
UNIT 12 ETHICAL PRACTICES IN MANAGING HEALTH, SAFETY, AND OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS IN THE RETAIL INDUSTRY

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12.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Identify workplace health and safety;
- Identify occupational hazard in retail industry;
- Explain about workplace bullying;
- Explain the measures to mitigate the workplace bullying.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Every company has a set of ethics to follow for managing the health and safety of the employees at the workplace. It is one of the most critical factors in an organization because occupational health and safety is very important for employees, and for the company to ensure sustainable growth and productivity and ensuring achievement of organizational objectives. Additionally, occupational health and safety of the employees is necessary for the organization's reputation in the industry because any untoward incident will have detrimental effect on its relationship with various stakeholders.

Hence, it's essential to formulate a clear and comprehensive company policy focused on ensuring employee health and safety within the workplace. Implementing robust safety measures not only safeguards employees but also contributes significantly to the company's sustainable growth and benefits.

Occupational Health and Safety, commonly known as Workplace Health and Safety, plays a pivotal role in identifying potential risks to employees' well-being and health. Every individual within an organization carries the responsibility of adhering to these established health and safety guidelines, ensuring their effective implementation.

In this unit, our objective is to deeply explore the concept of workplace health and safety. We aim to understand its significance for both employers and employees. Additionally, this unit will shed light on the advantages of a well-defined health and safety framework for both organizational success and employee well-being. Moreover, we will gain insights into strategies for fostering a conducive and secure work environment.

Furthermore, after grasping the essence and significance of workplace health and safety, our focus will shift towards understanding hazards, occupational risks, and their implications for employees and organizations alike. This unit will also provide an overview of the legislative measures established by the Government of India to uphold workplace health and safety standards.

Additionally, an integral aspect of ethical considerations concerning employee welfare involves preventing incidents of workplace bullying. Organizations bear the onus of ensuring an environment free from bullying and harassment. Within this unit, we will delve deeper into understanding the concept of employee bullying, its repercussions on individuals and organizations, strategies for mitigation, and the role of management in safeguarding employee rights and well-being.

12.2 WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Workplace safety and health are important parameters for success no matter how big or small an organization is. Every company, irrespective of its size and operations, needs to have workplace security. Employees who do not

take workplace health and safety seriously may experience severe emotional and physical problems. Well-executed safety protocols protect workers, but they are also critical to the long-term prosperity and advantages of the company. Workplace Health and Safety, which is also known as Occupational Health and Safety, is one such entity in charge of examining possible threats to the workforce's health and welfare. Every employee in a company has a primary duty to adhere to workplace health and safety standards and policies to guarantee that these policies are adequately implemented.

12.2.1 Need for Workplace Health and Safety

The impact of human casualties cannot be quantified. They may have serious repercussions not only for the employees but also for their friends and family. For this reason, workplace health and safety precautions are essential. Additionally, preventing accidents or fatalities among employees promotes business performance.

Frequently, we become so preoccupied with striving for efficiency or quickness that we neglect the aspect of safety. And accidents are more likely to occur at that time, particularly when we grow accustomed to our routines and fail to recognize the risks they provide.

The paramount concern is the assurance that one can return home safely after work. Every institution presents inherent risks to its employees' health and well-being. Factors such as environmental hazards and precarious work conditions significantly impact safety in the workplace. Additionally, issues like substance misuse and incidents of workplace aggression can arise.

For instance, IT professionals might face challenges with malfunctioning devices or cables, whereas those in the construction sector could confront risks associated with operating large equipment. To address these challenges, employers must formulate strategies that prioritize and foster a safe work environment. Ensuring the safety and well-being of employees is crucial for employers. When safety measures are in place, both the productivity and the quality of products and services are likely to improve.

12.2.2 Benefits of Workplace Health and Safety

- It goes without saying that higher productivity levels correlate with safer work environments. Employee productivity is a benefit to any business. For example, productive workers can complete tasks in less time, which lowers a business's operating expenses.
- Safety in the workplace fosters the wellbeing of both employers and employees. stronger health is correlated with stronger protection. Healthier workers are generally happier and more productive at work.
- In a safe workplace, there are extremely few accidents. This lowers worker's compensation costs and minimizes downtime for safety

inquiries. This also shortens the amount of time workers need to recover from wounds.

- The cost of replacement and repair is increased when industrial equipment is damaged. Profit will rise and costs will be reduced by preventing industrial equipment damage and occupational injuries.
- Employees are generally more self-assured and at ease when their employers are worried about their safety. Additionally, there is a decrease in absenteeism rates and an increase in job focus among employees.

12.2.3 How to Create Healthy and Safe Working Environment

Adequate health and safety measures for employees are advantageous and crucial for any organization. The following are some of the main ways of creating healthy and safe working environment:

