

MISSION REPORT
Regional Public Information Campaign and Training Activities
of the Occupational Safety and Health Center in Region X
March 14 - 16, 2005

BACKGROUND and SIMULTANEOUS ACTIVITIES

Region X responded with a high turnout for the joint information and training activities conducted by OSHC and DOLE-RO X during the above period. Three training courses were offered: Basic OSH with 33 participants; Construction Safety Training drew 26 and the Training on Work Relatedness of Diseases had 26 participants. In terms of the information and advocacy activities, OSHC in partnership with RO X carried out an uZAPang OSH forum in Cagayan de Oro City which was attended by 60 people from various multi-sectors. This is on top of the radio/TV guestings and the meetings with key sectors in the area.

It was very timely that Construction Safety Training was offered by the OSHC for the first time in Cagayan de Oro City. Data earlier provided by Regional Office X showed that the construction industry recorded the highest number of workplace accidents and injuries which includes slips and falls from heights. These can, in turn, be related to the construction boom experienced by the region in the 2nd quarter of 2004, as evidenced by the increase in the number of approved building permits issued in the area. These permits revolve around new constructions and additions, alterations and repairs of residential and nonresidential buildings and other structures undertaken in the region.

With the continued industrialization of Region X, OSH issues and concern remain high. Through sustained partnership and networks, the OSHC and DOLE are spearheading the implementation of Memorandum 679 regarding the implementation of Zero Accident Program activities in the regions.

TRAINING SUMMARY

Construction Safety Training Course (CST)

A total of 26 managers, field and project officers and staff from private construction firms and the DOLE RO X participated in the CST course. During the course of the CST, the participants recognized the need for a follow-up advance training on construction safety. Also, the regional office can pursue the graduates of the course to organize themselves to formalize an OSH network of safety practitioners in Region X. The participants also suggested that DOLE RO X should strengthen its capability to conduct training courses on OSH.

Seminar Workshop on Work Relatedness of Diseases

The seminar workshop was successful in generating an understanding on occupational and work-related diseases. The 25 participants are composed of physicians, nurses, supervisors, manufacturing and service delivery companies. During the workshop on case studies and issues on sickness claims, their grasp of

knowledge was gauged. And more importantly, after their evaluation of the course, the participants deemed it important that this type of training should be offered regularly in Region X so that more of their colleagues can attend.

Basic Occupational Safety and Health Training Course (BOSH)

BOSH drew 33 participants from various sectors of Region X. Awareness on OSH issues was heightened and the graduates of the course were able to apply their knowledge during the plant visit scheduled on the last day of the BOSH. The participants should be encouraged by DOLE RO X to formalize a safety practitioners group to serve as venue in exchanging ideas on safety and health in their workplaces.

RPIC OUTPUTS

The meetings in Cagayan de Oro City resulted in the following:

1. During the meeting with Atty. Nasser Munder, OIC-ARD of Region X, the LSED Division and other Division Chiefs of DOLE-RO X, the following issues were raised:

- a. In assessing the needs of the region, the number of Labor Inspectors was considered. Its 12 inspectors were only able to inspect 199 establishments out of the 930 targeted number of establishments for 2004. As earlier stated, majority of the accidents were noted in the Construction Industry, violations of which include no established safety committee in the company and failure for the employees to wear PPEs. In these cases, inspectors would ask the management to correct the problem and help them to set up their safety and health committees.
- b. It was also observed by the labor inspectors that for many establishments, compliance is only on paper and not actual facts. Also, major concentration during inspections is given to the wage component where the OSH aspects are more often than not, overlooked.
- c. It was suggested that an OSH division be established in the regional offices. Director Tecson said that this has been proposed but since this is yet to be the case, developmental strategies/approaches should be utilized in the regions wherein, training, capability building and education should be strengthened.
- d. The labor inspectors also asked about the accreditation of safety officers. Director Tecson reiterated that the accreditation function of BWC shall be devolved soon to the regional offices. With regards to training needs for would-be accredited safety officers, the region should tap other partnerships since the SOPI- Region X Chapter has yet to be accredited. Safety organizations and officers are important partners of the ROs in carrying out their work safety and health programs.

- e. Analysis of the Medical reports of accidents which are submitted to the BWC are available. The OSHC also asked to be furnished with a copy of the monthly SPRS and all accident investigation reports, if any, of RO X.
- f. Director Tecson pushed for a holistic approach on OSH. She encouraged divisions of the ROs to integrate safety and health in their work program. Awareness and consciousness raising on matters pertaining to occupational safety and health must be promoted by focusing on the preventive aspect of OSH.

