

SAFE TIME

Who is in Charge?



by Ir. Shum Keng Yan

THE most common answer is “the boss”. However, in an organisation, we must have a person responsible for coordinating and leading the safety management programme. I call him or her the Person-in-Charge. It is my firm believe that every company should assign a person to coordinate the implementation of the safety management programme within each company.

The title of the Person-in-Charge can either be the Vice President, Director, Lead, Manager, Officer, Specialist, Coordinator, or so on. The title will depend on the organisational structure and business complexity. Whether the Person-in-Charge takes this as an additional responsibility (in a small organisation), or as a full time job (in a large organisation) also depends on the regulatory requirements.

We can set up the best system or have the greatest commitment by the senior management, however, without a dedicated person to drive it, the programme will not run properly. It is also prudent to have a single point of contact to avoid the ambiguity of the “who to go to” syndrome when we need to consult a functional expert.

Safety and Health Officer is the legal title of the Person-in-Charge regardless of the organisational title. Under the Occupational Safety and Health (Safety and Health Officer) Order 1997, certain classes of industries must have Safety and Health Officers:

- (a) Total contract price of the project exceeding RM20 million for:
 - i) Any building operation; and
 - ii) Any engineering construction work.
- (b) More than 100 employees for:
 - i) Any shipbuilding activity at the peak of work;
 - ii) Any gas processing activity or petrochemical industries;
 - iii) Any chemical or allied industry;
 - iv) Any boiler or pressure vessel manufacturing activity;

- v) Any metal industry where there is canning or stamping or blanking or shearing or bending operations;
- vi) Any wood working industry where there is cutting or sawing or planning or moulding or sanding or peeling or any combination of the above; and
- vii) Any cement manufacturing activity.

- (c) More than 500 employees for any other manufacturing activity other than those listed in (b).

The duties of the Safety and Health Officer are listed in the Occupational Safety and Health (Safety and Health Officer) Regulations 1997. This includes advising employers on safety requirements, conducting inspections, conducting trainings and promotions, acting as the secretary to the Workplace Safety and Health Committee, conducting accident investigations, and updating information and records pertaining to safety. The list of duties is not exhaustive. Basically, the role of a Safety and Health Officer is to drive safety within the organisation. The regulation also stipulates the qualifications for becoming one.

A copy of the regulation can be downloaded at:
http://www.dosh.gov.my/doshV2/index.php?option=com_phocadownload&view=category&id=6%3Aregulations-under-occupational-safety-and-health-act-1994-act-514&Itemid=99&lang=en

Share with us your experiences in driving safety organisational change at pub@iem.org.my. ■

There is no harm in having a Safety and Health Officer even if your organisation does not come under any of the above categories. Selamat Hari Raya Puasa and have a safe journey home! Last but not least, Selamat Hari Merdeka!