

2012

Asia Pacific HSE Report



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Message from the Chairman



This report is prepared by Oil Gas Safety Council to look deeper into the Asia Pacific working environment and how it affects workers and professionals. Asia Pacific Health and Safety Statistics have number of indicators and variations due to diverse policies of governments and industries and regulators that shows that in some cases workplace environment has improved and in other cases it is on downward spiral.

The ILO (International Labor Organization) statistics indicates that every minute two people succumb to death in work related activities which is hard and unfortunate world of 21st century. And yet crude tragedy of life is that around 1.9 million workers were having problems due to standing for longer duration during work. The Statistics shows that approximately 15% of COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) are associated to work related activities that result in emphysema and bronchitis. In 2009/2010, there were 158 fatalities caused by silica, dust and coal and 289 casualties were reported with asbestosis as the main reason.

The main intention of this report is to highlight HSE issues through facts and figures to the industry leaders and regulators. Looking at the dismal figure it is high time that governments in Asia Pacific region make stringent safety rules with clear enforcement strategy to save millions of lives that are at risk due precarious working environment.

Raj Singh
Chairman, Oil Gas Safety Council



Introduction



The recent world and safety statistics have varied information about Singapore, Malaysia, Australia are doing fine but in some sectors HSE record is dreadful. The recycling and waste industries, agriculture and construction have more episodes of death despite the strict rules and regulations enforced to maintain safety and health of workers at work. In 2010/2011 around 115,459 cases were reported as non-fatal injuries such as amputations, fractures and minor wounds ending in resuscitation.



Source: International Labour Organization

Falling from height, tripping and slipping are most common reasons of injuries. The information collected from diverse sources show that falling from height accidents are more significant despite international standards of safety and Work at Height Regulations. Moreover, in the category of work related diseases, musculoskeletal disorder is another reason of concern. Cases of asbestosis and mesothelioma have also been registered caused by fibers. Research shows that during the last ten days the death cases related to asbestosis and mesothelioma have increased significantly because workers will be more exposed in coming years.

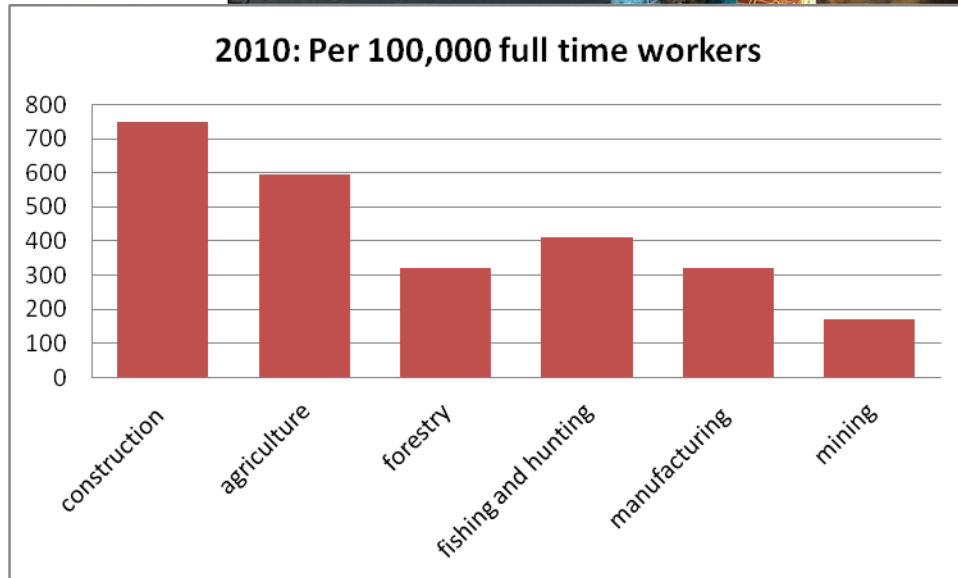
Increasing cases of death, work related diseases, problem at work etc can be controlled by HSE as it plays important role in taking action against employers or companies found to be indulged in breaching safety and health rules and regulations. In some countries it is doing well but in some nations the work is not satisfactory because HSE is not able to curb guilty. More strict rules are required to ensure the health and safety of workers at work. Each nation has its own standards of safety and health related issues, HSE should be more strict and informative to provide health care services, prosecute the employers and enforce rule and regulations in companies.



