



The Zimbabwe National Occupational Safety and Health Policy (OSH)





Foreword

The government of Zimbabwe promotes safety and health in the workplace as a pre-requisite for sound economic development and poverty reduction. The objective of this policy is to provide for occupational safety and health as a major component in the creation of sustainable business and therefore economic growth. The policy is deliberately gender sensitive and recognises the rights of employers and workers in the delivery of safety and health at work and upholds the sanctity of life by prevention occupational accidents, injuries, diseases and fatalities.

The government together with its social partners of employers' organisations and labour unions is building and maintaining a national preventive safety and health culture that increases awareness and training on hazard identification and risk assessment to make every task and occupation safe and worthy an occupation. My Ministry, through this policy, fosters the spirit of self-regulation by employers through the adoption and implementation of a systems approach in managing safety and health. Zimbabwe's national occupational safety and health performance has not been pleasing the past 5 years 2015 to 2019 with 26 798 workers having been seriously injured and 285 of them succumbing from their injuries compared to 20 641 workers seriously injured and 401 dying from their injuries during the preceding 5 year period of 2010 to 2014. On the basis of such statistics, the national OSH performance as measured by the key indicator of Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR) show that the period 2010 to 2014 registered an LTIFR of 1.64 while for 2015 to 2019 the LTIFR stood at 3.16 against a standard of less than 1. The major contributor to this under performance has been the slow uptake of a systems approach by employers in managing occupational safety and health. This policy, together with the envisaged enhanced updated OSH legislative framework stress the need for workplaces to manage occupational hazards and risks through occupational safety and health management systems. Additionally, the policy also introduces some incentives to employers who embrace a systems approach in managing occupational safety and health in their workplaces to eliminate or drastically reduce accidents and ill health.

The enactment of a harmonised occupational safety and health law should also improve the enforcement of minimum legal requirements to render the working environment safe and without prejudice to health. All employers should have a copy of this policy and communicate it effectively to their workers for harmonious and coherent implementation. In addition to the social and economic costs it entails, it is not right and in fact immoral for any workers to lose her or his life or limb while creating wealth for his or her employer. Accordingly, the government of Zimbabwe together with its social partners shall take all measures necessary to prevent occupational accidents and diseases through this policy.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accident means an unplanned event giving rise to death, injury, ill health, property damage or other loss.

Contractor means a person who renders services to the employer which are related to or connected with those of the employer's undertaking and is not under the general control or management of the employer.

Contagious disease is a subset category of transmissible diseases, which are transmitted to other persons, either by physical contact with the person suffering the disease, or by casual contact with their secretions or objects touched by them or airborne route among other routes.

Ergonomics means the adaption or matching of work to the capabilities of employees in light of their physical and mental health.

Hazard means a source or situation with a potential to cause harm terms of human injury or ill health, damage to the environment or any combination of these.

Hazard identification means a process of recognising that a hazard exists and defining its characteristics.

Health means a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

Occupational Accident means an accident that arises out of and during the course of work.

Occupational Disease means a disease contracted as a result of exposure to risk factors arising from work.

Occupational Health means disease the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical mental and social well-being of employees, temporary workers, contractor personnel, visitors and any other person in the workplace.

Occupational Health Services means services entrusted with preventive functions and also responsible for advising the employers and workers on the requirements for establishing and maintaining a safe and healthy working environment which facilitates optimal physical and mental health in the workplace.

Occupational Health Surveillance means ongoing systematic collection, analysis, interpretation and dissemination of OSH data linked to occupational health for the purpose of prevention.

Occupational Safety means freedom from unacceptable risk of harm at work.

Occupational Safety and Health means the discipline dealing with the prevention of injuries, diseases and facilities at work as well as the promotion and protection of the safety and health of workers including contractor personnel, visitors or any other person in the workplace.

Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems means part of an organisation's management system used to develop and implement the organisation's safety and health policy, objectives, targets, programmes and procedures to manage occupational safety and health risks.

Occupational Safety and Health Promotion means the furtherance or advancement of all activities intended to prevent occupational accidents, injuries, diseases and fatalities.

Reporting means the process by which the workers submit information on the occurrence of an occupational accident, injury, diseases, damage or fatality to their immediate supervisor and/or the submission by the employer to NSSA of information on the occurrence of an occupational accident, injury, disease, damage or fatality in his or her business.

Risk means the likelihood that an accident, injury, ill-health, fatality or damage will occur in the workplace. Risk Assessment means the overall process of estimating the magnitude of risk and deciding whether or not the risk is tolerable.

Working Environment means any premises or place with its surrounding where a person performs or is likely to perform work in the course of his or her employment as a worker or self-employed person.



1. INTRODUCTION

Occupational safety and health (OSH) is a significant component of the world of work and cuts across all economic sectors. OSH is a discipline dealing mainly with the promotion of safety and health in the workplace by preventing occupational accidents, injuries, diseases and fatalities. The major factors influencing occupational safety and health through their interaction are the worker, environment and equipment. When the worker is performing a task, he or she does so in a working environment and in most cases using machinery or equipment.

However, occupational accidents generally arise from uncontrolled worker factors, environmental conditions and/or the state of the equipment and machinery being used. It follows that much more effort must be applied through various approaches, chief among which is the application of occupational safety and health management systems to prevent accidents which are a recognized cost to business, the workers themselves and to society.