1. **Identification and Awareness About Workplace Hazards:** Prior to establishing a secure work setting, it's crucial to recognize potential health and safety concerns. Without this awareness, rectifying these issues becomes challenging. Risks in the workplace encompass issues like mechanical faults, harmful chemicals, and perilous electrical apparatus. Unexpected mechanical malfunctions can arise during machinery use, and handling hefty equipment poses accident risks. When employees engage with chemicals, utmost care is essential. These substances can inflict burns or poisoning, and direct exposure might be fatal. Additionally, the use of electronic devices carries its own set of hazards. Malfunctioning electrical devices can result in severe injuries from electric shocks. Workers must be knowledgeable about various equipment types and associated risks in their work environment. This awareness helps them steer clear of potential hazards and unfavorable situations. Identifying areas of potential risk stands as a pivotal objective, and teamwork with staff to mitigate such hazards proves effective. Furthermore, employers ought to furnish workers with proper training on equipment usage.
2. **Implementation of Workplace Safety Policies and Procedures:** Securing the commitment of every employee to workplace safety is the first step in developing a safety program. Including occupational health and safety in the mission statement of the business is one method to achieve this. Every employee should be responsible for adhering to the safety protocols. Every workplace accident should be investigated by the employer. They ought to motivate staff members to adhere to all safety protocols. Furthermore, a written explanation of the risks associated with breaking them should be provided. This lowers the possibility of errors.
3. **Provide Workplace Safety Training:** Every business's safety program must include training to shield workers from mishaps.

According to research, there is an increased chance of workplace accidents for new hires. This danger results from improper work skills and ignorance of workplace hazards.

To lower workplace accidents, employers should give staff members the appropriate training. All machinery and equipment should be operated by employees in a safe and effective manner. Employees should be appropriately instructed in the operation of heavy machinery, for example. Operators of such devices should only be qualified or trained staff members. For this reason, it is essential that workers receive specialized safety training.

4. **Use of Adequate Safety Equipment:** It is essential to utilize protective gear to reduce exposure to risks that result in occupational injuries. Failing to do so may result in harm or even death. Workers can be required to handle chemicals, machinery, electronics, and other potentially dangerous materials. Employers are required to give personal protection equipment (P.P.E.) to certain workers. P.P.E. needs to be comfortably fitted, safely planned, and built. P.P.E. items include hard hats, gloves, safety glasses, clothes, earplugs, and more.
5. **Reporting of Hazardous Working Conditions:** Workers are required to notify management of any safety hazards or work-related risks. It is legally required of employers to provide a safe workplace for their workers. Ending occupational safety dangers and promoting workplace safety are vital.
6. **Practice Correct Work Postures:** One of the main causes of back discomfort is poor posture. Maintaining proper posture is essential for lowering the chance of injury. For instance, use chairs with unique designs if one must sit for extended periods of time. Additionally, always sit up straight.
7. **Manage Workplace Stress:** Stress at work can lead to a variety of health issues, including depression and anxiety. Workplace stress is brought on by factors such as a heavy workload, bullying at work, and job uncertainty. Find out how to manage job stress and prevent its negative effects. Stress at work can have a negative impact on both employee health and productivity.
8. **Encourage frequent Breaks and Intervals:** Regular breaks are something that employers should promote to their staff. Frequent pauses will help one avoid being fatigued and exhausted. This will help to further avoid sicknesses or injuries. Workers who take breaks are more alert and concentrated.
9. **Remain Alert at Workplace:** Substance misuse is one of the main causes of fatalities at work. Approximately 40% of fatalities at industrial workplaces are related to substance misuse. People who are impaired by drugs or alcohol are not as attentive. Their capacity

for concentration, coordination, decision-making, and motor control is impaired. This increases the possibility of occupational fatalities and injuries.

10. **Accessible Emergency Exits:** Emergency exits should be easily accessible in case of an emergency. Less casualties and injuries will result from easy access to emergency exits. Therefore, one can force the workers to remove the exits at the first sign of trouble. Having rapid methods for shutting off equipment in an emergency is also crucial.
11. **Use of Appropriate Tools, Equipment, and Aids:** Workers in an industrial position might have to handle large machinery. Attempting to lift and move heavy objects carries several injury concerns. Therefore, rather of having the staff lift things by hand, provide them access to a wheelbarrow, forklift, or conveyor belt.

After talking about the different ways of creating workplace health and safety, we'll attempt to define workplace or occupational hazards and concentrate on the different kinds of workplace hazards.

12.3 MANAGING OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

Any situation at work that puts an employee's health at risk is referred to as a "occupational hazard." In other words, the possibility of getting sick or having an accident at work is known as an occupational hazard. Putting it differently, it includes risks that workers encounter during work. Anything unpleasant that someone experiences or endures because of their work is referred to be a workplace hazard.

Before discussing the importance of understanding workplace hazards, let us first try to explain what do the terms "hazard" and "hazardous" mean. A situation that could endanger someone's life, health, property, or the environment is referred to as a hazard. Majority of risks are potential or latent, offering merely a hypothetical risk of injury; when a hazard materializes as "active," an emergency may occur. Any source of possible harm or unfavorable consequence from exposures in the past, present, or future is considered a hazard. Any situation, set of circumstances, or mix of elements that significantly increases the chance of inflicting property damage or personal injury is referred to as hazardous. Even when such compounds are somewhat safe in diluted quantities, it is commonly used to characterize hazardous substances and materials like flammables, explosives, irritants, sensitizers, acids, and caustics.

12.3.1 Importance of Understanding Occupational Hazards

Recognizing workplace risks is essential for businesses and employees alike. Employees must be aware of the dangers involved in their work to take the appropriate safety measures to safeguard both themselves and their colleagues. Employers must be aware of occupational hazards to provide a

secure and healthy work environment. Employers can lower the likelihood of workplace accidents, boost employee morale, and prevent expensive workers' compensation claims by recognizing and eliminating occupational hazards.