Singapore HSE Statistics



For Singapore Government; the rising number of work related injuries and death are a matter of concern. Unfortunately most accidents and injuries are registered in construction industry due to lack of safety precautions and appropriate training. The graph below shows that construction bar is highest in comparison to other industries. There are reports that in the last six months 15 workers died of falling from height; the number of people died from falling was 9 last year. The MOM (Ministry of Manpower) is taking steps to control such accidents and ensure safety standards at worksites. In falling from heights cases, employers are found irresponsible and negligent in ensuring working standards; for which they must be executed and the government is planning to bring in strict rules and regulations.



Source: singstat.gov.sg

More than 13,500 WICA claims were processed in Singapore that indicates the seriousness of the matter in workplace safety. Most cases are related to minor injuries, even though the claims are compensated by the employers. On other hand, if the case is more serious such as fatal accident or permanent damage; then the compensation amount is ascertained by the MOM (Ministry of Manpower). During 2010, around 8 million dollars were compensated to the workers who suffered from permanent damage or death. As far as minor and serious injuries are concerned, 30 million dollars were awarded by the insurers and the employers.

MOM is also planning to raise the compensation limits for permanent incapacity and death that is around 21 percent. This increase will enable workers to enjoy revised compensation under this act. The bill is also meant to expand additional compensation for diseases that are not covered or listed earlier. After the amendment of the bill, diseases resulting due to the exposure of biological or chemical agents will also be compensated.



The Singapore government seems committed to make these amendments effective from first June 2012. To ensure the safety and health of workers, MOM will educate employees and will update stakeholders through meetings to let them understand the requirements of revised legislative needs. The new bill mentions that the employers are supposed to buy medical insurance having minimum coverage of around \$10,000 and will be accountable for medical expenses for their foreign workers. Overall it can be assumed that Singapore has been making good progress in preventing work place accidents, however further improvement and efforts are expected over the years.





Malaysia HSE Statistics



The Malaysia Occupational Safety and Health Act (1994) offer the legislative structure to ensure health and safety welfare for workers and to shield workers from risks involved activities at workplace. This act imposes responsibilities on health and inspections & officers, the safety and health committee of companies including employees' safety and health in workplace or work related activities.

Under this act, companies with more than 5 workers are obliged to create a written health and safety policy according to the legislation. This policy means that the company is committed to provide the best safety and healthcare related services to protect workers at workplace. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994, there are specific accountabilities and basic duties for employees, suppliers, designers, manufacturers, self-employed persons and employers. The main intention is to decrease accidents, discover diseases and medical problems hazardous work environment. Malaysian authorities believe that better health services to workers can be realized by establishing investigation teams to discover offenses at workplace including the appointment of health and safety officers to enforce safety rules and regulation.



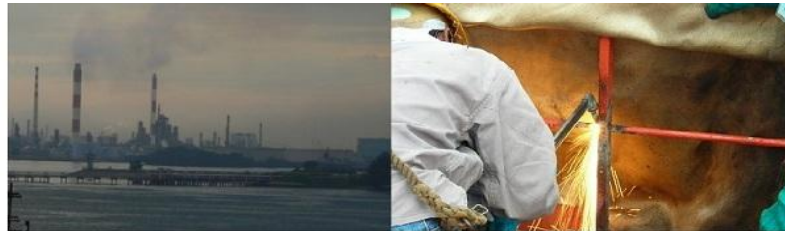
In addition to this, the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) Ministry of Human Resources have expressed their concerns about horrible increase of casualties in workplace, especially in construction.

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS RECORDED BY DOSH 2008		
No	Year	Case
1	28-Aug-08	Falling down from roof
2	26-Aug-08	Struck by concrete bank
3	25-Aug-08	Struck by scaffolding
4	23-Aug-08	Slipping from roof
5	1-Aug-08	Casualty because of fall from 6th floor
6	28-Jul-08	Slipping from platform
7	28-Jun-08	Falling from 9th floor
8	5-May-08	Struck by scaffolding frame
9	23-Apr-08	Struck against water tank of concrete mixer lorry
10	14-Apr-08	Casualty because of collapsed tower
11	5-Apr-08	Casualty because of overturned lorry
12	25-Feb-08	Struck by concrete

Source: Ministry of Human Resource, Malaysia

The table above shows minor cases of construction related activity, but with the amendment of Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994, there is hope that Malaysia HSE statistics will show good results in future.