Fig 1: Interaction of worker, environment and equipment in an accident



Government, employers and labour must have a concerted effort in promoting and maintaining the highest degree of occupational safety and health in all occupations. National and enterprise occupational safety and health programmes must be strategically designed to anticipate, recognize, evaluate and control hazards arising from the workplace, which may also impact on the general environment.

The working environment should be designed to ensure that all hazards are controlled, managed or eliminated within the operational parameters of the business concern. Preventive design and operational programmes are essential to ensure that favourable working conditions are created through the physical provision of an ideal working environment. Attention shall also be given to the acquisition of proper technology and installations thereof that assure adequate protection of workers from all identified occupational safety and health risks. Additionally, working environments should remain alert to emerging hazards and risks such COVID-19, SARS and H1N1. The employer is required to provide and maintain as far as reasonably practicable a working environment that is safe and without risks to the employees. Hence a comprehensive plan to mitigate the effects of emerging hazards and risks should be put in place including emergency preparedness plans that can be adapted taking into consideration the characteristics of evolving pandemics.

This policy recognizes the constitutional rights of workers to fair and safe labour practices as enshrined in section 65(1) of the constitution of Zimbabwe in addition to investment in safe work which in itself makes good economic sense by ensuring efficient work processes, quality products and the reduction of losses and suffering due to accidents, injuries, diseases and fatalities at work. Additionally, the constitution of Zimbabwe in Section 65(4)



emphasises that every employee is entitled to a just, equitable and satisfactory conditions of work, further pointing out in Section 73(a) that every person has the right to an environment that is not harmful to their health and well-being. Furthermore, the Labour Act Chapter 28:08 declares and defines the fundamental rights of employees including protection against occupational health risks.

Zimbabwe's occupational safety and health performance in the five years preceding the review of this policy in 2020 was not pleasing with 26 798 workers having been seriously injured and 285 of them dying from their injuries. The occupational injuries recorded for the 5 year period 2015 – 2019 show a marked increase of about 29.8% compared to the review period of 2010 – 2014 which recorded 20 641 injuries and 401 fatalities which translated to a decrease, however the fatality rate still remains quite high. The average lost time injury frequency rate (LTIFR) on 1 million hours exposure time stood at 3.16 for the 5 year period 2015 – 2019 compared to 1.64 recorded the previous 5 year period of 2010 -2014 against a standard of <1 (less than 1). Statistics on occupational diseases within the same 5year period of 2015 - 2019 still remain not comprehensive.

In 2019, the industrial production capacity utilization was around 36.4% but in 2018 it stood at 48.2%. Furthermore in 2016 capacity utilization was at 55.1%. Records kept by the National Social Security Authority (NSSA) show that on average one million two hundred and eight thousand four hundred and two (1 208 402) people were in gainful employment in the formal sector of the economy in 2013 which is about 9.25% of the total population of Zimbabwe of 13 061 239 as measured by the census of August 2013. The Zimbabwean economy is still considerably small even though there is a huge potential to grow. The reported occupational accidents, injuries and fatalities were excessive for an economy of this size and more worrying is the unsustainable increase in injuries a Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate (LTIFR) indicative of hazardous work environments in Zimbabwe. The implementation of this policy in its totality will certainly reduce the carnage arising from the workplace.

Further, the decline of the number of jobs with secure and lasting contracts and work-related social benefits, as well as the corresponding rise in precarious and unprotected work, are phenomena affecting many economic sectors in this country. For many, employment not only fails to secure a successful pathway out of poverty but also further contributes to vulnerability. While the role of employment in poverty reduction is recognised, a major potential source of worker vulnerability is that of occupationally related accidents, injuries, diseases and fatalities.

In Zimbabwe, occupational safety and health delivery is the responsibility of government through the ministry responsible for Labour, the tripartite National Social Security Authority, and the Zimbabwe Occupational Safety and Health Council whose membership includes government, the employers' confederation of Zimbabwe and labour unions. The Zimbabwe Occupational Safety and Health Council (ZOSHC) plays a significant role in ensuring national consensus on occupational safety and health issues in the country through dialogue and advises the minister on occupational safety and health policy, law and standards. The National Social Security Authority (NSSA) is the institution to which government delegated the responsibility for the national planning, development and implementation of OSH programmes. Enterprises extend the work of government in the promotion of occupational safety and health by employing safety and health professionals, appointing competent persons to be responsible for machinery safety, establishing safety and health committees and adopting occupational safety and health management systems.

An accident prevention culture is absolutely necessary in every workplace to halt the carnage due to accidents. Employer and worker attitudes and beliefs determine how business activities are carried out at work. The attitudes and beliefs subsequently are shaped to some extent by people's education, training and the level of understanding of OSH issues. While Zimbabwe has the highest rate of literacy in Africa at 97.7% in 2013 this has not translated into a good OSH culture and the national OSH performance across all sectors is far from being desirable. The need to fully implement this policy is thus warranted.



2. MISSION STATEMENT

2.1 Vision

To prevent occupational accidents, injuries, diseases and fatalities in Zimbabwe.

2.2 Mission

To promote occupational safety and health in Zimbabwe through the tripartism of government, employer organizations and labour unions.