Furthermore, the success of workers' compensation claims might be impacted by knowledge of occupational hazards. To be eligible for workers' compensation benefits after an occupational hazard injury, an employee must prove that the injury was brought on by circumstances at work. Employees who need assistance navigating the difficult process of establishing that their illness or injury is related to their job might consult with a worker's compensation attorney.

12.3.2 Examples of Occupational Health Hazards

There are several instances of dangers to employees due to their workplace. Some of main categories are given below:

- a. **Mechanical Hazards:** Abrasions, cuts, concussions, contusions, and falls are a few types of such injuries.
- b. **Psycho-social Disorders and Hazards:** Psychosocial hazards include, but are not limited to, low interpersonal connections, work pressure, uncertainty, and unhappiness with one's employment. Secondly, psychological, and behavioral alterations include hostility, anger, anxiety, sadness, drunkenness, drug addiction, and sick leave absenteeism.
- c. **Heat Illness:** Overindulgence in physical activity, over-aging, inadequate physical health, exhaustion, and overdressing, skin problems, cardiovascular disease, and dehydration.

12.3.3 Categories of Occupational Hazards

There are six main categories of occupational hazards, which are as follows:

1. **Physical Hazard:** This category of occupational hazard is the most common. Physical risks include things like falls, slips, and trips in addition to working at heights, loud noises, and insecure machinery.
2. **Ergonomic Hazard:** There are risks associated with working in an organization, these risks are not always obvious, but employees are still vulnerable to them. For instance, injuries brought on by poor posture, dim lighting, repetitive motion, etc. These are referred to as ergonomic hazards.
3. **Chemical Hazard:** These are the workplace related hazards or dangers that are caused due to certain gas leaks, chemical spillage, exposure to some harmful liquids or solvents, cleansers, etc.
4. **Biological Hazard:** These hazards include exposure to specific plants, medicinal chemicals, animals, insects, laboratory testing, etc.

Occupational hazards of this kind are most likely to affect healthcare workers.

5. **Safety Hazard:** Any situation, material, or item that poses a risk or harm to employees falls under this category. Examples include working at heights, spills on flooring, machinery with moving components, cramped areas, steep staircases, and exposed electrical wires.
6. **Work Organization Hazard:** Health risks to the mental, emotional, and physical domains include sexual harassment, workplace violence, discrimination, and a lack of respect.

12.3.4 Occupational Hazards in Retail Industry

The intricate network of activities makes up the retail operation dynamic. The controlled chaos of the retail sector is projected to advance with the cooperation of minds, machines, people, and technology. The retail store needs to continue down a safe and fruitful route to ensure everything functions properly.

Some of the common workplace hazards in retail industry are as follows:

- a. **Over Exertion Injuries:** Overexertion is a main cause of the inflammation of joints and ligaments that arises from excessive physical effort. It is a non-impact injury caused by excessive physical effort. People respond differently to excessive physical exertion; whereas some people may have little to no pain or discomfort, others may experience crippling effects.
- b. **Workplace Stress:** Large number of workers say that their jobs are the biggest source of stress in their lives. The detrimental physical and psychological reactions that arise when a worker's needs, resources, or capabilities are not met by the demands of their job are referred to as job stress. Stress at work has been linked to illness and even injuries.
- c. **Workplace Violence:** The term "workplace violence" encompasses any instance or indication of physical aggression, abuse, harassment, intimidation, or any other form of threatening or disruptive behavior occurring within a professional setting. It can take many forms, from verbal and physical abuse to threats and even murder. Workers, clients, contractors, consumers, and other guests may all be impacted and involved. Workplace violence, in all its forms, is becoming a national source of worry for both employers and employees.
- d. **Workplace Bullying:** Bullying in the workplace is defined as persistent, irrational acts taken against a subordinate or colleague with the intention of intimidating, demeaning, humiliating, or undermining them, or posing a risk to their health or safety. This could entail

physical, psychological, nonverbal, verbal, and humiliating abuse. Bullying frequently entails the abuse or misuse of authority, instills sentiments of injustice and helplessness, and compromises a person's right to dignity at work.

- e. **Loud Noise:** Vibrating or loudly noise-producing tools, machinery, and other items can result in hearing loss and other severe injuries.
- f. **Forklifts and Pallet Jacks:** Almost everything that moves and is mechanical could be dangerous. Moving parts of mechanical devices are the source of numerous workplace dangers. Bending, punching, tugging, caught-in, caught-on, and crushing incidents are caused by mechanical risks, which can cut, crush, shatter bones, strain muscles, and result in further, more severe injuries.
- g. **Lifting and Handling Materials:** Strains, sprains, and other significant injuries can result from improper lifting, pushing, pulling, lowering, and twisting techniques. Potential dangers can be attributed to improper practices, physical capabilities, prior conditions, and other connected factors.
- h. **Slips, Trips, and Falls:** Trips and falls can cause both staff and consumers to fall, but many of these incidents can be prevented with good upkeep, cleaning, and maintenance. The severity of the damage is usually determined by the following factors: the direction of the body at the time of impact; the hardness and other properties (such as smoothness or roughness) of the surface one lands on; and the distance and speed of the fall.
- i. **Knives, Cutters, or other Sharp Objects:** Cuts and lacerations are among the most frequent injuries that can be avoided. These occupational dangers in retail settings are frequently caused by employees who are rushing and taking short cuts, as well as inadequate training, disregard for established safety protocols, and refusal to wear required personal protective equipment.
- j. **Begin Stuck by or Against:** These are wounds that come from hitting something or colliding with something (like a product that falls off a shelf). The velocity of the impact—how hard one is struck and how far the object falls or travels—as well as the object's properties—size, shape, weight, hardness, etc.—and the body part that is struck are the main factors that determine how severe the injury is.

