I Pledge To End All Risks At Work.

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It’s a never-ending journey in my division’s quest to improve workplace safety and health (WSH) in Singapore. The combined effort of all stakeholders is key to us working together towards this goal. We strive to be both the enabler and catalyst.

We continued to make improvements in Singapore’s workplace fatality rate and a new low of 21 fatalities per 100,000 employed persons was recorded last year. However, the number of injuries has increased and this is a cause for concern. We must continue to strive to perform better as such accidents affect the livelihood and quality of life of our workers and their families.

There have been many initiatives in our WSH journey that serve to solidify the foundations that supports the framework we seek to create in order to allow WSH to progress further. 2012 was no exception. I would like to highlight a few.

Last year, we had our first ever “Singapore WSH Conference Week”. The 2nd Singapore WSH Conference was the main highlight, along with 8 other satellite events such as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Symposium on Developing a Preventive Occupational Safety and Health Culture. These collaborative efforts with various organisations created a vibrant and wide-ranging agenda for WSH professionals, business leaders and researchers in Singapore and the region. On the international front, Singapore also ratified the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187) with the International Labour Office on 11 June 2012 reinforcing our commitment to workplace safety and health.

A progressive and pervasive safety and health culture is critical for sustainable progress in safety performance. Leaders of respective organisations need to influence organisational values and make WSH everyone’s responsibility, down to the very last worker. For this reason, the WSH Council launched the CultureSAFE Programme last year. This is part of the critical piece in our efforts to ensure that good WSH performance is sustained. This can only be achieved by getting stakeholders to change mindsets and imbue strong WSH values that place workers’ safety and health first.

2012 also saw high-profile accidents. Such accidents included those at the Bugis Downtown line and Jurong Shipyards. As Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong mentioned, it served as a reminder to remain vigilant and try to perform better with regards to workplace safety. From the operational perspective, our inspectors were up to the tasks required as time was of the essence in such accidents. I am also pleased that through our strong working relationships with other agencies such as the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) and the Building Construction Authority (BCA), we were able to meet the challenges that we were faced with.

We also sought to tackle Work at Heights (WAH) holistically and improve WAH outcomes as it has consistently been the top contributor to workplace fatalities. The WAH taskforce launched a three-pronged WAH masterplan and several important initiatives such as improving regulatory controls through WSH (WAH) regulations that will be enacted on in 2013, as well as a new WAH competency framework which was developed.

Lastly, I am pleased that WSH Institute has rapidly established themselves as the think-tank for WSH in Singapore. Through their work on projects such as the WSH Leadership Guide and the OWLinks - the WSH Institute monthly e-newsletter that reviews and recommends articles on safety & health issues from around the world, they have helped to broaden the WSH knowledge of stakeholders. I believe that they will be the driving force in advancing WSH standards in Singapore.

We have been steadily setting the building blocks in place for WSH to progress in Singapore. However, it is important that all stakeholders continue to push the boundaries as we work towards our common vision in making Singapore the safest and healthiest workplace in the world. I am personally confident of this collective commitment. Together, let us continue to make this vision a reality through our actions!
ABOUT OSHD
The Occupational Safety and Health Division (OSHD) is a division under the Ministry of Manpower that promotes Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) at the national level. OSHD works with employers, employees and all other stakeholders to identify, assess, and manage workplace safety and health risks so as to eliminate death, injury and ill-health.

OSHD is also the WHO Collaborating Centre for Occupational Health, and the ILO CIS National Centre for Singapore.
Principles of OSHD’s Workplace Safety and Health Framework

OSHD adopts a strategic and long term approach to achieve our vision and mission. By long-term strategising and planning, we strive to achieve sustainable and continuous improvement in WSH performance.

OSHD has designed 3 key principles to help stakeholders take greater ownership of WSH outcomes and be more proactive in preventing accidents by identifying and mitigating WSH risks at source.

OSHD is confident that the 3 key principles will bring about safer and healthier workplaces for everyone by nurturing a culture where all stakeholders conduct risk assessments to identify and mitigate workplaces risks.
The WSHA is the key legal instrument of the WSH framework and is intended to inculcate good safety and health habits and practices in all individuals at workplaces.

The Act is designed to protect employees as well as any other persons who may be affected by the work being carried out at the workplace.

