Measures for Securing Safety and Health of Workers

Structure of Safety and Health Measures

**Formulation of the industrial accident prevention plan**
Prevention of industrial accident in accordance with the Eleventh Industrial Accident Prevention Plan (2008-2012)

**Basic measures**
- Establishment of safety and health management system
- Implementation of safety and health education
- Development of safety and health awareness
- Promotion of voluntary safety and health management activities

**Promotion of safety and health management activities**
Thorough implementation of safety and health education at workplaces.

**Promotion of construction safety measures**
Dissemination of guidelines on construction site safety management by principal employers.

**Promotion of measures for industries with frequent occurrence of accidents**
Promotion of measures for manufacturing, construction, transportation, forestry, and the tertiary industry

**Promotion of measures for chemical substances management**
Strict execution of 3 categories of management - work environment, work, and health management.

**Promotion of asbestos hazard prevention measures**
Total prohibition of asbestos containing products

**Promotion of dust hazard prevention measures**
Measures against asbestos exposure in accordance with the Ordinance on Prevention of Asbestos Hazards

**Promotion of mental health and overwork measures**
Thorough implementation of measures in accordance with the "Guidelines for Maintaining and Improving Worker's Mental Health".

**Promotion of industrial health activities**
Promotion of measures taking into consideration international trend.

Cooperation with industrial accident prevention organizations, etc.

**Measures for industries with frequent occurrence of accidents**
Promotion of measures for manufacturing, construction, transportation, forestry, and the tertiary industry

**Promotion of occupational safety and health management system (OOSH-MS) utilization.**
### System Framework

1. **Measures of industrial safety and health laws and ordinances**
   
   (1) Conducting mental health checkups by doctors at the time of interview guidance for those working long hours
   
   (2) Conducting investigation and discussion at health committees, etc. for establishing mental health measures

2. **Measures to be taken by business operators**
   
   (1) Formulation of the "Guidelines for Maintaining and Improving Workers' Mental Health" (made public in March 2006)
   
   The Guidelines provide the following matters as general implementation methods of mental health care that business operators should take.

   1. Investigation and discussion at health committees, etc.
   2. Formulation of mental health promotion plans
   3. Promotion of four types of mental health care
      - Self-care
      - Care by management supervisors
      - Care by industrial health staffs, etc. placed at offices
      - Care by external resources
   4. Concrete procedures of mental health care
      - Educational training and information provision
      - Identification and improvement of working environment, etc.
      - Detecting and responding to mental health disorders
      - Support for returning to work
      - Consideration to personal information protection
   5. Matters requiring attention for efforts made in small-scale offices

   * External resources: refers to institutions or experts that provide support for mental health care outside offices

   (2) Formulation of “Prevention of and Countermeasures against Suicide at Workplaces” (Suicide Prevention Manual) (revised in September 2008)

   (3) Formulation of “Support Guide for Workers Absent from Work due to Mental Health Problems to Return to Workplaces” (revised in March 2009)

3. **Guidance by Prefectural Labour Bureaus and Labour Standards Inspection Offices**

   Business operators are provided with guidance on measures that conforms to the Guidelines for offices.

### The government support for promoting mental health measures at workplaces

1. **Comprehensive support**

   (1) Establishment and operation of Mental Health Measures Support Centers, etc.
   
   Implementation of comprehensive support from prevention of mental health disorders, early detection, and proper treatment through to support for absent workers to return to workplaces
   
   [1] Implementation of comprehensive consultation from prevention through to returning to workplaces
   
   [2] Implementation of visiting support by experts at individual offices, etc.

2. **Information provision**

   Establishment of a mental health portal site “Ears of the Heart” (October 2009; http://kokoro.mhlw.go.jp/)
   
   Provision of comprehensive information on mental health measures at workplaces

3. **Others**

   (1) Conducting industrial health training for psychiatrists, etc.
   
   (2) Conducting mental health training for industrial health staffs, etc.
   
   (3) Provision of support for small-scale offices with insufficient industrial health care systems at regional industrial health centers located nationwide
   
   (4) Establishment of “telephone consultation for mental health of workers” at 19 Rosai (Workers' Accident Compensation) Hospitals nationwide
In order to prevent health problems caused by overwork, properly implementing measures for worker’s health care is important in preventing worker from cumulative fatigue and eliminating such heavy long-time overwork that does not allow workers to recover from fatigue.

For this reason, the Comprehensive Measures aim to prevent health problems caused by overwork with the formulation of the “measures that employers must take to prevent health problems caused by overwork” and compilation of necessary measures taken by the government, including thorough dissemination and guidance, etc.