3.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES

Within this general framework, the Government of Zimbabwe, with the full participation of employers and workers in all sectors of the economy, including the self-employed has set the following objectives;

1. To continuously reduce incidences of occupational accidents, injuries, diseases and fatalities.
2. To promote and maintain the highest possible level of occupational safety and health among workers in all sectors of the economy.
3. To create a sustainable environment of informed participation of all relevant parties in pursuit of occupational safety and health.
4. To provide for safety and health in respect of design, manufacture, testing, use and maintenance of equipment, chemicals and work processes.
5. To provide for ergonomics, prevention of occupational accidents and for emergency preparedness and response.
6. To provide for dialogue and co-operation between government, employers and workers in matters of occupational safety and health.
7. To cause the development, enactment and implementation of comprehensive, harmonized, integrated and effective occupational safety and health legislation that covers all work environments.
8. To provide for statutory inspection, monitoring and surveillance system that is able to enforce national occupational safety and health legislation.
9. To provide for systematic programmes of safety and health training in order to develop expertise in personnel employed or to be employed in the various sectors of the economy.
10. To establish and maintain a national injury and ill health reporting system to assist in the management of occupational safety and health.
11. To advocate for and support the teaching of occupational safety and health at all levels of the Zimbabwe's education system and to encourage research in the field of occupational safety and health by institutions of higher learning, research organizations and the work place.
12. To co-operate with other governments and the tripartite communities in the region and internationally to ensure that production practices or technologies that are imported into or exported from Zimbabwe are safe and do not cause safety and health risks to workers, communities and/or the environment.

4.0 POLICY PRINCIPLES

This policy is anchored on the following principles in the promotion of occupational safety and health in the workplace.

1. The highest priority at every work place shall be to make the job or task safe first before undertaking it as a way of managing occupational safety and health risks upfront.
2. Occupational Safety and health in Zimbabwe shall be managed through a systems approach in order to create a culture of preventing accidents, injuries, diseases and fatalities in the workplace. Such systems shall include a hazardous work permit system involving but not limited to confined space, hot work, hazardous chemicals, radiation sources and working on heights.
3. OSH legislation must cover workers and employers in all sectors of the economy and in all forms of employment relationships.



4. The core rights and duties of employers and workers in advancing occupational safety and health shall be spelt out in legislation.
5. Every worker shall have a right to occupational safety and health awareness education and to participate in the identification and evaluation of safety and health risks that affect or are likely to affect him or her in the workplace.
6. Every employer shall train or sponsor the training to a minimum of certificate level in occupational safety and health recognized by the Director of Occupational Safety and Health at NSSA of every supervisor and manager or any person earmarked to be a manager to instil competence in occupational safety and health management.
7. Every employer shall register his or her workers be they seasonal, permanent, contract or otherwise with the Workers Compensation Insurance Fund at the National Social Security Authority in case of a failure in occupational safety and health protection resulting in injury, illness or fatality. This principle shall apply equally to the self-employed.
8. The cost of providing all appropriate safety and health protection including personal protective equipment or clothing shall be borne by the employer.
9. Every employer of fifty (50) or more workers shall also employ a safety and health professional or professionals with their number depending on the complexity of operations. Every employer of seven hundred (700) or more workers shall employ in addition, a resident occupational health medical practitioner certified to practise occupational health medicine.
10. Every workplace shall have an emergency preparedness and response plan and procedure which includes the reverse parking of all vehicles at the premises.
11. Every employer shall permit occupational safety and health inspectors from the National Social Security Authority (NSSA) or any other authorized authority to carry out inspection or do any other thing permitted by law at any time of a 24 hour day.
12. All lost time injuries preventing or likely to prevent a worker from attending duty for 3 or more shifts, all fatalities immediate or delayed and all injuries to persons not employed in the workplace where the accident occurs such as customers, clients and members of the public shall be reported to the nearest Inspector of Workplaces as soon as possible and certainly within 24 hours of occurrence using the fastest means of communication available.
13. All calculations of lost time injury frequency rates (LTIFR) for purposes of understanding OSH performance and/or comparing performance within or outside the organization shall be based on 1 million hours exposure time. All injury severity rates shall be based on a 24-hour day (3 shifts of 8 hours) to provide country uniformity and consistency with accident reporting criteria in 12 above.
14. All employers shall maintain a current accident register in which accurate lost time for every reportable injury, illness or fatality is entered and shall be made available to the Inspector of workplaces on demand.
15. All consultants in occupational safety and health wishing to perform work in Zimbabwe must be registered with a recognised OSH institute or professional body.
16. Every acquisition of new technology, hazardous chemical, equipment or machinery which has a significant impact on business, the workers and the workplace shall be preceded by a detailed hazard and operability study (HAZOP) at feasibility study phase of the acquisition.
17. The curricula for primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities must include lessons on occupational safety and health since most students shall one day be a worker, a manager or a business person. Research in the OSH field shall be strongly encouraged.
18. Major accidents hazards shall be managed through an effective systems approach including proper siting of the major hazard installation following policies and procedures as spelt out by government from time to time.
19. This policy shall be reviewed every five years in consultation with social partners and every employer must have a copy communicated to his or her management and workers.