Therefore, safety in the workplace needs to be viewed as a mindset rather than just a strategy or program. It is imperative that occupational safety standards are established as a fundamental aspect of the retail culture and voluntarily assume the duty of integrating safety into all aspects of the operations. Comprehending the fundamentals of safety enhancement must thus be acknowledged as a central feature of the professional role—and a major component of the advancement as leaders in the retail industry.

12.3.5 Measures for Dealing with Occupational Hazards

It is essential for all the companies to devise measures to mitigate occupational hazards. These include:

1. Making a commitment to safety and health by making workplace safety a mandatory aspect of the organizational policy and practice. Also formulate policies for ensuring workplace health and safety and keep a regular check to ascertain these policies are implemented seriously in the organization.
2. The organization needs to involve the employees in implementing workplace health and safety. Make the employees aware of all the policies and procedures and ensure their commitment towards their adequate implementation.
3. Every organization should identify all the possible kinds of occupational hazards that could be there related to their respective workplace. Accordingly adequate safety measures need to be taken to avoid occurrence of any such mishaps.
4. Once the policies, rules and regulations are in place for occupational health and safety, ensure their strict compliance and make the employees abide by these rules and regulations. Also, the infrastructure should be such that it minimizes such hazards.
5. It is also important to train the employees and sensitize them towards issues related to occupational hazards. Besides making them aware of these important factors, they should be trained in such a way that they can participate in mitigating these problems in the wake of occurrence of such accidents.
6. It is the responsibility of the top management to inculcate and support a culture of safety right from the beginning of its establishment and when an employee is inducted into the organization.
7. Lastly, the organization needs to continually make efforts towards improving the system by adopting the latest methods and techniques of occupational safety and health.
8. Other common measures for retail industry are as follows:
 - a. **Training on Safety Procedures:** Training on safe lifting procedures and fire safety and emergency evacuation procedures that includes customer evacuation is essential in retail stores. Besides, training on safe use of equipment and tools and safe handling and storage procedures when handling hazardous products also needs to be imparted. A formal training manual should be present in every retail space. The training programs and attendance standards should be specified in the workplace training policy. All employees need to stay informed about the

best practices that safeguard themselves, their coworkers, and customers in the case of an emergency, from initial onboarding to refresher sessions. The training curriculum can consist of in-depth third-party training, audio-visual manuals, or quick in-service talks. Retailers are required to keep track of staff attendance and offer a set timetable for mandatory safety training sessions. Retailers have an obligation to provide a secure workplace for the benefit of both staff and clients. To prepare people for safe action in an emergency, a safety manual must also be in place.

- b. **Ergonomics:** There are many facets to protecting employee health in retailing which is much beyond physical injuries caused by slips, trips, and falls. Retailers need to teach employees proper posture while working at different counters such as cash registers, lifting equipment or service items, sitting at a workstation, and other physical movements that prevent injuries. Ergonomics system includes safety, comfort, ease of use, productivity and performance, and aesthetics for employee health and safety. This also includes the need for avoiding or taking frequent breaks from awkward body positions.
- c. **Protective Gears:** There is a need to use appropriate gears including footwear and other personal protective equipment wherever needed, such as eye and face, protectors, gloves, respirator, or high visibility safety apparel.
- d. **Working Condition:** Retailer should ensure clutter free environment and use of proper equipment while handling inventory in the store. Safe working condition also includes good housekeeping, hygiene, and cleanliness practices.
- e. **Safety and Security Measures:** It is essential to implement sufficient safety protocols to address retail crime and safeguard the well-being of employees. Establishing a clear policy to manage and respond to retail crime is crucial. Necessary procedures must be implemented for ensuring protection of employees against incidents of abuse or inappropriate behavior, violence, and negative situations. The retailer also needs to ensure safety in workplace when employees are working alone. This also includes installation of CCTV, alarm, panic buttons, and deployment of security staff.
- f. **Inventory Storage:** There is also a need to ensure adequate storage by avoiding exceeding the capacity of the shelves when storing products.
- g. **Fire Safety:** Ensure proper maintenance of fire-extinguishers and accessible fire exits. It's crucial to abide by local fire regulations to prevent penalties and save lives. To inspect the property, the

local fire department will schedule visits to check sprinkler systems, make sure the business has up-to-date fire extinguishers, and look for safe merchandising techniques that avoid fires.

- h. **First Aid kits:** Arrangement of adequate first aid kits in the retail facilities. Retailers need to be ready to handle staff, clients, and guests' first aid needs, from a small cut that just needs a bandage to a potentially fatal situation. Equipment like defibrillators can save lives, therefore having a first aid package on hand is imperative.
- i. **Cybersecurity:** Sensitive data is transmitted and stored by almost all retailers. Employees using computers and other devices should abide by a cybersecurity policy that specifies acceptable password practices and device usage considering the surge in cybercrime. Everyone is protected when company and customer data is kept secure.

