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Imrpoving your Business by Improving OSH performance

Occupational Safety and Health: Maintain healthy and productive workforce and minimize risks to business

Make occupational health and safety a priority for your business as, after all, healthy and motivated people will be more productive and loyal to your business, helping you to succeed. Use the need for COVID-19 preventive measures as a starting point for systematically reviewing risks to worker health and safety, and manage and minimize these and their possible impacts through prevention, protection and preparedness

Three prong approach is necessary to relegate the crisis situation so that healthy and productive workforce pave a smooth path for revival of businesses. These are:
- *Disease Prevention and Control*
- *Harzard and Risk*
- *Working Condtions*

Occupational Safety and Health for Small Business

Occupational health and safety (OHS) relates to health, safety, and welfare issues in the workplace. It includes the laws, standards, and programs that are aimed at making the workplace better for workers, along with co-workers, family members, customers, and other stakeholders. Improving a company's occupational health and safety standards ensures good business, a better brand image, and higher employee morale. Employees and their families benefit from safety and health because their incomes are protected and their family lives are not hindered by injury; their stress is not increased.

In India, National Policy on Safety, Health and Environment at Work Place specify four directive principles.

(a) for securing the health and strength of employees, men and women; b) that the tender age of children are not abused;

c) that citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength;

d) just and humane conditions of work and maternity relief are provided; and

e) that the Government shall take steps, by suitable legislation or in any other way, to secure the participation of employee in the management of undertakings, establishments or other organisations engaged in any industry.

On the basis of these Directive Principles as well as international instruments, Government is committed to regulate all economic activities for management of safety and health risks at workplaces and to provide measures so as to ensure safe and healthy working conditions for every working man and woman in the nation.

Occupational health and safety standards should be in place to enable the removal, reduction, or replacement of job site hazards. OHS programs should also include material that helps minimize the

effects of the hazards. Overall the bottomline is that the healthy people are productive and useful in workplace, and a conducive workplace will attract good staff.

Occupational safety and health (OSH) is good for business as well as being a legal and social obligation. Enterprises appreciate that OSH prevents people from being harmed or made ill through work, but it is also an essential part of a successful business.

Every enterprise can enjoy significant benefits by investing in OSH. Simple improvements can increase competitiveness, profitability and the motivation of employees. The implementation of an OSH management system provides an effective framework to prevent or minimize accidents and ill health.

Good companies have long recognised the importance of their image and reputation. Large organisations are expected to demonstrate ever-higher standards of corporate governance and greater transparency in reporting practices. The combination of operating in a market- driven economy alongside a society that is more aware of risks means that many enterprises now realise the significant gains that can be made from integrating OSH performance into their wider business model. These include:

- • Improvements in the image, brand value and reputation of the enterprise,
- • Delivering on corporate social responsibility (CSR) commitments,
- • Maintaining and promoting investor confidence, and
- • Developing positive stakeholder engagement.

Approach of OHS During Revival Process from COVID

Getting ready in the post COVID situation involves two parallel tracks. First, to improve COVID-19 prevention and preparedness through a comprehensive Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) approach. Second, to ensure operational preparedness, through the established practices of

preventive and productive maintenance ([1]) and 5S techniques ([2]). These two tracks are interlinked through Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) that need to reflect COVID-19 measures and associated changes in work flows and work stations.