The Act departs from taking a prescriptive stance under the former Factories Act and introduces a performance-based regime. It emphasises the importance of managing WSH proactively by requiring stakeholders to take reasonably practicable measures to ensure the safety and health of employees and other people that are affected by the work being carried out.

The Act also assigns liability to those who create and have management and control over safety and health risks. The stakeholders include:

- **Occupiers** who occupy or have control over the management of the workplace
- **Employers** who employ the service of any person to do work
- **Manufacturers or Suppliers** of machinery, equipment or hazardous substances used at work in the workplace
- **Persons at work** who engage another person other than those under a contract of service to either supply labour or to do any work for gain or reward
- **Principals** installers or erectors of machinery for use at work installers or in the workplace
- **Persons at work** owners, installers or erectors
- **Persons at work** self-employed
The Work Injury Compensation Act (WICA) allows employees who have sustained injuries in a work-related accident or contracted an occupational disease to claim work injury compensation. Dependents of employees who died in a work-related accident are also eligible for compensation. Claimable compensation includes medical leave wages, medical expenses and permanent incapacity (if any), or death. Unlike civil claims, compensation is generally payable under the Act regardless of whether the employer is at fault, as long as the employee had suffered an injury by accident arising out of and in the course of his employment or had contracted an occupational disease as defined under the Act. The compensation benefits are computed based on fixed formulae and capped under the Act.

WSH 2018 is our national strategy for workplace safety and health in Singapore. It outlines the four strategic outcomes that contribute to our vision of “a safe and healthy workplace for everyone and a country renowned for best practices in workplace safety and health”, as well as the strategies to achieve these outcomes.

WSH 2018, which replaced the incumbent WSH 2015 strategy, was launched in 2009 by then-Minister for Manpower Mr Gan Kim Yong. Under the WSH 2015 strategy, we aimed to bring down workplace fatality rates in Singapore to 2.5 per 100,000 workers by 2015. We were overly conservative. By 2007, only 2 years after the launch of WSH 2015, WSH standards in Singapore had improved significantly and our workplace fatality rate dropped to 2.9 per 100,000 workers. Singapore was well on track to meet, or even surpass our target of 2.5 workplace fatalities per 100,000 workers. To continue to spur improvement in WSH standards, a new target of less than 1.8 fatalities per 100,000 workers by 2018 was set under a revised WSH 2018 strategy under the directions of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

For more information
Details of our WSH 2018 National Strategy, the Strategic Outcomes and the key focus areas of the four Strategies can be located at the link below

https://www.wshc.sg/wps/portal/wsh2018
Our long-term goal is to have safe and healthy workplaces where no lives are lost and no injuries are suffered. Our intermediate goals for 2018 are to achieve:

+ A workplace fatality rate of less than 1.8 fatalities per 100,000 workers; and
+ A workplace injury rate of less than 280 injuries per 100,000 workers.

+ Safety and Health is seen as an integral part of business.
+ Companies see the value of good WSH practices in enhancing business competitiveness, productivity and profitability.
+ There is proactive assessment and control of risks at all levels during business operations.
+ WSH performance is seen as an important dimension of company performance, alongside established business outcomes such as revenue and profit.

+ Singapore is renowned as a Centre of Excellence for WSH that provides a safe and healthy workplace for everyone.
+ Singapore is also recognised for her high WSH standards and is seen as being at the forefront of building a progressive and pervasive safety and health culture.
+ Employers, workers and other stakeholders possess the right skills and capabilities to manage WSH. Our workers and WSH professionals are therefore highly regarded by other countries for their competencies.
+ There are also strong institutions such as professional bodies, industry associations and training providers supporting the WSH framework in Singapore. These enable Singapore to serve as a regional centre for WSH ideas, practices and expertise.

+ Employers, workers and other stakeholders view WSH as a personal responsibility and share the belief that workplace accidents are preventable and therefore unacceptable.
+ This mindset is manifested in concrete behavioural terms: management proactively addresses safety concerns, while workers take precautionary steps to complete a task in a safe manner. They look out not only for their own safety, but that of those around them as well.
Strategy 1
Build Strong Capabilities to Better Manage WSH

- Employers and relevant stakeholders must be able to manage WSH issues before they can effectively drive WSH reforms and raise WSH standards. Therefore, it is critical that stakeholders – WSH professionals, management, line supervisors, and workers be equipped with the relevant skills and competencies to better comprehend, control and deal with WSH risks. These competencies go beyond technical knowledge of WSH matters and include the skills and behaviour that stakeholders must demonstrate or acquire.
- To facilitate the building of strong capabilities, we also need to ensure that the necessary support frameworks are in place. There must be strong supporting institutions, including quality training providers to guide the identification and development of WSH competencies.
- Another key pillar would be the provision of supporting resources – from financial assistance for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to guidance materials.

