

SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Minister Gwede Mantashe: 2019 Mine Health and Safety Statistics

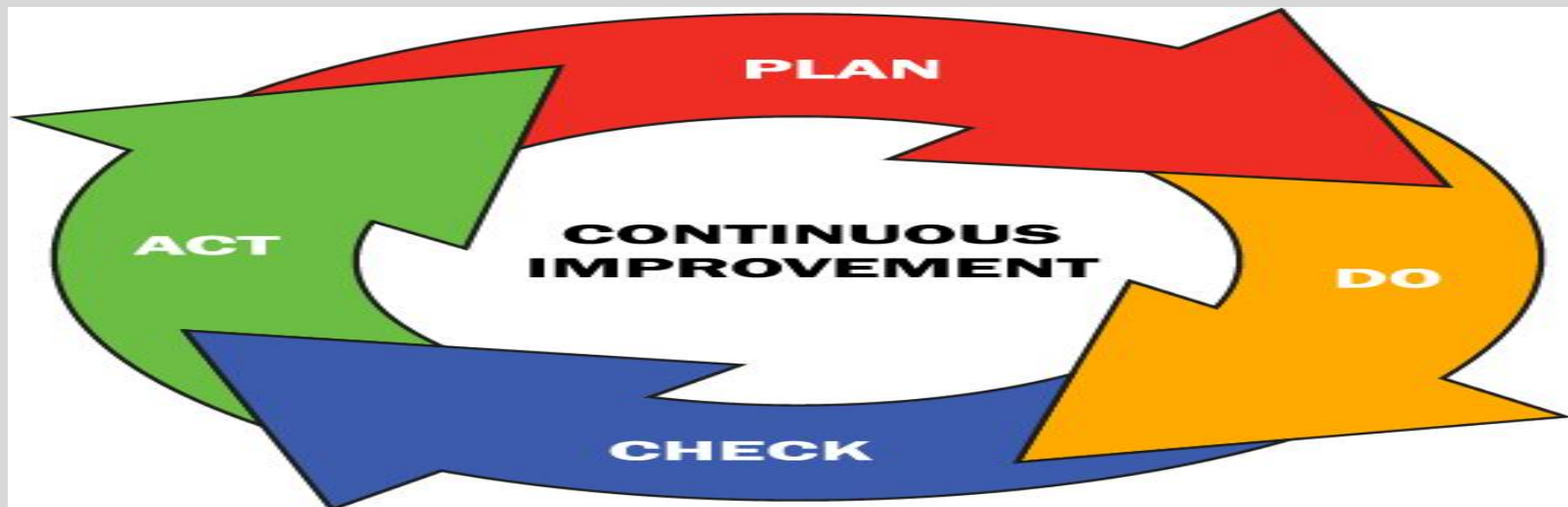
Occupational fatalities - 51 fatalities in 2019

Occupational injuries - A total of 2 406 injuries were reported in 2019

Medical deaths due to occupational diseases - 999 reports in 2018

Occupational diseases - 3 458 in 2018

Safety is the state of being safe; freedom from the occurrence or risk of injury, danger, or loss. No one wants to be injured or experience a loss or pain. These often come as a result of an accident. Parents leave home with hope to return to their kids the same way they left, which is, without any injury or harm. This is the same with kids when they leave home for school. For this hope to come to realisation, a safety management system is to be set in place. Well, this system should be applied everywhere, where one spends time since accidents happens everywhere but for this article, we put our focus in the workplace.



What is a Safety Management System?

It is an organization's overall plan and system which lays out the company's Occupational Health and Safety objectives and strategy. The system will be structured in compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act.



What are the elements of Safety Management System?

1. Management commitment - Management needs to promote a safe working environment while demotivating unsafe behaviours in the workplace. The system therefore is to contain the commitment of the management in the implementation of safety measures in the workplace.
2. Health and Safety policy – It is a written statement of principles and goals embodying the company's commitment to workplace health and safety. A health and safety policy is developed in order to create a healthy, safe, and prepared working environment for the employees, visiting clients, contractors, and suppliers
3. Structures and Organogram - An organogram is a graphical representation of an organisation's structure. It's used to show hierarchical relationships between managers and the people who report to them, as well as departments. An organogram is a useful tool for organisations to both visualise reporting relationships and communicate employees' names, skills, and contact information
4. Worker participation – The employer should ensure compliance to the OHS Act relating to the appointment and the training of workers and their safety and health representatives. The employer should make arrangements for them to have the time and resources to participate actively in the processes of organizing, planning and implementation, evaluation and action for improvement of the OSH management system.

How do we set up a Safety Management System?

Setting up a safety management system is a project that needs to be executed with **co-operation between the health and safety officers** or health and safety representatives of a business and **management**.

1. Establish requirements

The first step in setting up a safety management system is for the company to identify their OHS needs, according to OHS policies and legislation in relation to the company's work environments and industry.

2. Create an OHS governance structure

Next, the people who will be responsible for managing a company's health and safety elements need to be brought together. This entails:

- Setting up an OHS committee
- Electing a committee chairperson
- Electing representatives
- Establishing the committee structures and procedures
- Defining the communication structure between the committee, employees, and management

Going forward, the purpose of this committee will be to:

- Implement and enforce safety policies

- Respond to and manage health and safety concerns
- Promote health and safety
- Ensure the wellbeing of employees
- Assume accountability for all health and safety elements

3. Create a plan

The committee should set up a comprehensive health and safety plan for the company and the employees. This plan should cover:

- An initial exploration of health and safety needs in the workplace
- A sustainable plan for ensuring health and safety in the workplace
- Response protocols for all emergencies or incidents
- Health and safety training programmes for employees
- OHS objectives and goals
- Continued evaluation of health and safety elements
- Methods of communicating health and safety concerns to employees
- Reporting and documentation structures

4. Implement the plan

Each health and safety element in the plan should be assigned to a representative and implemented. The implementation will include:

- Responding to incidents as they arise
- Doing regular inspections
- Training new employees on health and safety protocols
- Running drills
- Responding to employee or management concerns

Implementation is thus a sustained process and can range from mundane tasks to adrenaline-inducing emergencies on any given day.

5. Evaluate and improve the system

Evaluation means that there is continuous improvement on the safety management system. This means that the committee will be going through the process on an ongoing basis to see where there are missed opportunities, where their efforts are falling short, and how they can keep improving their plan.

Because any safety management system is a continuously changing project, companies need skilled and trustworthy safety representatives to manage their OHS concerns.

If you are interested in joining your company's safety committee, or in standing out in that committee and qualifying for a leadership position – you should consider completing a part-time Occupational Health and Safety Course

Conclusion

Conclusively, no one hopes for incidents and accidents in the workplace but they happen anyway due to factors which we may deal with to prevent future occurrences. The safety management system is a tool which may assist us to continuously reduce them together with their impacts/effects. If this tool is properly set, much of the accidents and incidents will be kept at bay.