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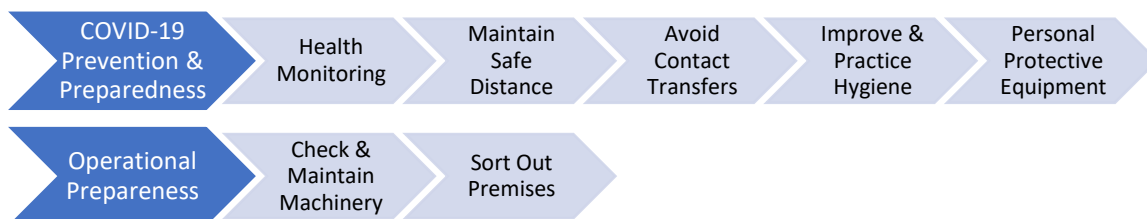
[1] Preventive maintenance means taking measures in advance, before corrective action is needed with regard to functioning of the equipment. Productive maintenance is when result of maintenance of equipment is measured (normally in economic terms, e.g., cost-benefit analysis) and the result is positive (i.e., tuning your boiler regularly will not only prevent damage, it will also save fuel costs). If the savings are superior to the maintenance costs, that is productive maintenance. Together, they are referred to as PPM. PPM is useful as a means for enhancing productivity, minimizing down time, and maximizing efficiency. It involves keeping equipment operating at peak performance levels to help reduce waste (www.apo-tokyo.org).

[2] 5S is a set of workplace management techniques that focuses on improving and maintaining processes, equipment, workplaces and people. 5S stands for consecutively: sort, set in order, shine, standardize and sustain (www.apo-tokyo.org).

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OSH- Three Prong Strategy

Three prong approach is necessary to relegate the crisis situation so that healthy and productive workforce pave a smooth path for revival of businesses. These are:
- *Disease Prevention and Control*
- *Harzard and Risk*
- *Working Conditions*

Disease Prevention and Control :

This would include a strategy and plan by Medical Monitoring, Vaccine plan , Post-Infection Treatments, Non-Pharmaceutical Measures and Emergency planning

The most successful organizations recognize that a healthy workplace is a happy and productive one. Employers and managers have a leading role in preventing ill health and promoting good health. Individuals also recognize how important their health is; older workers need to stay fit and healthy to keep working and enjoy their later years; younger generations are more informed on health and they expect their employers to actively provide healthy workplaces, not ones that merely give them a pay packet. Physical and mental occupational disease and illness can be prevented. There is no excuse for workers to lose their health – for example suffer hearing damage, develop asthma or die from cancer from uncontrolled exposures at work. Working conditions should not create environments that increase the likelihood of physical or mental ill-health, such as those associated with occupational stress.

Organisation could focus on the following aspects for addressing the health related diseases:
- Communicable disease control :
  - Early diagnosis/Rx Cases isolated from working environment
  - Protective measures
  - Regular Medical check-up & Immunisation
  - TB, Typhoid, hepatitis, malaria, venereal diseases
- Cleaning and Contamination : All areas in the premises and transport facilities shall be disinfected completely
- Workplace Measures: Hand wash & sanitizer, thermal scanning and social distancing, reduced no of workforce
- Protection of Workers: PPEs and regular monitoring
- Insurance and local clinics

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This pillar involves identification of the hazard by carrying out a workplace risk assessment, determination of how employees might be at risk and evaluating the risks; record and review hazards at least annually, or earlier if something changes

Hazard is a term associated with a substance that is likelihood to cause an injury in a given environment or situation. Industrial hazard may be defined as any condition produced by industries that may cause injury or death to personnel or loss of product or property. An industrial riskassessment however usually includes Identification of major hazards or operability issues related to the process and its design. Major process hazards usually include the release of hazardous materials and/or energy.

In order to reduce Workers' Risk of Exposure following should be considered
- Develop an Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan
- Stay abreast of guidance from govt agencies, and consider incorporating recommendations
- Plans should integrate the level(s) of risk associated with worker and workspace
- Such considerations should include exposure to communicable diseases
- Non-occupational risk factors at home and in community settings.
- Workers' individual risk factors needs redressal

Following are the safety concerns that needs to be considered.
Fire Safety:
- ✓ Ensure that a team for emergencies, such as fire, explosion, natural disaster, accident or others are organized and that all its members are trained on required actions.
- ✓ Ensure fire prevention groups are formed and fire drills are conducted once every six months.
- ✓ Ensure access to medical treatment and communication devices such as mobile phone in case of an emergency.
- ✓ Ensure that combustible and flammable materials are stored in a safe and systematic way.

