidelines learnt through actual cases and in-class demonstrations.
- Understand the physiological and psychological aspects of working in different environments.
- Awareness and impact of work-related injuries to muscles and bones

### **Redesign:**

- Apply OSHE and Ergonomics recommendations and guidelines for maximum benefits at the workstations, factory floors and other locations at the company.
- Improved employees' performance and housekeeping.

### **Reduce:**

- Debilitation and expensive medical costs of work-related injuries and properties damages.
- Costly human error due to poor workstation's designs and lay-outs
- Workers' compensation costs and insurance premiums

### **Revitalize:**

- Your company's drive towards higher profitability and revenues
- Greatly improved product quality and productivity
- Ability to substantially increase employees' job satisfaction and roles within the company.