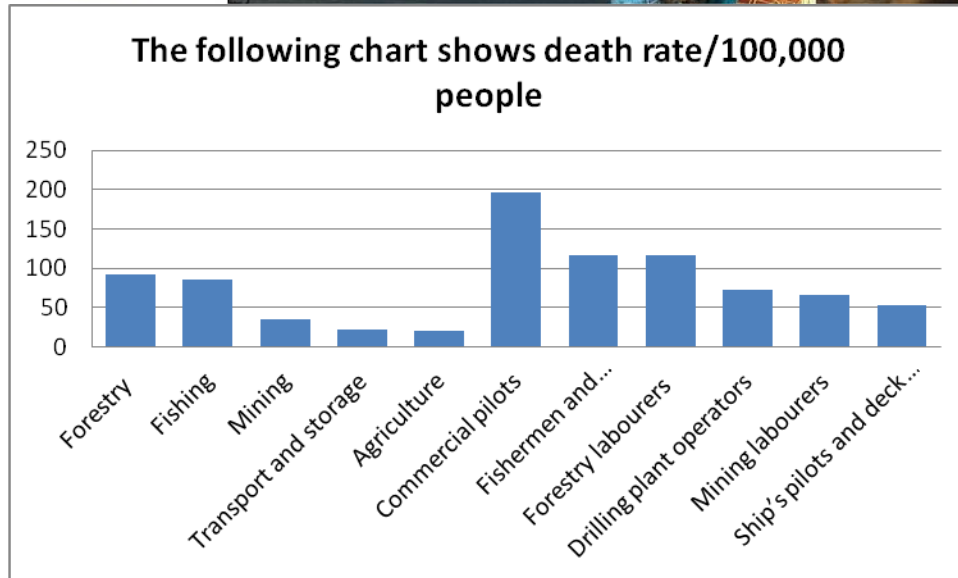


Australia HSE Statistics



According to Australia HSE statistics, there are number of sectors to be improved and developed, but four of them are more critical; such as health & community services, manufacturing, transport & storage and construction. Fisheries, forestry and agriculture are also considered important, but in terms of death and serious fatalities and work-related injuries and accidents at work they are not considered much significant, according to statistics of the National Strategy in 2005. Based on the data and resources collected from different sectors, highest accidents prone zone are above mentioned four important industries as cases of compensation claims, high number of workers and accidents rates are reported in those four sectors only in Australia.

Injuries and problems related to workplace may be minor to serious sometimes with dire consequences- as the nature of accident is unexpected that sometime may result in long term to short term disability or death. These accidents not only hurt the workers, but it may also cause financial problems for workers; such as losing jobs, loss of income etc. During 2006, around 680,000 people went through different work related problems, but one thing was very significant; women workers were less affected or hurt in comparison to men workers.



Source: safeworkaustralia.gov.au

The increasing death toll in various HSE sectors is a significant challenge for the Australia government that needs stringent enforcement of law due to numerous cases of outbreak of diseases frequently due to horrible workplace environment. Some improvements and development have been seen in recent times however these improvement do not meet the set the expectations.

According to a recent survey done in 2008, around 57 percent Australian people aged above 15 years indicated that they were living very good life and have excellent health. The comparative study also showed that around 15 percent population complained that they were not having enough resources to maintain good life and health. About 29 percent mentioned that they were satisfied with their health. The interesting fact about Australian people is women are having better life compared to men.





Conclusion

Each day, around 7,000 people succumb to death as a result of work-related activities and other accidents that accounts for 3 million work associated deaths each year worldwide. Around 1.8 million deaths are caused by diseases at workplaces and around 360,000 deaths cases are direct results of accidents. Moreover, 235,000 fatal incidents are commuting accidents which might increase in coming days as people are getting irresponsible towards rules and regulations. Every year, around 370 million occupational accidents result in being absent from workplaces irrespective of how severe is the case.

Due to the fact that asbestos is major cause of death all over the world, claiming 150,000 each year, nothing substantial has been done - as figures are rising very fast. Worldwide asbestos production has decreased, but number of people dying has increased in Malaysia, Singapore and Australia. Cancers, lung diseases, and other major health related problems caused due to chemical exposure in different industries and millions of workers die every year.

A healthy and safe working atmosphere is important to maintain the life and safety of workers and each county should pay equal importance of workers' life. The role of HSE and their jurisdiction should also be strengthened to execute different policies and prosecute the employers as well as the main culprits. Workers should be educated about their rights and how they can play a role to prevent work related accidents. In addition to this, the number of inspections at workplaces, awareness of health related diseases and their consequences should also be discussed among workers worldwide. OGSC Council is committed to develop a robust health and safety environment all over the world, but this is not possible unless each county realizes the importance of Health and Safety.



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