Electrical Safety
- ✓ Ensure power tools, generators, and transformers are properly maintained.
- ✓ All live electrical equipment must be insulated.
- ✓ Ensure that only trained authorized employees are conducting electrical work. Check with the DISI's electrical inspection department to know the trained professional in each factory.
- ✓ Lock-out procedures or danger tags must be in place when conducting electrical maintenance.

Machine Safety:
- ✓ Ensure that operators are informed, instructed and trained on how to operate the machinery safely and correctly, including the checking of machinery prior to use.
- ✓ Plant and machinery must be kept maintained.
- ✓ Ensure that there is an adequate work space for the operators around the machinery.
- ✓ Ensure that workers are empowered and are aware that they should inform supervisors if a machinery breaks down or guards become dislodged.

       ✓ Ensure that emergency stops are easy to access and are visible in case of an emergency.

Chemical Safety:
- ✓ Communicate on hazardous substances workers handle
- ✓ Inform employees on the exposure of chemical substances
- ✓ Make awareness on how to use chemical substances safely
- ✓ Safe storage and disposal of chemical

Working Environment

Factors that pertains to the 'Working Environment' includes health and safety, security and working hours. A poor working environment can damage your health and put your safety at risk. It's the responsibility of both employer and employees.

Wellbeing in the workplace has different meanings within and across organizations and countries. This may be influenced by complex cultural and societal beliefs, attitudes, constraints and regulatory and social systems. The International Labour Organization (ILO) states that: "Workplace wellbeing relates to all aspects of working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment, to how workers feel about their work, their working environment, the climate at work and work organization. The aim of measures for workplace well-being is to complement Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) measures to make sure workers are safe, healthy, satisfied and engaged at work. Workers [sic] wellbeing is a key factor in determining an organization's longterm effectiveness. Many studies show a direct link between productivity levels and the general health and well-being of the workforce"

The best workplace wellbeing programmes recognize that there are inter-related elements; the individual, the work environment /job, the organization and social engagement/ values. Done properly, wellbeing programmes are more than just a few 'healthy life' initiatives. They are about creating an organizational culture which promotes strong, ethical workplace relationships based on trust and respect; a collaborative and communicative management style; and a culture in which learning and development is encouraged so that people can fulfil their potential, as well as promoting good physical and psychological health, whilst enabling broader social engagement.

Major aspects that forms the working environment are :
Temperature:
- ✓ Ensure effective ventilation
- ✓ Ensure availability of clean drinking water

Ergonomics:
- ✓ Passage routes clearly marked
- ✓ Ensure mechanical lilting as much possible
- ✓ Avoid militiaperson lifting
- ✓ Ensure work stations are adjustable
- ✓ Ensure east of work

Noise:
- ✓ Ensure safe noise level
- ✓ Ensure length of exposure reduced
- ✓ Ensure appropriate use of PPE

![Building Back Business from Crisis - MSME logo]

