

WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH 2028 TRIPARTITE STRATEGIES COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Executive Summary

Introduction

1. Singapore has made significant progress in our workplace safety and health (WSH) outcomes.
2. Our workplace fatal injury rate declined by more than 75% over the past 14 years: from 4.9 per 100,000 workers in 2004 to 1.2 per 100,000 workers in 2018 – the lowest level recorded in history. This was the result of concerted tripartite efforts to strengthen WSH regulations, develop capabilities, raise awareness and deepen industry ownership of WSH, which were guided by the national WSH strategies developed in 2005 (WSH 2015) and 2008 (WSH 2018).
3. We aim to do better. To guide our efforts in the next decade, we developed a new vision.

WSH 2028 Vision

A Healthy Workforce in Safe Workplaces; A Country Renowned for Best Practices in Workplace Safety and Health

4. The WSH 2028 vision acknowledges that both workplace safety and workforce health are of equal importance, and reaffirms our aspiration to be a global leader in WSH practices. It guides our efforts in the prevention of workplace injury and occupational disease (OD), and the promotion of workforce health. Our rallying call is Vision Zero, where stakeholders are committed to preventing all forms of injury and ill-health at work.
5. To realise this vision, MOM established the WSH 2028 Tripartite Strategies Committee to recommend a set of 10-year WSH strategies. The Committee comprised representatives from the Government, industry, unions; and partner organisations such as training providers, voluntary welfare organisations, insurance companies, healthcare institutions, and institutes of higher learning.

Strategic Outcomes

6. The Committee identified four strategic outcomes to track progress in attaining the WSH 2028 vision.

Strategic Outcome 1: Sustained Reduction in Workplace Injury Rates

7. We aim to reduce Singapore's workplace fatal injury rate by 30% on a sustained basis: from a 3-year average of 1.4 per 100,000 workers in 2018 to below 1.0 per 100,000 workers within the next 10 years. Only four countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have achieved this. It is also important to reduce major injuries at the workplace as they reflect wider attitudes towards safety. Our aim is a similar 30% reduction from a three-year average of 17.2 per 100,000 workers to below 12.0 per 100,000 workers.

Strategic Outcome 2: Minimise Hazards that Lead to Occupational Disease

8. As some ODs may only emerge after years of exposure, prevailing OD rates are lagging indicators. A leading indicator of OD incidence is whether workers are sufficiently protected against exposure to toxic substances and excessive noise. Protection can be achieved in two main ways: (i) by upstream controls that remove or isolate the hazard from workers; or if that is not possible, (ii) by reducing workers' exposure to the hazard to an acceptable level through other control measures, such as the use of personal protective equipment. The Committee encourages more companies to remove hazards upstream. To this end, the Committee recommends improving the current 46% of workplaces under MOM's surveillance that adopt upstream noise and chemical risk controls to more than 75% by 2028.

Strategic Outcome 3: Promotion of Good Workforce Health

9. There have been more workplace accidents linked to dizziness or loss of consciousness that stem from poorly-managed chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension (high blood pressure) and hyperlipidaemia (high LDL cholesterol). Ill-health and poor health management impacts safety. The Committee has decided that a target should be set, unlike previously where there was none, for at least 50% of employees to have access to employer-initiated health promotion activities. At the same time, risk assessments should include consideration that ill-health could lead to accidents. In high-risk industries, such enhanced risk assessment should cover at least 75% of those in safety-sensitive jobs, up from 51% in 2017.

Strategic Outcome 4: Pervasive Adoption of the Vision Zero Culture

10. A progressive and pervasive WSH culture, with companies intrinsically motivated to prevent accidents and keep their workforce healthy, is essential to sustaining low rates of workplace injuries and ill-health. While it is difficult to measure WSH culture directly, it is possible to assess the strength of a company's WSH culture by looking at its practices. By 2028, the adoption of progressive practices that reflect the Vision Zero culture should cover at least 75% of employees in high-risk industries, up from about 60% in 2017.

Strategies

11. Three broad strategies have been identified to attain the strategic outcomes.

Strategy 1: Strengthen WSH Ownership

12. The Committee believes that the level of ownership for WSH by all stakeholders has to move beyond "basic" to be global-leading for sustained improvements in WSH.

13. The following summarises the Committee's recommendations to realise its aspiration for 2028: that every company is intrinsically motivated to care for their workers' safety and health, and there is mutual trust and joint responsibility by all stakeholders to embrace ownership for WSH.

