

News Release

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Occupational Safety and Health Center

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RP Joins Observance of World Day for Safety and Health at Work

DOLE Acting Secretary Manuel G. Imson recently signed Department Order No. 44-03 urging all offices, workers' organizations, trade unions, employers' organizations, establishments, safety and health practitioners and professional organizations to commemorate April 28 every year as "World Day for Safety and Health at Work" pursuant to a call from the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The ILO World Day for Safety and Health at Work brings tripartite strength to the International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers organized worldwide by the trade union movement since 1996 and coordinated by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The observance of this day intends to focus international attention on the magnitude of the problem and how promoting and creating a safety and health culture can help reduce the number of work-related deaths each year.

According to ILO estimates, 250 million work accidents occur annually while 160 million are estimated to suffer from work-related illnesses. About 1.2 million die due to such accidents – a death toll averaging some 5,000 workers a day.

In the Philippines, the Occupational Injuries Survey 2000 done by the Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics showed that non-agricultural establishments employing 20 or more workers experienced a total of 69,208 cases of occupational injuries. Sectorally, manufacturing ranked with the highest number of accidents with 46,955 cases. Other industries placed relatively lesser cases with hotels and restaurants following far behind with only 8,217 while mining and quarrying had the least with only 78 cases.

Clearly, work-related injuries and illnesses remain a major problem worldwide. DO 44-03 aims to give a strong reminder on the importance of safeguarding the health and welfare of Filipino workers. All offices are urged to hang a streamer with a slogan of either "Promoting a Safety and Health Culture in a Globalized World" or "*Pagpapaunlad ng Kultura ng Kaligtasan at Kalusugan sa isang Global na Pamayanan.*"

Another significant activity sponsored by ILO and supported by OSHC and its tripartite constituents is the National Tripartite Meeting on Safety and Health at Work at the Mandarin Hotel on April 28 with the theme, "Health and Safety Culture in a Globalized World."

OSHC, for its part, will be showing a technical presentation on current policies and programs on safety and health during the National Tripartite Meeting. Media, being a strong supporter on work safety and health, has given good coverage of the World Day for Safety and Health at Work. Among the television shows where OSHC Executive Director Dr. Dulce Gust guested recently were at the Philippine-Japan

Weekend aired over Sky Cable Channel 56 last April 27, 9:00-10:00 p.m.; another at the program dubbed as Workforce to be shown at RPN 9 on May 4, 2:00-2:30 p.m.. In radio, Dr. Gust also talked about this significant event at the OSHC's regular radio program entitled *Trabaho* aired over Radyo Veritas every Monday from 9:00-10:00 a.m. To sustain its information dissemination activities using radio, dramas dubbed *Sa Palad ng Buhay* tackling various issues on work safety and health are also aired at Radyo Veritas every Saturday, 4:30-5:00 p.m.

Two advertisements related to the World Day for Safety and Health at Work were also published at the Philippine Star. One was on DO 4403 which came out last April 21 and served as basis for many companies to join the observance of this important day by hanging streamers. Among the institutions that now display streamers are the Social Security System, Development Bank of the Philippines, Government Service Insurance System, among others. OSHC has so far received several queries regarding the World Day for Safety and Health at Work owing to the second advertisement published last April 26 at the Philippine Star regarding the event. Most of these companies were interested in joining activities on World Day for Safety and Health.