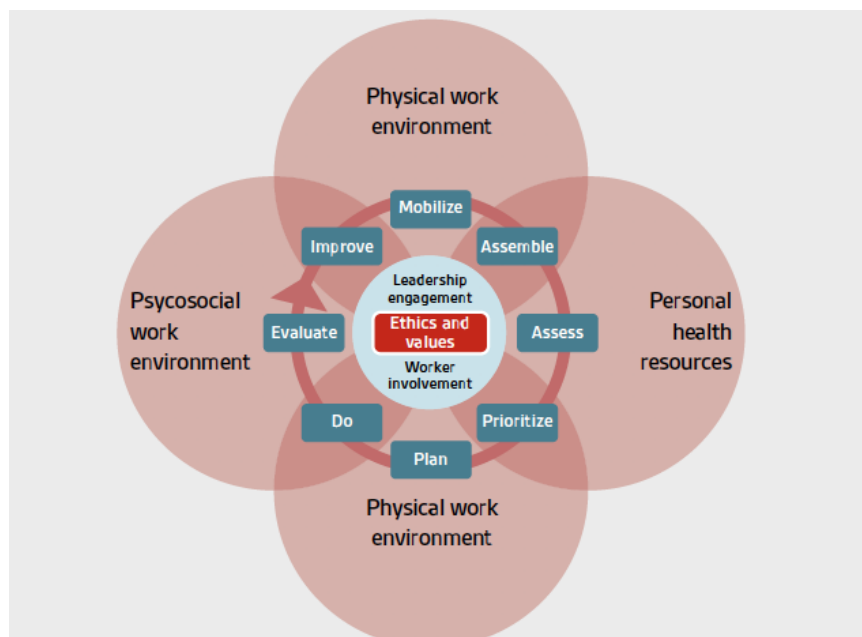# FACT SHEET

Health and Welfare Facilities
- ✓ Ensure adequate medical care for employees
- ✓ Ensure clean drinking water and clean toilets
- ✓ Ensure availability of first aid kit

OSH Strategy

Well planned OSH strategy is core to minimize the hazard and risk for incurring incidents. World Health Organization (WHO) has recommened the following healthy workplace model.

The strategy needs to address the following in a holistic way.
- hazard identification/risk assessment: Identify hazards and risk factors that have the potential to cause harm
- prevention strategy: Determine appropriate ways to eliminate the hazard, or control the risk when the hazard cannot be eliminated
- monitoring & management: Regularly check that the implemented control measures are effective
- OSH standards ISO: 45000: specifies requirements for an occupational health and safety (OH&S) management system, to enable organizations to provide safe and healthy workplaces by proactively improving its OH&S performance.

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ISO 45001, the new global management system standard on occupational health and safety has put health - physical, mental and cognitive at its core, while continuing to drive high safety standards. The standard reflects that occupational ill-health can and should be prevented and that in doing so, it will bring measurable benefits to workers and the organization.

ISO 45001 explicitly requires that health hazards are identified and controlled, including those classed as 'psychosocial' (workload, work hours, bullying etc), as well as those arising from other hazards such as chemical or biological.
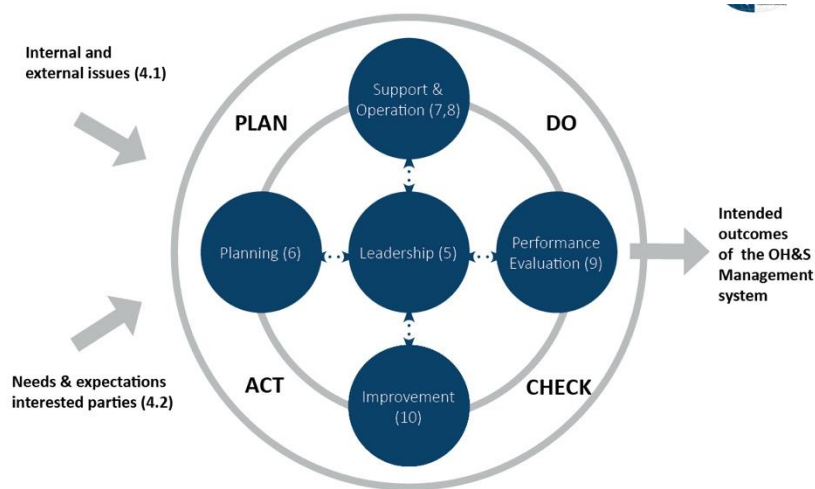
ISO 45001 also reflects the principles seen in the WHO's healthy workplace model – that in order for the occupational health and safety management system to be effective it needs:
- Leadership commitment
- Involvement of workers
- Compliance with legal and other requirements
- Comprehensive processes focussed on continual improvement
- Integration with the overall strategic direction of the business

Overall with a holistic approach, whether in a pandemic or a normal situation, an organisation can raise its performance bar in terms of achrieving higher effeiciency goal that can add to its making businesses a successful one.