1.1 Make WSH More Salient in Business Decisions

- Publish every company's WSH performance in terms of workplace fatality and major injury rates, normalised by workforce size and industry to facilitate meaningful comparison.
- Share work injury compensation claims data with insurance industry, so that premiums can be differentiated according to the WSH performance of a firm.
- All public-sector developers to adopt harmonised criteria to disqualify unsafe construction firms.
- Share list of disqualified construction firms with private developers.
- Provide incentives for supply chain leaders, such as main contractors and shipyards, to invest to improve WSH capability of their suppliers.

- Allow leading enterprises to certify their in-house WSH training as fulfilling government-mandated training requirements and to offer them to supply chain partners.

1.2 Align Company Directors and Top Management to WSH Ownership

- Introduce an Approved Code of Practice on WSH duties of company directors.
- Introduce an Approved Code of Practice on WSH duties of principals to their contractors.

1.3 Strengthen WSH Ownership of Workers

- Labour Movement's Collective Agreements and MOUs with companies to institutionalise:
 - WSH Committee comprising workers and management
 - System to report and learn from near-misses
 - System to empower workers to stop work in unsafe conditions
 - Joint worker-management teams to conduct internal WSH inspections and implement control measures.
- Build in-house WSH expertise in every union.
- Mobilise Migrant Workers' Centre to educate foreign workers on progressive WSH practices.

Strategy 2: Enhance Focus on Workplace Health

14. It is not sufficient to focus solely on injury prevention. A healthy workforce is the outcome of a safe workplace. At the same time, a healthy workforce is also a contributor to safety. This encompasses both the prevention of ODs and the promotion of workforce health.

15. The Committee recommends the following:

2.1 Expand Occupational Disease Prevention Efforts

- Encourage adoption of upstream measures to prevent ODs.
- Expand the WSH Act's list of reportable ODs.
- Raise capabilities of medical community to detect and report ODs.
- Increase health hazard surveillance to more workplaces.

2.2 Build Companies' Capabilities to Promote Workforce Health

- Develop guidelines on job adaptations that employers can take to support workers in managing their chronic diseases.
- Increase companies' access to Total WSH Services.
- Upskill WSH professionals in workforce health.
- Raise awareness of measures to promote workers' mental health.

Strategy 3: Promote Technology-Enabled WSH

16. By the year 2028, Singapore will have made much progress towards its vision to be a Smart Nation. There is thus immense potential for the practice of WSH itself to be transformed through technology.

17. The Committee recommends the following:

3.1 Develop a WSH Technology Ecosystem to Deepen Industry Capability

- Develop a WSH technology roadmap to identify emerging technologies with greatest impact to solve WSH problems.
- Set up a WSH innovation and technology network coordinated by MOM to mobilise research institutions, leading technology companies and experts to develop WSH solutions.
- MOM to continue implementing the WSH Technology Challenge to catalyse development of innovative solutions for difficult WSH problems.
- Provide rapid follow-on support for successful solutions from the WSH Technology Challenge to accelerate industry adoption.
- Catalyse the supply and adoption of WSH monitoring services to strengthen companies' WSH capabilities to detect and manage WSH risks.

3.2 Strengthen WSH Training through Technology

- Incorporate technologies into WSH training, where it is shown to be effective.
- Deploy technology for team learning on work coordination to operate safely.
- Explore use of micro-learning applications on hand-held devices for continuous upgrading of knowledge.

Overview of the Committee’s WSH 2028 Recommendations

18. The Committee’s WSH 2028 recommendations are summarised as follows:

Vision		
A Healthy Workforce in Safe Workplaces; A Country Renowned for Best Practices in Workplace Safety and Health		
Strategic Outcomes		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Sustained reduction in workplace injury rates ii. Minimise hazards that lead to occupational disease iii. Promotion of good workforce health iv. Pervasive adoption of the Vision Zero culture 		
Strategies		
1. Strengthen WSH ownership	2. Enhance focus on workplace health	3. Promote Technology-Enabled WSH
<i>Key recommendations:</i> 1.1 Make WSH more salient in business decisions 1.2 Align company directors and top management to WSH ownership 1.3 Strengthen WSH ownership of workers	<i>Key recommendations:</i> 2.1 Expand occupational disease prevention efforts 2.2 Build companies’ capabilities to promote workforce health	<i>Key recommendations:</i> 3.1 Develop a WSH technology ecosystem to deepen industry capability 3.2 Strengthen WSH training through technology