

Table of Contents

Preface from the ILO	i
Preface from the Author.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
Tables, Figures & Diagrams	v
Abbreviations and Acronyms	vii
Executive Summary (English)	1
Executive Summary (Thai).....	3
Introduction	
Study Aim	7
OSH Background in Thailand.....	7
Methodology	9
Period of Study	9
Part I: Macro Session	
A. National Policy Framework.....	11
B. Legislation in occupational safety and health.....	12
C. Governmental OSH organizations and their responsibilities.....	20
D. National Statistics	26
E. Inspectorate.....	31
F. Unions.....	34
G. Employers' Organizations	36
H. National Training Groups for OSH	37
I. The Informal Sector.....	40
J. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)	43
K. Globalization.....	44
Part II: Micro Session	
Survey on Occupational Safety and Health	48
Results for Small Enterprises.....	50
Results for Medium Enterprises.....	57
Overall Situation	65

Part III: Development Plan and Recommendations

The Master Plan for Occupational Safety, Health and Environment69
Recommendations73
Strengthening Occupational Safety and Health in Thailand88

References92

Appendices

A. Survey Questionnaire96
B. National Surveillance Indicators in Occupational Safety and Health .104
C. OSH Case Studies in Small and Medium Enterprises.....111
D. Occupational Safety and Health Guidelines and Checklists130

Executive Summary

The objective of this country report is to examine occupational safety and health (OSH) standards in Thailand and provide some recommendations for promoting OSH. The report comprises two sessions: (1) A macro session to review the national OSH situation, and (2) A micro session to explain the results of a survey of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The first session was proceeded by collecting and reviewing information and statistics from various sources. The contents include information on – existing national OSH policies, legislation, government organizations, statistics, inspectorate, labour unions, employers' organizations, training groups, the informal sector, SMEs and the effects of globalization. For the micro session, results of a questionnaire-based survey of 23 SMEs in three industrial sectors – the garment industry, metal product industry and the plastic product industry - are presented. The survey looked at working environments, protection of employees from occupational injuries and diseases, employers' encouragement and the productivity of the manufacturing plants.

In Thailand, in 2000, more than 97% of total establishments were SMEs and 442 deaths and 95,130 injuries occurred in them. This clearly demonstrates the severity of OSH problems in SMEs. Not only employees in SMEs are at risk, but also employees in the informal sector - forming more than a half the total workforce - are at risks from occupational injuries and diseases. They are not protected by any OSH regulations and their safety at work is generally poor. These situations indicate the need for the strengthening OSH in these critical sectors.

At present, there is no law specifically dealing with OSH in Thailand. The OSH is only a small part of the Labor Protection Act, the Factory Act, the Public Health Act and others. Some regulations are inconsistent and out of date, revision of existing regulations is slow, any enforcement of these laws is virtually ineffective and many establishments violate current regulations. This situation is partly caused by inadequate and poorly organized government safety inspections. There are three main ministries, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Industry and Ministry of Public Health, responsible for OSH administration and inspection. However, there are overlapping roles and responsibilities among them, causing inefficiency in the usage of personnel and resources. This report also shows a genuine lack of an effective information system about OSH. Information sources are scattered across the above mentioned agencies and are not interconnected. This report also indicates that a number of occupational injuries and diseases are underreported.

From the micro session, it was discovered that working environments in small and medium enterprises were generally poor. For example, there were inappropriate emergency exits, improper handling of hazardous substances, a lack of machine guards etc. Employees were not adequately protected for hazards. Some did not receive personal protective equipment (PPE) or they did not receive proper instructions for PPE usage. Interviews with employers' showed that most small enterprises had no OSH policy or OSH committee and that most of the medium enterprises did have these because of proper law enforcement. However, many of the medium enterprises did not have OSH committee meetings and did not follow through with OSH procedures. Some important OSH procedures such as annual health checks, installation of first aid kits, fire response plans and fire extinguishers were not

available in most of the surveyed establishments. Comparing OSH conditions of the small enterprises to those of the medium enterprises, those of the medium enterprises were better. However, both of them were at very poor or poor levels.

In this report the need to strengthening national OSH administrative structures and improve OSH conditions in SMEs has been pointed out. The promulgation of the Occupational Safety, Health and Environment Act is a very important task. It will provide a firm legal basis for OSH management in workplaces and help to upgrade the entire OSH administrative structure. The reformation of OSH administrative structures is required to remove overlapping roles and responsibilities of the related governmental agencies and ministries. In the long term, some government agencies should be unified for better performance and efficiency. It is necessary to revise and improve present OSH regulations as well enforce the use of them. The revised regulations must reflect technological changes and have an effective inspection system. Human and financial resources should be available to support safety inspections, information systems, research and development in OSH. Technical knowledge and financial assistance should be provided to develop OSH in SMEs. An easy and low-cost technique, such as WISE (Work Improvement at the Small Enterprises), is recommended to be widely applied for improving OSH in small enterprises.

Finally, as the well being of working people is the crucial basis for overall socio-economic and sustainable development, OSH in Thailand needs to be strengthened urgently. Action towards improvement needs to be taken in all areas mentioned in this report. Good coordination among concerned agencies is vital for the mobilization and development of occupational safety and health standards. Above all, OSH promotion in Thailand requires participation and commitment from all government and other partners.