5.0 DUTIES OF EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS.

Workplace occupational safety and health policies shall take into account that workers have various and diverse needs.

Employers shall:

- i. Treat all workers with respect regardless of disability, language, race, culture, religion, age, gender or literacy
- ii. Value the participation of workers that have different life and work experiences in OSH matters.
- iii. Ensure that OSH information, training and systems address diverse needs.
- iv. Adopt a risk management approach to managing workplace safety and health.
- v. Ensure the safe use, handling, storage and transportation of equipment and hazardous substances including chemicals.
- vi. Ensure the proper use by workers of occupational safety and health protection systems including personal protective equipment and clothing.
- vii. Report all reportable accidents to the Inspector of Workplaces.

Workers shall:

- i. Take reasonable care of the safety and health of themselves and others.
- ii. Co-operate with employers in their efforts to comply with this policy and OSH requirements
- iii. Follow procedures in the performance of any task at work.
- iv. Report all accidents and near-misses to their supervisors.

Both employers and workers are prohibited from:

- i. Interfering with or misusing items provided for the safety and health of persons at work
- ii. Obstructing attempts to give aid or prevent a serious risk to the safety and health of a person at work
- iii. Refusing a reasonable request to assist in giving aid or preventing a risk to safety and health.
- iv. Disrupting a workplace by creating safety and health fears.

6.0 GENERAL OSH WORKER RIGHTS

Every worker shall have a right to-

- a) Fair and safe labour practices
- b) An environment that is not harmful to their health and well being
- c) Know the occupational safety and health risks and

their effects, he or she is or is likely to be exposed to.

- d) Be consulted in the development of mitigatory mechanisms for identified occupational safety and health risks.
- e) Refuse to undertake any work that has not been rendered safe.

7.0 AREAS OF STRATEGIC FOCUS

In view of the OSH philosophy outlined in the introduction, the objectives and principles of this policy stated above, the following are the key strategic areas of focus in carrying out the mission of this policy.

7.1 OSH Awareness

Employers shall develop OSH promotional programmes in order to raise awareness on OSH issues amongst both management and workers. The following initiatives shall be the minimum for every workplace:

- a) a) Establish live OSH promotion programmes.
- b) Establish a communication board at the general entrance to the workplace highlighting daily OSH performance on key indicators to reinforce an accident prevention culture.
- c) Create OSH committees comprising management and OSH worker representatives for bipartite dialogue and share the centre of OSH responsibility at enterprise level. Such committees shall be chaired by senior management with OSH professionals or OSH representatives as secretariat. Under no circumstance should OSH professionals chair meetings of these OSH committees.
- d) Induct every new worker and visitor at an establishment on the prevailing OSH risks and their management system in place and his or her expected response to them.

7.2 Operational Policies and Standards

The government, employers and labour unions shall together or separately, develop or adopt appropriate standards, codes of practice and guidelines consistent with international standards on OSH for uniformity at industrial sector and/or at national level in all economic activities.

- a) Every employer shall have an OSH policy and HIV and AIDS policy which are consistent with this national policy.
- b) Every employer shall have occupational health services which will assure insofar as practicable that no worker shall suffer diminished health, functional capacity, or life expectancy as a result



of his work activities and that in the event of such occupational diseases having been contracted, is suitably treated, rehabilitated and compensated.

7.3 Accreditation of Occupational Safety and Health Practitioners

In order to uphold professional ethics and to assure employers of good OSH professionals with suitable qualifications.

- a) All OSH professionals shall first be accredited by a recognized body of Occupational Safety and Health before entering the Zimbabwe job market.
- b) Every employer who adopts an occupational safety and health management system shall have a qualified OSH professional to drive the system and to report on its performance. Such management systems shall apply equally to permanent employees, seasonal and fixed term workers and to any other person in the workplace

7.4 Compliance and Enforcement

- a) The National Social Security Authority or any other authorized authority shall employ Inspectors of Workplaces to regulate OSH practices at the workplace. Employers shall be required to adopt a proactive approach by self-regulation and enforcement of good OSH practices and standards.
- b) Every enterprise shall identify vulnerable groups of workers such as pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers and develop specific programmes to protect them against risks which can compromise their health or the health of their unborn or sucking children.
- c) Every employer shall as far as practicable consider gender issues when offering employment.
- d) All personal protective equipment and clothing provided shall be commensurate with the type and level of risk of the job to be undertaken.
- e) Every employer shall have effective health and medical surveillance programmes to protect the health of workers.
- f) All employers and workers shall comply with this policy and any legislation intended to enforce the provisions of this policy.

7.5 Decent Work

Decent work embodies opportunities for women

and men to obtain productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Decent work is central to sustainable poverty reduction and is a means for achieving equitable, inclusive and sustainable development. It is based on the understanding that work is a source of personal dignity, family stability, peace in the community, democracies that deliver for people, and economic growth that expands opportunities for productive jobs and enterprise development.

7.5.1 The Centrality of Occupational Safety and Health to Decent Work

Occupational safety and health is concerned with the prevention of occupational accidents, injuries, diseases and fatalities by promoting safe work practices and the improvement of working environments and conditions. OSH is therefore a critical component of decent work. Employers shall measure and monitor the extent to which they protect their workforce through the following indicators:

- a) Lost time injury frequency rate, based on one million hours exposure time;
- b) Injury severity rate based on a 24 hour day (3 shifts of 8 hours).

