**Chartered qualification in Human Resource Management**

**Case Study 01**

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# **Question 01-Application of the hierarchy of controls to the case**

According to Oshin Perera's case study as a secretary at Commercial Lanka Pvt Ltd, the Hierarchy of Controls is one of the basic concepts in determining ways in which the accident might have been prevented. The hierarchy gives a systematic way of risk reduction, whereby control methods are ranked in their effectiveness, starting with the highest in effectiveness or elimination and moving toward the lowest: substitution, engineering control, administrative control, and personal protective equipment or PPE. Applying this framework might have revealed missed opportunities for preventing this unfortunate incident.

## **Elimination**

Eliminate the hazard. Here, the torn stair carpet will probably leave a permanent risk to the workers. Had the management acted right away to procure replacement or removal of the torn carpet, tripping hazards would have completely been eliminated. The management may have failed to work on several requests to fix the carpet but showing no action at all indicates that it is ineffective in implementing the most efficient control strategy.

## **Substitution**

Substitution may be less applicable in this instance than elimination, but the organization could also have considered safe alternatives to carpet altogether, such as a non-slip material or flooring that is more durable and less likely to wear down. This would have constituted a long-term workplace safety investment. (BCarm, 2025)

## **Engineering controls**

These controls aim to isolate people from hazards. Engineering solutions such as installing anti-slip stair treads, improving lighting on the staircase, or adding secure handrails could have helped reduce the likelihood of slips and falls. While not removing the hazard entirely, engineering controls reduce the exposure and impact.

## **Administrative controls**

These controls involve changing the way people work. In the context of this case, administrative measures would include regular safety inspections, timely hazard reporting systems, and maintenance schedules. The fact that repeated reports were ignored points to poor administrative oversight.

## **Personal protective equipment (PPE)**

Of all possible PPE, the least effective non-slip footwear would really form a few minimal barriers against hazards. The last resort relied on avoiding the use of PPE. This should not be a first-line defense against worksite dangers.

Eventually, proactive application of the hierarchy could have protected Oshin and would have created a more successful safety culture. (Turner, 2025)

# **Question 02-Recommendations to improve hazard identification and risk assessment**

There is a need to apply HIRA effectively within the workplace in order to ensure safety and health. At Commercial Lanka Pvt Ltd, Oshin Perera sustained injuries while walking on a damaged carpet that had been torn and neglected for a considerable time. This incident demonstrated several flaws in the company's existing health and safety practices. To avoid a repeat of such incidents and in order to inculcate a culture of safety, a number of organized improvements within HIRA would have to occur within the organization.

## **Establishing a formal HIRA framework**

One of the first steps is to establish a formal and structured HIRA framework within the organization. This involves developing clear procedures for identifying hazards, evaluating the severity and likelihood of risks, and determining appropriate control measures. Such a framework should be aligned with national safety standards and best practices to ensure consistency and effectiveness.

## **Conducting regular workplace inspections**

In the case of an obvious and public risk, such as the torn carpet, regular scheduled inspections play an important role in recognizing potential safety hazards before they evolve into accidents. Detected hazards could then be negated by recurrent walkthroughs and checklists executed by trained safety officers. Upon conclusion of each inspection, a formal report should be generated, with a timeline for corrective actions outlined. (Labor, 2025)

## **Enhancing reporting mechanisms**

An effective reporting system allows employees to report any hazard quickly and without fear of reprisal. In the example given, requests by the Health and Safety Committee to in fact fix the carpet drew no clear evidence of accountability or tracking. The organization should provide a digital or physical hazard reporting log that records issues, the person responsible, actions taken, and timelines for resolution.

## **Training and employee involvement**

Employees must be trained not only to identify hazards, but also how to assess risk levels and respond appropriately. Time spent with employees during risk assessments will guarantee that practical, frontline insights are gained. It also helps trigger a sense of responsibility and ownership over the workplace safety.