12.3.6 Legislative Framework for Managing Occupational Hazards in India

The Constitution of India outlines detailed provisions concerning the rights of its citizens. Additionally, it introduces principles for the country's governance known as the "Directive Principles of State Policy." These principles aim to ensure various aspects of citizen welfare. For instance:

Article 39 emphasizes the importance of protecting employees, both men and women, ensuring children are not subjected to exploitation, and preventing citizens from being compelled by economic conditions to engage in occupations unsuitable for their age or physical capability.

Article 42 stresses the establishment of fair and compassionate working conditions, including provisions for maternity benefits.

Article 43A highlights the government's responsibility to facilitate employee participation in managing enterprises, businesses, or other industrial organizations.

Furthermore, there are provisions aimed at prohibiting the employment of children under the age of 14 in factories.

These articles collectively underscore the Constitution's commitment to promoting social justice, welfare, and equitable opportunities for all citizens of India.

Based on these constitutional provisions, the Ministry of Labour & Employment, had declared the National Policy on Safety, Health, and Environment at Workplace (NPSHEW) on 20th February, 2009. "The purpose of this National Policy is to establish a preventive safety and health culture in the country through elimination of the incidents of work related injuries, diseases, fatalities, disasters and to enhance the well-being of

employees in all the sectors of economic activity in the country. The salient features of the Policy are:

- It recognizes safe and healthy working environment as a fundamental human rights.
- It aims at enhancing the well-being of the employees and the society at large by eliminating work related injuries, diseases, etc.
- It enumerates the goals to be achieved and brings into focus the objective of continuous reduction in the incidence of work related injurious and diseases.” (NPSHEW, 2009).

Some of the important laws and regulations related to occupational safety and health at workplace are as follows:

1. The Factories Act, 1948
2. Dock Workers (Safety, Health and Welfare) Act, 1986 and The Dock Workers (Safety, Health & Welfare) Regulations, 1990
3. The Mines Act, 1952 and other laws pertaining to mines
4. The Building and other Construction Workers (Regulations of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996

Besides, these four legislations, there are a number of other legislations that are related to certain factors, machinery and environment which also address some matters concerning workplace health and safety. In addition to these legislations, there is also The Employee’s State Insurance Act, 1948 for providing certain benefits to the employees in case of certain sickness, maternity and also “employment related injuries”.

The Government of India has also ensured adequate dissemination of information on occupational safety and health through its Ministry of Labour and Employment in the central government as well as the labour ministries of the state government through its websites. Additionally there are also websites of all the Directorate of Industrial Safety and Health and Factory Inspectorates of various State Governments which provides the necessary information and contact details of the concerned people responsible for enforcing the regulations at different levels.

Case Study

IndianOil, a diversified, integrated public sector undertaking, an Indian energy major dealing with almost all the streams of oil, gas, petrochemicals and alternative energy sources, has more than 31095 employees, and women comprise 8.76% (2726 women employees) of the workforce. Its establishment dates back to 1950s when in 1958, Indian Refineries Ltd was established and in 1959, Indian Oil Company Limited was formed. These two companies were merged in 1964 and renamed as Indian Oil Corporation Limited. It is

the highest ranked PSU in Fortune-500 list of 2023 with a Rank of 94, with revenue from operations of Rs. 9,34,953 Crores and a net profit of Rs.8,242 Crores for the financial year 2022-23 (Source: IOCL Corporate Brochure 2023).

It considers “health, safety and environment as three pillars for safe communities and happy stakeholders”. IndianOil considers its employees as prime, and therefore remains committed to their wellbeing and prosperity. Every occupational health program in the company is modulated with the goal of enhancing workers' health, happiness, and productivity by fostering a work environment that actively and persistently encourages and supports healthy behaviours. For occupational health of the employees, its programmes have main three objectives:

- Maintenance and promotion of employees health,
- Improvement of working environment and work to become conducive to safety and health of employees, and
- Development of healthy workplaces which supports health and safety at work and promotes positive social climate to enhance the productivity of the employees.

Workplace Health and Safety Initiatives at Indian Oil:

Occupational Health Centres: The well-equipped "Occupational Health Centres" in its refineries and large installations fulfil the statutory requirements to look after the health of employees and protect them from dangers and hazards associated with their jobs. IndianOil Doctors and paramedics have received specialized training to monitor the workers' health as they operate in hazardous work environments because of the chemicals they handle. The shop floor managers and staff constantly engage with the healthcare personnel. Additionally, in order to investigate the impact of occupational hazards, employees working in hazardous environments are also subjected to pre-placement and periodic medical examinations.

Digital Initiatives: By creating an internal OHS (Occupational Health Services) portal, the company has digitalized occupational health data in the context of Industry 4.0 and the new era of digital technology. This new portal offers dependable data, real-time monitoring, and analytics to help create efficient procedures that improve worker safety and lower occupational risks. There is also a digital e-learning platform for generating awareness and imparting training to the employees located at remote places. This platform has a number of e-learning modules on occupational health, healthy life-style & nutrition.

Besides, for effective implementation of occupational health policies and practices, IndianOil has developed an ‘Occupational Health & Wellness Index’ and it conducts periodic evaluation of this Index, resulting into

improved delivery and better professional quality of Occupational Health Services.