7.6 Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment

There is need to identify as far as possible all hazards associated with any job or task and their risk of becoming an accident or disease assessed on an ongoing basis. Therefore, all employers and any individual responsible for the work of others shall carry out hazard identification and risk assessment of every workplace in consultation with the workers involved with the aim of rendering the job safe first before production.

The employer shall effect OSH programmes in the following hierarchy to:

- i. Eliminate the hazard or risk;
- ii. Control the hazard or risk at source, through the use of engineering controls or organizational measures.
- iii. Minimize the hazard or risk by designing safe work systems, which include administrative control measures; and
- iv. Where residual hazards or risks cannot be controlled by corrective measures, the employer shall provide appropriate personal protective



equipment, including clothing, at no cost to the worker, and shall ensure its proper use and maintenance.

- v. Maintain a hazard and risk register with all identified and profiled hazards and risks to inform mitigatory programmes.

7.7 Accident Prevention Culture.

- a) Safety and health culture is simply the attitude about safety that pervades the whole organisation, from top to bottom, and is the norm of behaviour for every member of staff, from directors down to the newest junior. Safety and health culture is therefore of paramount importance in the prevention of accidents and diseases in any organisation.
- b) Organisations with a positive safety and health culture are characterised by communication founded on mutual trust, by shared perceptions of the importance of safety and health and by confidence in the efficacy of preventive measures.
- c) Employers shall identify workplace safety and health culture using specific indicators, including attitudes and behaviours of workers and management, the workplace environment, implementation of systems of work, safety and health discussions and consultations across the organization and at all levels.
- d) Now therefore all employers shall develop an OSH culture to ensure that all levels of workers understand that they have a shared responsibility of preventing accidents, injuries, disease and fatalities at work.

7.8 OSH Education and Training

- a) The Zimbabwe education system needs to recognize occupational safety and health and introduce it in the curricula for primary, secondary, college and university education. The majority, if not all students, become either workers, managers or employers at some stage in their lives. It will be beneficial to the promotion of occupational safety and health if it becomes a taught subject in schools.
- b) Universities and colleges that teach Environmental Health/Sciences, Industrial Hygiene, Engineering, Occupational Safety and Health, Nursing and Medicine are required to strengthen the course components on Occupational Safety and Health

at undergraduate level in order to produce a professional who has confidence in practising occupational safety and health in Zimbabwe.

8. OSH IN ECONOMIC SECTORS

As the concept of a global market gathers momentum, new international patterns of trade and investment bring new demands on OSH development and performance. Good OSH performance is a competitive advantage for doing business. A good OSH record ensures favourable treatment by customers, financial institutions, and insurance organizations including the Workers' Compensation Insurance Fund at NSSA. This favour assists in propelling economic growth.

8.1 Mining

The mining sector is a major contributor to the Gross Domestic Product of Zimbabwe and offers huge employment opportunities. However, mining is generally a hazardous economic activity requiring stringent occupational safety and health systems. Every organization or individual involved with mining shall be required to pay special attention and monitor the following occupational safety and health issues:

- i. Environmental Impact Assessment
- ii. Hazard and operability study (HAZOP)
- iii. Mine decommission plans
- iv. Ground Support
- v. Ground Conditions
- vi. No intoxication.
- vii. eye protection.
- viii. hangings and sidewalls.
- ix. explosives transportation, storage and use.
- x. safety pillars.
- xi. Fall of Ground
- xii. Underground Ventilation and Cooling
- xiii. Working in confined spaces
- xiv. Working on heights
- xv. Dust suppression
- xvi. Lighting
- xvii. Heat
- xviii. Noise and Vibration
- xix. Mine flooding
- xx. Fires and Explosions
- xxi. Gases
- xxii. Emergency Preparedness and response.
- xxiii. Ionizing Radiation
- xxiv. Chemicals



- xxv. House keeping
- xxvi. Waste management,
- xxvii. Pneumoconiosis, HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis, Hepatitis B and so on.

8.2 Agriculture

The agricultural sector has experienced a significant change due to the land reform from 2000. It is a heterogeneous and complex sector. It does not cover farming only but includes other operations such as crop processing and packaging, pest control and management, grain storage, husbandry, and so on. The sector employs a huge number of people and the employment location is mainly rural and hence workers are traditionally family members (children, women, men and the elderly). There has been an upward trend of occupational accidents, injuries, illnesses and fatalities involving in some cases, the use of machinery and equipment such as boilers however acquired. Every organization or individual practising agriculture shall be required to pay special attention and monitor the following occupational safety and health issues:

- i. Use of machinery and equipment such as boilers, tractors and harvesters
- ii. Use of pesticides and other agrochemicals
- iii. Hazard and operability study (HAZOP)
- iv. Rodent control
- v. Noise and thermal stress
- vi. Working in confined spaces
- vii. Working on heights.
- viii. Dust
- ix. Biological hazards due to multiple contact with animals and plants
- x. Ergonomics
- xi. House keeping
- xii. Child labour
- xiii. Lifting of heavy loads
- xiv. Malaria
- xv. Anti-sera stocks
- xvi. And many more