### Measures that employers must take to prevent health problems caused by overwork

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(1) Reduction of overtime and holiday work hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○ Observance of “standard for limit” when concluding the 36 agreement</td>
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<td>○ Proper identification of working hours, etc.</td>
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<th>(2) Promotion of taking annual paid leave</th>
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<th>(3) Improvement of working time arrangements</th>
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<th>(4) Thorough implementation of health management measures for workers</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[1] Establishment of health management system and implementation of health checkups, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Appointment of industrial doctors, health supervisors, and health promoters, etc. and implementation of health management by them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of health management system, including establishment of health committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Steady implementation of health checkups and subsequent measures, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>[2] Interview guidance for workers who had long overtime and holiday work hours for a long time, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Implementation of interview guidance by doctors and subsequent measures, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Development of procedures for implementing interview guidance, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Utilization of regional industrial health centers to promote implementation of interview guidance, etc. at small-scale offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[3] Identification of cases and recurrence prevention in case of occurrence of occupational diseases due to over work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Necessary measures taken by the government

| ○ Guidance for overtime work at consultation desks in accordance with the 36 agreement, etc. |
| ○ Supervision and guidance for offices that are suspected of having overtime/holiday work hours of 45 hours or more |
| ○ Guidance for thorough implementation of recurrence prevention measures in case of occurrence of occupational diseases due to over work |
Creation of Comfortable Working Environment

Business operators are obliged by the Industrial Safety and Health Act to make efforts in creating comfortable work environment.

Outline of Guidelines for Comfortable Workplaces

1. Details of measures to be taken
   (1) Appropriate maintenance and management of work environment not to make it uncomfortable to work in
   (2) Improved work methods for work performed in an uncomfortable posture or work requiring considerable muscular strength
   (3) Establishment and development of resting rooms, etc.
   (4) Maintenance and management of facilities required for office life, including washrooms and lavatories, etc., to keep them in a clean and easy to use condition

2. Matters to be concerned
   (1) Taking necessary measures for continued and systematic efforts for the creation, maintenance, and management of comfortable work environment
   (2) Taking necessary measures for reflecting as much opinions of workers as possible
   (3) Taking into consideration individual differences, including age, etc.
   (4) Taking into consideration that workplaces have rich and relaxing atmosphere
Detailed Information 5  Guidelines for the Comprehensive Safety Standards of Machinery (Outline)

Procedure for securing safety of machinery based on the Guidelines for the Comprehensive Safety Standards of Machinery

Entities engaged in the manufacturing, etc. of machinery

(1) Investigation of the risks or hazards, etc.
[1] Set up specification of the limits, etc. of the machine
[2] Identification of hazard, etc. where workers interact with machinery.
[3] Estimation of risk for the hazards identified
[4] Reduction of risk by considering and carrying out protective measures

(2) Implementation of protective measures
[1] Implementation of inherently safe design measures (Attached Table 2)
[2] Implementation of safeguarding methods and complementary protective measures (Attached Table 3, 4)
[3] Compilation of information for use (Attached Table 5 of the Guidelines)

Employers who have workers using machinery

(1) Implementation of risk assessment
[1] Identification of hazards in tasks, etc.
[2] Identification of hazard, etc. where workers interact with machinery.
[3] Estimation of risk for the hazards identified
[4] Reduction of risk by considering and carrying out protective measures

(2) Implementation of protective measures
[1] Implementation of inherently safe design measures where possible (Attached Table 2)
[2] Implementation of safeguarding methods and complementary protective measures (Attached Table 3, 4)
[3] Development of work procedures, provision of worker training, use of personal protective equipments, etc.
Asbestos is fibrous mineral produced from natural environment, hazardous for human health and may cause lung cancer and mesothelioma after decades of latent period when inhaling its dust particle.

### Measures to prevent future damage

1. Total ban on manufacturing asbestos (Industrial Safety and Health Act)
   - Based on the “Asbestos Comprehensive Measures” (Meeting on asbestos issue by concerned ministers on December 27, 2005), manufacture, import, transfer, provision and use of asbestos containing products has been totally prohibited excluding products that the ban is stayed on manufacturing exceptionally (products of exclusion from application of prohibition) since September 1, 2006.
   - Manufacturing the products of exclusion from application of prohibition is to be gradually banned after the safety of the substitutes is confirmed (this procedure is to be completed in FY2011)

2. Prevention measures of diffusion and exposure at the time of taking down buildings (Ordinance on Prevention of Hazards due to Asbestos)
   - Measures have been intensified with the establishment of the “Ordinance on Prevention of Hazards due to Asbestos” in February, 2005.
   - Asbestos was formally controlled under the Ordinance on Prevention of Hazards due to Specified Chemical Substances.

   Pre-examination of construction materials, submission to the authorities, isolation of working sites, use of inhalation protection equipment, storage of working records, health check-ups, etc.