Multiple Modes of Communication: A wide range of communication mediums, including books, movies, posters, and house journals, are widely utilized to raise awareness of occupational hazards and ways to mitigate them. It also has an in-house compilation and publication of six health manuals for generating awareness amongst employees on important issues related to prevention of work related stress, happiness & well-being, home remedies, physical health and prevention of lifestyle disorders with the help of balanced nutrition. These are:

- Managing Stress and Health at Workplace;
- Guidelines on Healthy Lifestyle, Nutrition and Occupational Health;
- An Introduction to Happiness & Well-being;
- Home remedies for common ailments;
- Medical ready reckoner for employees joining IndianOil Corporation; and
- Guidelines on Fatigue prevention in the workplace.

Indian Oil has also developed a Corporate Occupational Health Manual which details out the company policies, procedures, and standard formats. The manual is periodically reviewed, for strengthening and ensuring uniform working of Occupational Health services across the Corporation.

Workshops and Seminars: IndianOil initiated an employee assistance program called “Paramarsh” for giving psychosocial support to its employees. As a part of this program, the company conducts emotional wellness workshops for the employees and their families. For these workshops, leading psychiatrists & clinical psychologists are invited.

There are also a number of subject/area specific specialised preventive health programmes for protecting the health of the employees, namely:

- Workshops on management of food safety, health & hygiene for Administration /HR Officers and Hygiene Index of canteens and guest houses.
- Workshops on work-life balance, stress management, emotional well-being, and happiness under Project Happiness and Wellbeing.
- Workshops on work-life balance, stress management, emotional well-being, and happiness under Project Happiness and Wellbeing.
- Eye-check up and health check-up of tank truck crew during Safe driving campaigns.

- Workshops on creating awareness between tank truck crew regarding menace of alcoholism during No alcohol campaigns etc.

ISO Certification: All its refineries are ISO 45001:2018 (Occupational Health & Safety Management System) and ISO 14064: 2006 (standards for Sustainable development) certified.

Check Your Progress A

1. Explain any two ways of creating healthy and safe working environment.
2. Define occupational hazard.
3. What is the need for workplace health and safety?
4. What do you understand by the term “hazard”?
5. Which of the following statements are **True** or **False**?
 - (i) There is no need to follow ethics to maintain health and safety in a company.
 - (ii) Higher productivity levels correlate with safer work environments.
 - (iii) Employees must be aware of the risk involved in the work.
 - (iv) There is a no need to use appropriate gears in the workplace.
 - (v) Trips and falls can cause both staff and consumers to fall.

12.4 WORKPLACE BULLYING

Bullying is typically defined as behaviours or verbal comments that have the potential to 'mentally' or psychologically harm an individual or cause them to feel lonely and isolated at work. Negative physical contact is occasionally a part of bullying as well. Bullying typically entails a pattern of behaviour or a series of occurrences meant to dehumanize, offend, intimidate, or humiliate a specific individual or group of individuals. Workplace bullying can also be defined as the assertive use of power to establish one's dominance.

Some common examples of workplace bullying are:

- Jokes targeted at a particular employee.
- Employee getting purposely misled about some work as for instance, incorrect deadlines or unclear directions.
- Persistent refusal of leave requests without a good or sufficient explanation.
- Verbal abuse, threats, insults or humiliation.
- Overly attentive performance evaluation.
- Excessively harsh or unjustified criticism intended to intimidate, degrade, or single out someone without cause.

12.4.1 Types of Bullying

There are number of ways by which an employee can be subject to bullying in a workplace. Let us now try to understand the difference types of bullying that an employee can experience in a workplace:

- **Verbal:** This includes all forms of verbal or spoken bullying such as mockery, humiliation, jokes, gossip, or other spoken abuse.
- **Intimidating:** Threats, workplace social exclusion, eavesdropping, and other privacy violations may fall under this category.
- **Performance at Work:** Examples include placing the blame incorrectly, interfering with or sabotaging work, and stealing or claiming credit for ideas.
- **Retaliatory:** Speaking out about the bullying may occasionally result in denials of promotions, false charges of lying, more exclusion, or other forms of retaliation.
- **Institutional:** Bullying in the workplace that is accepted, permitted, and even encouraged is known as institutional bullying. Impossible output targets, mandated overtime, or singling out individuals who are unable to keep up are a few examples of this bullying.

12.4.2 Early Signs of Bullying

Employees can assess situations when they are being bullied at their place of work, provided they are made aware of such situations and the signs of early bullying. Initially it may seem to be a single random incident, however if it keeps on getting repeated, then the employee needs to be alert. The following can be considered to be signs of early bullying in the workplace:

- Employee getting ignored by peers or co-workers becoming quiet or leaving the room when the employee walks in.
- Employee getting intentionally left out or not included by others for social gatherings in the office.
- Unnecessary meetings and supervision by the senior or supervisor or manager to check what the employee is doing or asking unusual number of times about work without any reason.
- Employee being assigned duties or tasks which are outside the purview of his duties and also not being provided adequate training and background on the work.
- Excessive scrutiny and monitoring beyond the level required.
- The worker may be assigned challenging or seemingly meaningless duties, and if he is unable to complete them, he may face criticism or ridicule.

- The employee can observe a trend in the disappearance of office files, documents, and other work-related or personal stuff.

12.4.3 Effect of Bullying on Health

Bullying can affect the health of employees either directly or indirectly. It can either cause physical effect or mental effect. Some of the common physical health effects are as follows:

- Anxiety either doing the work or thinking about the prospect of doing work.
- Develop physical problems such high blood pressure, digestive disorders, elevated sugar levels leading to diabetes, insomnia, etc.
- Troubled sleep and difficulty in waking up.
- Frequent incidents of headaches, dizziness, and forgetfulness.