Strategy 2
Implement an Effective Regulatory Framework

- Beyond capability building, we need to establish and maintain an effective regulatory framework to implement the WSH Act.
- Under this strategy, targeted interventions and enforcement actions will be developed based on a comprehensive analysis of industry trends and developments.
- We will also review existing WSH legislation to ensure that they remain relevant to industry trends.
- More emphasis will also be placed on creating a self-regulatory framework in order to promote greater industry ownership.

Strategy 3
Promote the Benefits of WSH and Recognise Best Practices

- To encourage businesses to adopt good WSH practices, it is important they recognise that good WSH practices will enhance business competitiveness. Businesses should be made aware that good WSH practices can bring benefits such as a good corporate image, cost savings in terms of higher productivity, and fewer disruptions to work due to accidents. It is also necessary to reach out to the workforce and encourage workers to adopt good WSH practices.
- In addition, we should continue to recognise employers and workers who demonstrate good WSH practices and behaviours, and encourage them to share their experiences with the industry. Such sharing of best practices will further encourage cross-learning and facilitate the environment of continuous improvement. This will help build a strong safety and health culture, which will eventually elevate Singapore’s state of WSH development.

Strategy 4
Develop Strong Partnerships Locally and Internationally

- Improving WSH standards and developing a vibrant WSH culture is not something that the Government, nor the WSH Council, can achieve by itself. It requires the collective effort and cooperation of all key stakeholders.
- Close working relationships among the various stakeholders are vital as they can leverage on one another’s strengths to refine and implement the WSH framework.
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Mr Woon Cheng Peng
Deputy Director
Work Injury Compensation Department
There are 4 departments under OSHD (OSH Policy, Information & Corporate Services Department, OSH Inspectorate, OSH Specialist Department and Work Injury Compensation Department) together with the Workplace Safety and Health Council (WSH Council) and the Workplace Safety and Health Institute (WSH Institute).
OSH Policy, Information & Corporate Services Department

The OSH Policy, Information and Corporate Services Department (PICS) is the central co-ordinating department within OSHD. Its primary role is to ensure that the various arms of OSHD complement each other in working towards our common vision of safer and healthier workplaces.

PICS drives divisional efforts through policy formulation and review. It plays a vital role in ensuring the continued relevance of existing policies and programmes as well as in the conceptualisation of new ones to ensure that the division is poised to tackle emerging challenges. This is done through identification and analysis of emerging WSH trends and risks by leveraging on effective information systems, quality resources and astute business intelligence.

The department also drives initiatives to promote corporate excellence within OSHD. It oversees the strategic planning aspect of the division’s work and helps prioritise projects so that resources are most effectively utilised. It develops organisational capability by leveraging on technology and systems thinking, and also works towards improving staff engagement and work-life harmony.

Customer Responsiveness is another key focus of the department’s work. The department strives to effectively manage customer touchpoints to help ensure stakeholders understand and buy into the division’s policies. This is done through the systematic processing and analysis of customer feedback as well as ensuring consistent messaging on policies through all customer touch-points.

There are 3 branches within the OSH Policy, Information & Corporate Services Department:

- OSH Corporate Services Branch
- OSH Information Branch
- OSH Policy and Planning Branch

OSH Inspectorate

The Inspectorate focuses on reducing safety and health risks at workplaces by conducting inspections, surveillance of workplaces and enforcing the law when necessary, to ensure that workplaces maintain an acceptable level of safety and health standard. The Inspectorate also investigates accidents and shares the lessons learnt from these accidents with the industry.

There are 4 branches within the OSH Inspectorate Department:

- Operations & Surveillance (Con) Branch
- Investigations and Engineering (Con) Branch
- Ops Planning & Licensing Branch
- General Workplaces Branch

OSH Specialist Department

The department provides specialist support in the development of WSH standards and best practices, as well as the investigation of complex accidents and occupational diseases. The department conducts operational research, develops and implements strategies and targeted programmes for specific WSH hazards and industries. The department also collaborates with international organisations and national institutes in projects, information exchange, visits and training.