8.3 Forestry

Forestry enterprises vary considerably in terms of size, scope, economic stability and culture. It is extremely difficult to enforce laws and regulations in some parts of this sector as operations are frequently carried out in remote worksites which are widespread and often change location. The work is mostly done by small

groups of workers. Every organization or individual involved with primary timber work shall be required to pay special attention and monitor the following occupational safety and health issues

- i. Tree felling
- ii. Lumbering
- iii. Logging
- iv. The use of saws and other equipment
- v. Hazard and operability study (HAZOP)
- vi. Tree planting
- vii. Biological hazards due to multiple contact with animals and plants
- viii. Use of chemicals
- ix. Use of machinery and equipment such vehicles, tractors, front end loaders, saws and so on
- x. Mountainous terrain
- xi. Lifting of heavy loads
- xii. Working in confined spaces
- xiii. Working on heights
- xiv. Anti-sera stocks
- xv. Malaria

8.4 Manufacturing

This is a broad and diverse sector which includes among other industries the following;

- a) Chemical
- b) Electricity generation
- c) Electronics
- d) Automotive
- e) Electrical appliances and equipment
- f) Metal fabrication
- g) Metal processing
- h) Textile
- i) Building materials
- j) Rubber
- k) Food and beverages
- l) Brewing
- m) Iron and Steel
- n) Milling
- o) Boiler making
- p) Smelting and foundry
- q) And many others

Every organization or individual involved in manufacturing shall be required to pay special attention and monitor the following occupational safety and health issues

- i. Environmental impact assessment



- ii. Hazard and operability study (HAZOP)
- iii. Radiation Sources
- iv. Heat exposure
- v. Lighting
- vi. Dust
- vii. Working in confined spaces
- viii. Working on heights
- ix. Energy including electricity
- x. Noise and vibration
- xi. Hazardous chemical exposure
- xii. House keeping
- xiii. Waste management
- xiv. Pneumoconiosis in dusty occupations
- xv. Heavy metal poisoning
- xvi. Ergonomics
- xvii. Materials handling and storage
- xviii. Archaic technology
- xix. Welding
- xx. Lifting of heavy loads
- xxi. Front-end loaders with kidney belts
- xxii. Registration of the factory premises with the Inspector of Workplaces
- xxiii. And many others

8.5 Energy

Apart from the workplace hazards the energy sector presents a high risk to the consumers and public at large given the nature of its means of transmission and use across all sectors. Considerable effort has been made in the design of the infrastructure, but challenges related to the maintenance of this infrastructure continue to be a threat to the community environment. Every organization or individual involved with the manufacture and distribution of energy sources including liquid and gaseous fuels and electricity shall be required to pay special attention and monitor the following occupational safety and health issues:

- i. Low level awareness by both workers and members of the public
- ii. Working in confined spaces especially those involving fuel tanks
- iii. Hazard and operability study (HAZOP)
- iv. The use of cell phones at fuel stations
- v. Use of LPG and other inflammable gases
- vi. Fires
- vii. Working in confined spaces
- viii. Working on heights
- ix. Bonding where liquid fuel and electricity are involved
- x. Decanting fuel using plastic containers and the risk

- of static electricity build up.
- xi. Ingestion of hydrocarbon fuels
- xii. Distribution and Transportation
- xiii. Registration of the factory premises with the Inspector of Workplaces
- xiv. And many others

8.6 Transport and Communication

The transport sector includes rail, road, water, and air. Managing OSH risks poses a challenge especially to drivers in the road transport because usually drivers work alone and away from their base. In the information and communication technology including mobile phones, various studies are taking place to profile the safety and health risks involved. Every organization or individual involved with distribution and transport shall be required to pay special attention and monitor the following occupational safety and health issues:

- i. Competence
- ii. Fatigue
- iii. Vibrations and prolonged sitting
- iv. Manual handling
- v. Overloading
- vi. Speed
- vii. Unauthorized passengers
- viii. Hazardous substances
- ix. Working in confined spaces
- x. Working on heights
- xi. Violence and harassment
- xii. Infectious diseases including HIV and AIDS
- xiii. Road Traffic Accidents
- xiv. Weather conditions
- xv. Ascites (fluid accumulating in the lower part of the abdomen) of heavy vehicle drivers
- xvi. Malaria
- xvii. Lifting of heavy loads
- xviii. Vehicle tracking systems
- xix. And many others
- xx. Equipment worthiness

8.7 Wildlife and fisheries

The industries of wildlife and fisheries are mainly outdoor and hence the main hazards are associated with interaction with animals, poachers and weather conditions. Special competences are a prerequisite in these sectors as animals and weather conditions can be unpredictable. Every organization or individual involved with wildlife and fisheries shall be required



to pay special attention and monitor the following occupational safety and health issues:

- i. Thorough training
- ii. Medical and physical fitness
- iii. Acclimatization
- iv. Malaria
- v. Anti-venom stocks
- vi. Drowning

8.8 Building and Construction

Building and construction is one of the key sectors of any economy dealing mainly with infrastructure development. One important sign of an economy that is doing well is the intensity of the building and construction industry which has a positive impact on other downstream industries. The industry is mainly concerned with the planning and construction of buildings, roads, railway tracks, communication base stations, advertising billboards and dams. Every organization or individual involved in building and construction industry shall be required to pay special attention and monitor the following occupational safety and health issues:

- i. Environmental Impact Assessments
- ii. Submission and Approval of Plans
- iii. Accessibility of Building or Construction Sites.
- iv. Lifting of heavy loads
- v. Earth moving equipment
- vi. Erection of scaffolding
- vii. Working platforms and landings
- viii. Working on heights.
- ix. Dust
- x. Noise
- xi. Falling objects
- xii. Waste management
- xiii. Toilets and ablution

8.9 Retail and Service

The retail and service sector is the cause for the growing central business districts in many urban centres in Zimbabwe and is therefore very important especially in its interaction with customers. Every organization or individual involved in retail and/or service industry shall be required to pay special attention and monitor the following occupational safety and health issues:

- i. Slippery floors
- ii. Exposure to various chemicals and materials, which may include paints, solvents, pesticides, fertilisers, perfumes, or cleaning products.

- iii. Elevators and escalators
- iv. Indoor air quality
- v. Repetitive manual tasks such as till operations.
- vi. Fatigue and stress
- vii. Violent customers
- viii. Working in confined spaces
- ix. Working on heights
- x. Varicose veins arising from continuous work in a standing position
- xi. Lifting of heavy loads
- xii. Waste management
- xiii. Sick building syndrome
- xiv. Contagious diseases e.g. COVID-19
- xv. And many others

8.10 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

Small and Medium Enterprises are found in nearly every sector of the Zimbabwean economy and usually form the basis of future conglomerates. In Zimbabwe this sector tends to have many limitations in funding, skills training, work knowledge, OSH awareness, and professionalism and support services. This policy applies to every sector of the economy inclusive of the small and medium enterprises. However, the local authorities are best placed to assist with the discharge of occupational safety and health to this sector as they may be trading in premises known and perhaps licensed by them. Therefore, every organization or individual involved in the small or medium enterprise shall be required to pay special attention and monitor the following occupational safety and health issues:

- i. OSH awareness and training.
- ii. Hiring of competent personnel to undertake work.
- iii. Registration of the workforce with the Workers' Compensation Insurance Fund in case of failure in occupational safety and health.
- iv. Registration of the factory premises with the Inspector of Workplaces.
- v. Hygiene
- vi. Chemicals and their use.
- vii. Welding
- viii. Painting
- ix. Working in confined spaces
- x. Dust



8.11 Informal Sector

The informal sector in Zimbabwe is growing mainly because of the economic difficulties the country has experienced. It is suspected that the informal sector employed a huge number of people by 2013 although accurate statistics may be difficult to come by. Funding is an acute challenge in this economic sector. While the scope of this policy is to cover all work places, the informal sector tends to be fluid in terms of what its members trade in, business locations and other variables. The local authorities are best placed to assist with the discharge of occupational safety and health to this sector as they may be trading under a registration system managed by them. Informal sector workers are generally exposed to poor working environments, and poor sanitation. The level of OSH awareness is low and technical understanding of the business they are involved in is very limited. Every organization or individual involved in the informal sector of the economy shall be required to pay special attention and monitor the following occupational safety and health issues:

- i. Occupational safety and health awareness.
- ii. Hygiene
- iii. Technical understanding of the business.
- iv. Formal trading premises
- v. Chemicals including pesticides
- vi. HIV and AIDS
- vii. Waste management
- viii. Contagious diseases
- ix. And many more

8.12 Public Service

Many different employment relations characterise the public sector but the obligation to manage OSH has not been clear before this policy review. Many workshops, equipment and boilers that fall under the public sector system except military premises and installations have been consistently covered in terms of OSH delivery. While this policy applies to all work places, military premises and installations remain out of its scope. While the public service covers a wide range of workplaces, and occupations, each with its own OSH issues, every head of department or institution as the case may be, in the public service and every member of the public service shall be required to pay special attention and monitor the following occupational safety and health issues:

- i. OSH awareness and training
- ii. Ergonomics
- iii. Hazard and operability study (HAZOP)
- iv. Working in confined spaces
- v. Varicose veins arising from prolonged working in a standing position
- vi. Work place stress
- vii. Infectious diseases especially in health institutions.
- viii. HIV and AIDS
- ix. Violence and harassment
- x. Waste management
- xi. Malaria

9. OSH LEGISLATION

The discipline and practice of occupational safety and health belongs to the Employment Labour Sector (ELS). It is desirable that Zimbabwe develops a non-discriminatory occupational safety and health law which applies to the totality of the employment labour sector to give added effect to this policy along the lines of the Labour Act Chapter 28:01 which applies to the totality of the Zimbabwe employment labour sector.

Further, all the International Labour Organization's conventions on occupational safety and health which have been ratified by the government of Zimbabwe need to be domesticated in order to be implementable and to give added impetus to this policy. All employers and workers shall comply with all conventions ratified and domesticated by the government of Zimbabwe.