## **Continuous review and improvement**

Lastly, hazard identification and risk assessment are not processes that can be static. These should be reviewed periodically after accidents or changes in the workplace. Feedback loops, audits, and performance reviews can update the system over time and keep the safety standard alive. (Ltd, 2025)

# **Question 03-Business benefits of effective occupational health and safety management**

Occupational health and safety (OHS) issues are not only a legal and moral duty but can also be a compelling strategy for gaining business advantage. The Oshin Perera incident at Commercial Lanka Pvt Ltd truly affirms that avoiding safety has its impact, and it provides room to discuss what could have been the business gains had the OHS been properly implemented.

## **Reduction in workplace accidents and injuries**

Had the company addressed the torn stair carpet promptly, Oshin’s accident could have been prevented. A proactive approach to hazard control reduces the likelihood of injuries, lowering the direct costs associated with accidents, such as medical bills, compensation claims, and insurance premiums. Indirect costs—such as loss of productivity, damage to morale, and time lost in investigations—can also be significantly minimized when a strong OHS system is implemented.

## **Improved employee morale and retention**

When employees perceive that their safety and well-being are valued, they are more likely to remain with and be actively engaged in the organization. In the case of Oshin, the apparent lack of response to safety complaints may have fostered an atmosphere of neglect amongst the staff. An effective OHS program nurtures a great work culture that builds high trust, satisfaction, and loyalty among employees. (IOSH, 2024)

## **Enhanced organizational reputation**

A firm with a noteworthy health and safety record garners the appreciation of its clients, stakeholders, and society in general. If Commercial Lanka Pvt Ltd had responsibly reacted to the reported hazard and was concerned for its employees' welfare, it would have augured well for its corporate image. On the contrary, an accident due to negligence can tarnish a reputation and tear apart the trust of its customers and confidence of its investors.

## **Legal compliance and risk management**

Effective OHS management guarantees compliance with national regulations and workplace safety rules. Legal action, fines, or compensation payouts can impose huge financial penalties and/or reputational loss to the business. In the presented case, failure to address the safety concerns can put the company under litigation.

## **Operational efficiency and productivity**

Those working in a safe environment lead to uninterrupted operations with few to no accidents. Which means deadlines are met, quality maintained, and productivity achieved. Thus, managing OHS effectively helps improve business continuity and business growth directly. (Helpline, 2025)

# **Question 04-A critical discussion of management and employee responsibilities**

The case where Oshin Perera got injured due to a carpet torn in the stairs of Commercial Lanka Pvt. Ltd. demonstrates glaring deficits in occupational health and safety (OHS) responsibilities. An analysis of this incident reveals that both management and employees have responsibility-sharing roles for the purposes of maintaining safety in the workplace; however, the greater burden of responsibility lies upon management.

## **Management responsibilities**

The management in this case has failed fundamentally in a number of respects. One of their primary duties is to maintain a safe and healthy working environment. Despite repeated requests and reminders from the Health and Safety Committee to repair or replace the torn carpet, the management failed to act. This is an obvious infringement of their duty to identify hazards and to mitigate risks without delay.

Management is also accountable for the establishment and ongoing maintenance of a full OHS policy, as well as the performance of risk assessments at regular intervals and subsequent actions towards any identified hazard. While doing so, it is also their responsibility to acknowledge and respond in an effective manner to any safety matters raised by employees. This failure is evidence that safety communication processes and organizational responsibility have broken down. Plus, an immediate further sign of a poor OHS command and culture appears through this failure by the management to investigate and correct the situation promptly after the accident. (Herrity, 2025)

## **Employee responsibilities**

But the event lays the blame at the door of management. There are, however, some responsibilities resting on employees' shoulders under health and safety practice. Part of that is the requirement to report hazards and unsafe conditions to the relevant authority immediately. Oshin and others acted in line with this reporting requirement by taking the torn carpet to the committee's attention. However, if there were any staff who failed to report the hazard or took it lightly, that would mean either ignorance or irresponsibility on their part.

Employees should also make responsible use of workplace facilities, follow safe practices, and take part in safety training. While Oshin did exercise her responsibilities, the overall safety culture demands active participation of employees in safety committee activities with a much clearer perception of their rights and duties. (Jones, 2002)

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