### Response to anxiety of the people

3. Health management of resigenees (Personal Health Record System in accordance with the Industrial Safety and Health Act)
   - Personal Health Record is issued for those who have been engaged in handling asbestos for a certain period
   - Health check-ups by the government’s burden (every 6 months)

4. Disclosure of information on workplaces, etc. where workers certified as being afflicted with asbestos exposure belonged

### Relief of the victims without a gap

5. Relief based on Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Act
   - Insurance benefits for victims and the bereaved families afflicted with employment injuries by asbestos

6. Relief based on Act on Asbestos Health Damage Relief
   - Payment of the special survivor benefits to those who have lost the right to receive the survivor compensation benefits pursuant to lapses due to prescription based on the industrial accidents insurance
**Measures to Prevent Industrial Accidents by Chemical Substances**

Chemical substances have significantly contributed to the development of industry and affluent life of today heavily depends on them. Chemical substances are indispensable in our daily lives. While they are useful, many of them are hazardous and toxic at the same time. Since inappropriate handling of chemical substances has adverse effects on our health, their proper management is crucial.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has been promoting measures to prevent industrial accidents by chemical substances, including examination of chemical toxicity (carcinogen test, etc. by animal experiment), dissemination and thorough implementation of a system requiring indication of toxicity of chemical substances (labeling, issuance of Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)), and promotion of workers’ voluntary management of chemical substances at workplaces.

### Chemical substances at workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substances covered by the Investigation of Risks or Hazards, etc.:</th>
<th>approx. 60,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substances subject to preparation and issuance of MSDS:</td>
<td>640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substances subject to special control:</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinance on Prevention of Hazards due to Specified Chemical Substances (61 (7 of them are also subjected to manufacturing permits))</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlorine, ethylene oxide, chromic acid, hydrocyanic acid, hydrogen fluoride, benzene, mercury, ammonia, carbon monoxide, formaldehyde, hydrogen chloride, etc.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ordinance on Prevention of Organic Solvent Poisoning (54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acetone, xylene, chloroform, carbon tetrachloride, trichloroethylene, toluene, n-hexane, methanol, gasoline, petroleum naphtha, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ordinance on Prevention of Lead Poisoning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ordinance on Prevention of Tetraalkyl Lead Poisoning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Substances subject to manufacturing permits:</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beryllium, etc.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Substances covered by the Guideline for Prevention of Health Disturbance: | 18 |
| vinyl acetate, biphenyl, etc. | | 

| Substances subject to the prohibition of manufacturing: | 8 |
| Benzidine, Asbestos, etc. | |
Investigation of Risks or Hazards, etc. at Workplaces and Measures Based on the Results

Investigation of the risks or hazards, etc. (risk assessment) refers to the act of identifying the danger and toxicity involved in work and estimating the risks (severity of injuries/diseases and the possibility of occurrence combined).

* Employer's obligation to make efforts under the revised Industrial Safety and Health Act (Enforced in April 2006)

**Procedure of implementation**

1. Identification of the risks and hazards involved in work
2. Estimation of risk for the risks or hazards identified
3. Setting the priority for reducing the estimated risk
4. Discussion and implementation of risk reduction measures
5. Recording risk assessment and risk reduction measures

**Examples of risk estimation/evaluation**

- Severity of accidents:
  - ×: Mortal/severe (industrial accidents causing death or workers to be absent from work for 1 month or longer)
  - △: Moderate (industrial accidents causing workers to be absent from work for less than 1 month)
  - ○: Slight (slight injury, etc.)

- Possibility of occurrence:
  - ×: High/relatively high (possibility of the risks or hazards is rising every day/accidents can occur even with the greatest care)
  - △: Medium (possibility of the risks or hazards may frequently rise in such events as repairing, etc.)
  - ○: Low (possibility of the risks or hazards is rare)

Risk is estimated by combining the severity of accidents and possibility of occurrence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possibility of occurrence</th>
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<th>Moderate</th>
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<tr>
<td>×</td>
<td>III</td>
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<td>△</td>
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<td>○</td>
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<td>II</td>
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Risk levels:
- III: Requiring immediate correction, or being at serious risk
- II: Risk reduction measures should promptly be taken
- I: Risk reduction measures should promptly be taken as required
By type of industry, the number of workers died was the largest for construction at 365 persons (30.5% of total deaths), followed by manufacturing at 211 (17.7%), land cargo transportation at 154 (12.9%).

Source: Labour Standards Bureau, MHLW

The Rate of workers with abnormal findings in the regular medical examination is increasing every year and was 52.5% in 2010.

The Rate of workers with abnormal findings in the special medical examination was 6.3% in 2010.

Disease detection rate in the regular medical examination (Note 1)

Rate of workers with abnormal findings in the pneumoconiosis medical examination

Source: Labour Standards Bureau, MHLW

(Note) 1. Items covered by the regular medical examination were revised in 1989.
2. Items covered by the organic solvent and lead medical examination were revised in 1989.
3. Tabulation methods for the special medical examination were changed in 1995.
4. Items covered by regular medical examination were revised in January 1999.
The number of persons having industrial diseases exceeded 20,000 in 1979 but has been decreasing in a long-term and was 8,111 in 2010 (up 8.3% from the previous year).

Source: Labour Standards Bureau, MHLW

At present roughly 60,000 major chemical substances are being used or have been used in industries in Japan. With the diversity of demands, approximately 1,200 new chemical substances are produced every year. In recent years, in particular, types of new chemical substances whose consumption is very small are increasing.

Source: Labour Standards Bureau, MHLW