

MISSION REPORT
Regional Public Information Campaign and Training Activities
of the Occupational Safety and Health Center in Region IX
April 20 to 22, 2005

BACKGROUND and SIMULTANEOUS ACTIVITIES

A successful Basic Occupational Safety and Health Training Course (BOSH) and regional public information campaign was conducted in Region IX last April 20 to 22, 2005. OSHC offered the BOSH training course in Zamboanga City with a total of 28 participants attending from all over the region. In terms of the information and advocacy activities, OSHC in partnership with RO IX carried out an uZAPang OSH forum in Zamboanga City which was attended by 58 people from various multi-sectors. This is on top of the press conference and meetings with key sectors in the area.

OSH issues and concern remain high in Region IX. 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.

OUTPUTS

I. Basic Occupational Safety Health Training Course

BOSH drew 28 participants from various sectors of Region IX. The LSED staff and OSHC team-up was successful in heightening OSH awareness of the participants. Re-entry plans made by the participants during their training stressed that they will be promoting OSH in their respective companies and workplaces through echo training of BOSH, conduct of OSH related activities/projects and to generate employee support and awareness and they shall push for strong management support for OSH, establish and re-establish Safety and Health Committees and formulate improved safety and health programs to prevent accidents and injuries and maintain a healthy workplace for all.

The participants should also be encouraged by DOLE RO IX to formalize a safety practitioners group to serve as venue in exchanging ideas on safety and health in their workplaces.

II. Meeting with Regional Director Cilindro

During the dinner meeting with Director Chit Cilindro, she emphasized that OSH related accidents and injuries remain low in Region IX. This may be attributed to non-reporting and minimal awareness of establishments and workers on issues of safety and health. Majority of the violations found during inspections include no established safety committees in the companies, non-registration of establishments and failure for the employees to wear PPEs. It was also brought

out that there are no established OSH organizations, group or partnership in the region.

III. Meeting with the Local Government Unit

Zamboanga City Administrator Antonio Orendain Jr. represented City Major Celso Lobregat in the meeting with Director Cilindro and Deputy Exec. Dir. Agnes M. Tecson.

They agreed that the city government has the same advocacy as DOLE OSHC in promoting a safe and healthy workplace for all workers and constituents. As an example, Mr. Orendain cited the city garbage disposal workers or sanitary engineers. They are properly equipped with PPEs and are getting their hazard pay. Even though informal orientation on basic OSH is given by the human resources department before their employment, there are still workers who fail using PPEs and oblivious of hazards present in their occupation.

Also, he said that there is a high rate of tuberculosis among their employees and in response, they established a TB intervention in the City Health Office. But it would also help, if they get the proper orientation on the new TB guidelines in the workplace.

Director Cilindro also promised that they will coordinate with the city government to nominate establishments and individuals in the next GKK in 2006.

IV. uZAPang OSH and Mass Media Campaign

In the uZAPang OSH forum held in Grand Astoria Hotel in Zamboanga City, 49 participants coming from various sectors, signed a resolution (please see attached) 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.

Interestingly, the Western Mindanao Power Corporation sent 10 participants who shared their best practices on OSH. They gave emphasize to the support of management and cooperation of all workers in implementing their safety and health programs. They even committed the WMPC to integrate OSH information drive to their corporate social responsibility and teach OSH among small enterprises in their communities.

They also reiterated the need for an organized OSH advocate group in Zamboanga to further support DOLE and OSHC in advocating and promoting the culture of safety and health in the region.

The University of Zamboanga also invited the DOLE OSHC to conduct orientation seminars for its staff, students and parents on occupational safety and health.

Representatives of the Southern Command also shared their practices on safety in the military and committed their support to the DOLE Regional Office, the OSHC and all stakeholders in the programs and projects on OSH.

The Civil Service Commission also gave their commitment to support safety and health programs in the government sector and work together with DOLE RO IX. The OSHC and DOLE RO IX were also invited to guest in their regular radio program.

Members of the mass media were very supportive of all the OSH activities as it featured DOLE-RO IX and OSHC officials in their radio and TV shows. Reporters from IBC, ABS-CBN Tacloban, DXMR, Radyo ng Bayan, RMN Radyo Agong, RGMA Super Radyo, the major dailies of Zamboanga City like The Zamboanga Times and Zamboanga Today covered the uZAPang OSH, featured the World Day for Safety and Health press release and had key interviews related on OSH information.

PIA Kapihan Interview

The Philippine Information Agency also featured for their Kapihan sa PIA, the emerging issues on occupational health, programs of the Center, vital researches on OSH among others.

They were thankful for getting copies of OSH radio dramas and videos. The various topics on safety and health at work will reach more people through media tie ups. They recommended that we advertise the names of radio talents and scriptwriters featured in our radio dramas for the ordinary folks to appreciate them more.

A poster campaign for April 28 World Day for Safety and Health at Work will also be launched in addition to the proposed Chavacano OSH posters that they would like to develop.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

- The OSHC provides the DOLE Regional Office IX and other interested partners 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 IX should provide assistance in the establishment of regional organizations, OSH advocate groups and networks by providing training and capability building to employers', workers' and other interest groups like the Chambers of Commerce and specific professional groups;

- The DOLE Regional Office IX taps partnership and coordinates with other regional government agencies like the CSC, DILG, for a wider OSH implementation in their region.
- The DOLE Regional Office IX and the OSHC should link with companies, establishments and SMEs with good OSH programs and push for their participation in the GKK. Also they should be encouraged to formalize a OSH best practices group in Region IX to aid other OSH practitioners and enterprises.

All partners in Region IX believe that promotion of preventive occupational safety and health will greatly benefit all partners and stakeholders in the region. Though local OSH advocate groups are yet to be established, this should not prevent the DOLE in looking for other means to establish sustainable OSH programs for all in Region IX.