As an example, she cited that LRD can include OSH modules including HIV/AIDS prevention and Drug-free workplace in labor education. For the WAWD, inclusion of OSH in livelihood training and family welfare activities is encouraged.

- g. The RO also asked for additional PPEs like masks, safety shoes and promised to promote the GKK, strengthen ZAP network and set up a mini library on OSH in the DOLE RO.

2. The Cagayan de Oro Chamber of Commerce was positive in their support for the revival of the local SOPI chapter or setting up an OSH advocate network among their members. Mr. Ruben Vegafria, the President of Oro Chamber also said that he will facilitate the inclusion of an OSH criteria similar to the GKK in their search for the Outstanding Business Enterprise. He will further review the activities of the group to schedule OSH trainings during the year (eg. during VIP monthly meetings, a presentation of OSHC programs may be included) and help in tapping local OSH focal persons.

3. City Mayor Vicente Y. Emano was enthusiastic in accommodating the OSH concerns of his constituents. He said that he would look into the possibility of a city ordinance that would mandate OSH orientation to SMEs as a requirement for renewal of their licenses.

4. In the uZAPang OSH forum held in Deluxe Hotel in Cagayan de Oro City, 58 participants coming from various sectors, signed a resolution committing to assist DOLE and OSHC in their programs on OSH. The importance of partnership between the DOLE regional offices, the OSHC and proactive participation of workers, employers and partners was highlighted to sustain the preventive aspect of work safety and health. The best practices of bigger companies were shared during the forum and SMEs committed to adapt these OSH practices in their respective workplaces.

5. Members of the mass media were very supportive of all the OSH activities as it featured DOLE-RO X and OSHC officials in their radio and TV shows. Reporters from ABS-CBN Cagayan de Oro, Bombo Radyo, DXKO, DXCO, DXIM - Radyo ng Bayan, PARASAT Cable TV Channel 29, the major dailies of Cagayan de Oro like The Golden Chronicle, Manila Standard Today also covered the uZAPang OSH and actively participated during the Presscon/Talakayan sa PIA. The programs, projects

of the OSHC were discussed as well as the responses of DOLE RO X to OSH concerns in the region.

6. On the other hand, worker groups as indicated in a meeting with ALU - TUCP Cagayan de Oro Chapter officers, identified their OSH concerns, which were:

- a. Need for more detailed information on occupational safety and health to protect themselves from work-related accidents and illnesses, as well as in organizing and sustaining safety and health committees;
- b. Joint worker and management attendance in basic occupational safety and health training. This is said to be necessary to arrive at a common understanding and response to OSH issues at the workplace level
- c. Need for a specialized training on OSH for the agricultural industry as ALU-TUCP membership in CDO is mostly from plantations and agri-ventures.
- d. Also a big concern is road safety and health in the transport industry. Intervention through granting of financial incentives to drivers who has had zero road accidents has been so far successful but they are also looking at other approaches to sustain their zero accidents program.
- e. A common reason cited by employers for non-compliance with the OSH Standards is lack of funds, especially those pertaining to personal protective equipment (PPE) provisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We therefore recommend the following strategies and activities to sustain preventive OSH work in Region X:

- The OSHC provides the DOLE Regional Office X with the necessary technical inputs and materials to sustain ZAP activities in the region; particularly on information dissemination, training, and technical services and the designation of an OSH focal person in the region;
- The OSHC and the DOLE Regional Office X should provide assistance in the reestablishment of regional organizations and OSH advocate networks by providing training and capability building to employers', workers' and other interest groups like the Cagayan de Oro Chambers of Commerce and ALU-TUCP;
- The regional office can pursue the graduates of the training courses to organize themselves and formalize an OSH network of safety practitioners in Region X to serve as venue in exchanging ideas on safety and health in their workplaces. (Please see attached Directory of Participants)
- The DOLE Regional Office X taps partnership and coordinates with other regional government agencies like the DENR, DILG, DAR, DOST, PIA for a wider OSH implementation in their region.

- To continuously implement and monitor actions taken by stakeholders on OSH as embodied in the Resolution signed during the uZAPang OSH Forum (Please see attached Resolution).

Region X's economic developments continue to hasten the need for a strong integration of OSH in the day-to-day operations of companies based in the region. Promotion of preventive occupational safety and health will greatly benefit all partners and stakeholders in the Region X.