There are 5 branches within OSH Specialist Department:

- Engineering Safety Branch
- Major Hazard Installations Branch
- Occupational Hygiene Branch
- Occupational Medicine Branch
- International Collaboration Branch

Work Injury Compensation Department

The department administers the system that regulates the right of employees to compensation in the event of work-related injury, death or occupational disease under the WICA. Covering about 2.9 million employees, the WICA provides access to a low-cost, fair and expeditious alternative to common law for employees to settle claims for work-related injuries. The department also administers the Incident Reporting system for the reporting of workplace accidents, dangerous occurrences and occupational diseases.

There are 2 branches within the Work Injury Compensation Department:

- Incident Reporting & Investigation Branch
- Claims Management Branch
The WSH Council Office is the secretariat office for the WSH Council.

Established on 1 April 2008, the WSH Council comprises 18 leaders from the major industry sectors (including construction, metalworking and manufacturing, marine industries, healthcare, chemicals industries, logistics and hospitality), the government, unions and professionals from the legal, insurance and academic fields.

The Council works closely with the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and other Government agencies, the industry, unions and professional associations to develop strategies to raise WSH standards in Singapore and to realise the national WSH 2018 strategy.

The Council’s main functions are to:
+ Build industry capabilities to better manage WSH;
+ Promote safety and health at work and recognise companies with good WSH records; and
+ Set acceptable WSH practices.

### Vision
A safe and healthy workplace for everyone; and a country renowned for best practices in WSH

### Mission
To lead industry efforts in strengthening capabilities and building a progressive culture in WSH

### Main Functions of the WSH Council Office

The WSH Council Office comprises three departments:

+ The **Industry Practices, Sensing and Engagement** department drives the development and adoption of good WSH practices and proposes solutions to achieve sustainable improvement in WSH. The Industry Practices, Sensing and Engagement department also collaborates with industry stakeholders to promote and raise industry-driven efforts in WSH.

+ The **Industry Capability Building** department drives WSH capability building efforts at both the organisational and individual levels. It implements initiatives such as bizSAFE, Risk Management Assistance Fund (RMAF) and CultureSAFE Programme to raise WSH capability in businesses. It also oversees the provision of training and the development of competency frameworks for WSH professionals and the workforce, to ensure that workers are well equipped to deal with risks at the workplace.

+ The **Strategy and Management** department provides policy guidance, and oversees the work planning, budget allocation and business performance monitoring functions of the Council Office. The Strategy and Management department also works with MOM to monitor critical milestones in the implementation of WSH 2018 strategies.
The WSH Institute was set up in April 2011 as part of Singapore’s WSH 2018 strategy to strengthen Singapore’s capabilities in safeguarding the safety and health of persons at work, and put us on par with global leaders. The WSH Institute will help MOM and WSH Council recalibrate and ensure policies and programmes continue to stay relevant and effective. Businesses in Singapore can look to the WSH Institute for strategies and solutions to help them address WSH issues. In addition, the Institute will also work with the WSH Council to equip business leaders and WSH professionals with the competencies to better manage safety and health at their workplaces.

Strategies and Functions

To realise our vision of a leading institute for WSH knowledge and innovation and achieve the corresponding strategic outcomes, the Institute will adopt the following three key strategies:

- informing WSH policies and strategies,
- creating WSH solutions for businesses and
- transforming and nurturing capabilities of leaders and professionals.

Governance

With effect from April 2012, WSH Institute came under the purview of the WSH Council. A nine member Governing Board, appointed by the WSH Council, was formed to provide governance to the WSH Institute. The WSH Institute Governing board provides strategic guidance and directive to facilitate efficient governing of the Institute. It consists of members from the industry, the labour movement, government and institutions of higher learning. The board will ensure that the Institute’s work is relevant to industry, government and workers, tapping on expertise distributed across organisations with capabilities in research, education and training. The Institute also taps on the advice of MOM’s International Advisory Panel (IAP), which comprises WSH experts from countries with similar but more mature set-ups. These include Germany, Korea, the United Kingdom and the United States.