10. INCENTIVES FOR ESTABLISHING FUNCTIONAL OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (OSHMS)

- a) This policy advocates for business transactions to consider the safety and health performance of an organization. The mere existence of a functioning Occupational Safety and Health Management System (OSHMS) shall be sufficient for the purpose of discharging business with an organization.
- b) Finance and insurance houses are encouraged to offer better financial and insurance terms respectively to organizations with functioning OSHMS.
- c) The Workers Compensation Insurance Fund premium paid by an organisation to NSSA shall continue to be linked to the safety and health performance of the sector to which



the organisation belongs. Sectors with low occupational accidents, injuries, diseases and fatalities shall pay low premiums. It is therefore important that all sectors keep a check on their safety and health performance in order to ensure that the risk profile of the respective sector remains as low as possible.

- d) Organizations with good OSH performance shall be recognised and given awards at the national OSH occasions such as the Safety and Health at Work conferences.

11. MULTILATERAL OSH AGREEMENTS

Zimbabwe shall honour the international agreements including memoranda of understanding with other countries or organizations including SADC and African Union on occupational safety and health. This policy requires every organization to honour any agreements or memoranda of understanding on occupational safety and health it makes or signs with other organizations. Further, every contract on development or employment including job descriptions shall contain clear occupational safety and health responsibilities.

12. ORGANIZATIONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

The government of Zimbabwe has the sole responsibility for protecting the occupational safety and health of the citizens of this great country. In doing so it seeks and obtains support from other countries and organizations such as the International Labour Organization which has established a country office for Zimbabwe. The government in its wisdom delegated the OSH operations to the National Social Security Authority. The government further established a tripartite council called the Zimbabwe Occupational Safety and Health Council (ZOSHC) made up of some government ministries closely linked to OSH, the Employers' organization and Labour Unions to advise the minister responsible for labour on occupational safety and health matters and to achieve tripartism in resolving OSH issues at national level.

12.1 International Labour Organization (ILO) Zimbabwe Office

The ILO Country Office for Zimbabwe delivers on its mandate through the Zimbabwe Decent Work Country Programme (ZDWCP) which supports the Government of Zimbabwe and its Social Partners (Employers and Workers' Organizations) in promoting rights at work, harnessing decent employment opportunities, enhancing social protection and strengthening social dialogue in the world of work. The ILO country office for Zimbabwe, in close collaboration with other ILO Departments assists Zimbabwe to implement programmes through technical advisory support on policies, technical cooperation projects and activities, studies and research for evidence-based decisions and capacity building interventions. It is within this office that occupational safety and health interventions, such as the occupational safety and health management systems are adapted to the national level, from the global and regional level. Zimbabwe has ratified a number of ILO conventions on occupational safety and health.

12.2 Government

The Ministry responsible for Labour is the arm of government working in partnership with the ILO in occupational safety and health governance. The ministry formulates and implements national plans, policies, programmes and projects on occupational safety and health through the National Social Security Authority (NSSA). The government of Zimbabwe in tripartism with business and labour shall

- a) Develop and implement effective OSH laws, policies and their enforcement system.
- b) Establish and maintain appropriate institutions under the Ministry responsible for labour, and enabling such institutions to develop, implement and coordinate OSH national strategies.



12.3 National Social Security Authority (NSSA)

The National Social Security Authority (NSSA) was created by an act of Parliament, namely the National Social Security Authority Act (Chapter 17:04) of 1989. It is a statutory corporate body tasked by the Government to provide social security. NSSA is managed by a tripartite board constituting equal representation from Government, Employers' organization and labour unions. NSSA has an Occupational Safety and Health Division which exists to promote occupational safety and health in Zimbabwe through the establishment and maintenance of an effective occupational safety and health culture at all workplaces. The Division has four departments namely Workplace Inspectorate, Occupational Health Services, OSH Promotions and Training, and Research and Development. The OSH Director also reports to ZOSHC where he or she is an ex officio member. It is within this framework that national plans, policies, programmes and projects such as this policy are implemented.

12.4 National Tripartite Organization

The Zimbabwe Occupational Safety and Health Council (ZOSHC) is the national tripartite body, which plays a significant role to ensure that there is national consensus on occupational safety and health issues in the country. The council comprises of an equal number of delegates from relevant government ministries linked to OSH, from the employers' organization and from labour unions. The council is chaired by the Ministry responsible for Labour. The council meets regularly.

It provides a platform upon which occupational safety and health management plans, policies, programmes and projects are deliberated and translated into sector, industry and individual organizational interventions. The council provides a link between government and individual organizations for the systematic formulation, implementation, evaluation and review of occupational safety and health plans, policies, programmes and projects emanating from the organizational, national and international levels.

13. FUNDING MECHANISMS

13.1 OSH operations at national level shall be funded through;

- a) Workers' Compensation Insurance Fund at NSSA.
- b) Fees charged on services rendered by the Occupational Safety and Health Division of NSSA
- c) Donated funds

13.2 OSH operations at organizational level shall be funded through

- a) Employers' budgets
- b) Any other funds available to the employer.



Glossary of terms and abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HIV	Human Immune Virus
LTIFR	Lost Time Injury Frequency Rate
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISR	Injury Severity Rate
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
NSSA	National Social Security Authority
OSHMS	Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems
OHS	Occupational Health Service
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SI	Statutory Instrument
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
ZDWCP	Zimbabwe Decent Work Country Program
ZIMSTAT	Zimbabwe Statistics Agency
ZOSHC	Zimbabwe Occupational Safety and Health Council