In addition to the physical health problems, an employee also tends to develop mental or psychological problems due to continued instances of workplace bullying. These are:

- Constant anxiety and worry about work, even during off hours and holidays.
- Fearing work, feeling of dread, and trying to avoid going to work.
- Excessive stress, requiring the employee to stay back to ease off the stress levels.
- Loss of interest in work or in anything.
- Enhanced level of depression, desolation and suicidal.
- Feeling of low self-esteem.
- Having doubt on self and losing self-confidence.
- Feelings of frustration and/or helplessness.
- Reduced concentration and morale.

12.4.4 Effect of Bullying on Workplace

Bullying not only harms the concerned employee but in the long run, over a prolonged period of time, it tends to affect the organization also. It becomes detrimental to organizational health and effectiveness. It can manifest in the following ways in the workplace:

- Financial loss as a result of investigations conducted against bullying and the expenditure incurred on legal consultations.

- Fall in productivity and employee morale.
- Increased worker absenteeism.
- Employee turnover rates goes up.
- Impaired team relationships.
- Employee trust, loyalty and feeling of belongingness gets decreased.
- Poor customer service leading to loss of customer confidence.
- Reduced company image and esteem.

Therefore, it is essential that incidents of employee bullying whether direct or subtle, are not tolerated in the organization and addressed seriously and in a timely manner. This will discourage people from adopting such negative behaviour towards other employees. It is the responsibility of the organization to see that no employee is subjected to workplace bullying by anyone and if any such incident is reported, timely necessary action is taken against the concerned person so that other employees do not repeat such behaviour.

12.4.5 Measures for Mitigating Workplace Bullying

Management commitment is the most crucial element for managing any workplace related incidents of bullying. Management commitment towards prevention of workplace bullying or any other forms of employee harassment is demonstrated only when a formal procedure is in place in the organization. Thus the organization needs to have a thorough formal policy that addresses all situations, including bullying and harassment as well as physical assault. A formal policy should have the following components:

- It has to be jointly developed by the management and representatives of employees so as to ensure their commitment toward implementation of the policy and that they are mutually consented to it.
- The policy should be applicable to all the stakeholders in the company.
- The policy should be able to clearly define what is workplace bullying.
- Have an exhaustive list of clear of unacceptable behaviour and working conditions.
- Clearly define the preventive measures.
- Ensure employee awareness towards what comprises workplace bullying and the actions can be taken in case such an incident is reported.

- Have a clearcut procedure for investigating and resolving complaints.
- Commitment to organise training programs of different levels within the organization so as to sensitise the employees on the crucial matter.
- Ensure regular monitoring and review of the policy.

Check Your Progress B

1. Define workplace bullying.
2. What is the effect of bullying on the workplace?
3. Enlist common physical health effects of workplace bullying on an employee.
4. What are the different types of employee bullying?
5. Which of the following statements are **True** or **False**.
 - (i) There are multiple types of bullying.
 - (ii) Employee getting ignored by co-workers is not a type of bullying.
 - (iii) Troubled sleep and difficulty in waking up is the effect of bullying.
 - (iv) Workplace bullying policy should be clearly defined.
 - (v) Workplace bullying causes fall in productivity.

12.5 LET US SUM UP

To sum up, workplace safety and health, also known as occupational health and safety, are important parameters for success for any organization, irrespective of its size and operations. Well-executed safety protocols protect workers, and they are also critical to the long-term prosperity and advantages of the company because any accident-causing causalities may have serious repercussions not only for the employees but also for their friends and family. For this reason, workplace health and safety precautions are essential. Additionally, preventing accidents or fatalities among employees promotes business performance.

It goes without saying that higher productivity levels correlate with safer work environments. Employee productivity is a benefit to any business. For example, productive workers can complete tasks in less time, which lowers a business's operating expenses. Also safety in the workplace fosters the wellbeing of both employers and employees. Stronger health is correlated with stronger protection. Healthier workers are generally happier and more productive at work. Employees are generally more self-assured and at ease when their employers are worried about their safety. Additionally, there is a decrease in absenteeism rates and an increase in job focus among employees. This also lowers worker's compensation costs and minimizes downtime for safety inquiries. The cost of replacement and repair is increased when

industrial equipment is damaged. Profit will rise and costs will be reduced by preventing industrial equipment damage and occupational injuries.

It is the responsibility of the top management to inculcate and support a culture of safety right from the beginning of its establishment and when an employee is inducted into the organization. The responsibility lies on the employer to provide safe working environment, identify workplace hazards, and create awareness about them amongst the workforce. It also needs to formulate and enforce workplace safety policy and procedures besides imparting safety training to the employees. The company must ensure use of adequate tools and equipment, prevent injury, and manage workplace stress. Necessary work interval and breaks need to be encouraged so that the employees do not hurt themselves due to postural fatigue and exhaustion.

Further, employers can lower the likelihood of workplace accidents, boost employee morale, and prevent expensive workers' compensation claims by recognizing and eliminating occupational hazards. These hazards could be of different kinds, such as physical, ergonomic, chemical, biological, safety and work organization hazard. Company health and safety policies should ensure protection against all these kinds of hazards.

Every organization needs to implement necessary measures for managing occupational hazards by making a commitment to safety and health by making workplace safety a mandatory aspect of the organizational policy and practice. Also, it must formulate policies for ensuring workplace health and safety and keep a regular check to ascertain these policies are implemented seriously in the organization. Adequate employee involvement in implementing workplace health and safety is also essential so that the employees are aware of all the policies and procedures and ensure their commitment towards their adequate implementation.

Once the policies, rules and regulations are in place for occupational health and safety, ensure their strict compliance and make the employees abide by these rules and regulations. Also, the infrastructure should be such that it minimizes such hazards. Additionally, it is also important to train the employees and sensitize them towards issues related to occupational hazards. Besides making them aware of these important factors, they should be trained in such a way that they can participate in mitigating these problems in the wake of occurrence of such accidents. Finally, the organization needs to continually make efforts towards improving the system by adopting the latest methods and techniques of occupational safety and health.

Organizational ethical practices for managing health and safety of the employees also includes promoting and facilitating an organizational climate wherein employee safety is ensured, and they are not subjected to any kind of bullying or harassment at workplace. Bullying could be in different forms, direct or indirect, verbal, intimidating, retaliatory, or institutional. However, whatever the form maybe, they have detrimental effect on physical and mental health of the employees. It is also the responsibility of the management of the company to ensure the workplace climate and culture is

free from incidents of bullying and harassment. It must be committed, determined, and dedicated towards the welfare of its employees for growth and development of the organization.

12.6 KEY WORDS

- Occupational Health** : Occupational Health and Safety, is one such entity in charge of examining possible threats to the workforce's health and welfare.
- Stakeholder** : A stakeholder is a person, group or organization with a vested interest, or stake, in the decision-making and activities of a business, organization or project.
- Hazard** : A situation that could endanger someone's life, health, property, or the environment is referred to as a hazard.
- Bullying** : Bullying is typically defined as behaviours or verbal comments that have the potential to 'mentally' or psychologically harm an individual or cause them to feel lonely and isolated at work.
- Harassment** : It is behavior which is intended to trouble or annoy someone, for example repeated attacks on them or attempts to cause them problems.
- Psycho-social Disorder:** A psychosocial disorder is a form of mental illness that manifests due to issues within a person's cognitive/behavioral processes and or through life experiences.
- Pallet Jacks** : A pallet jack is a tool used to lift and move pallets. Pallet jacks are the most basic form of a forklift and are intended to move pallets within a warehouse.
- Ergonomics** : An applied science concerned with designing and arranging things, people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely.
- Inventory** : It refers to the raw materials used in production as well as the goods produced that are available for sale.
- Cybersecurity** : Cyber security is the practice of defending computers, servers, mobile devices, electronic systems, networks, and data from malicious attacks.

Governance : It is the process of making and enforcing decisions within an organization or society.

12.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

A 5. (i) False; (ii) True; (iii) True; (iv) False; (v) True

B 5. (i) True (ii) False; (iii) True; (iv) True; (v) True

12.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What are the common measures for handling occupational hazards in retail industry?
2. Explain the different categories of occupational hazards in retail industry?
3. Explain in detail the benefits of having adequate workplace health and safety measures in an organization?
4. How does an organization know that its employee is experiencing workplace bullying?
5. How can workplace bullying be mitigated?

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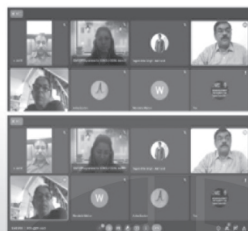
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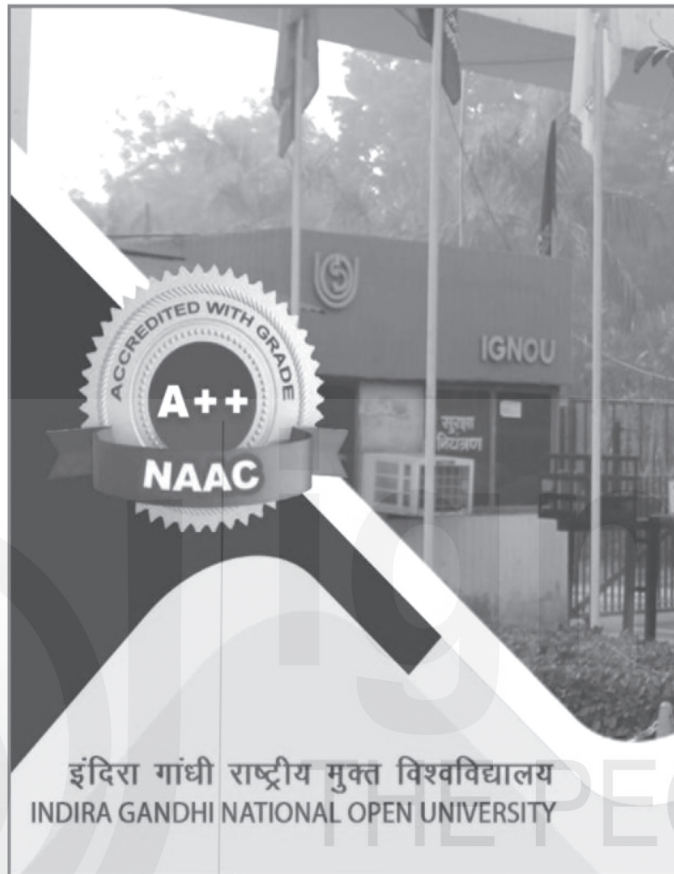
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