

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Intramuros, Manila

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. 01
Series of 2000

For: All Regional Directors

SUBJECT: Implementing Guidelines for the Conduct of Workplace Environment Assessment (WEA) in Hazardous Establishments and Work Processes

In the interest of protecting the welfare of workers from hazardous conditions and work processes in establishments and to institutionalize WEA as part of regular inspection the following guidelines are hereby prescribed for the conduct of WEA activities:

Section 1. Scope

These guidelines shall be observed by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) inspectorate in applying Rule 1070 (Occupational Health and Environmental Control) and other relevant rules of the Occupational Safety and Health Standards.

Section 2. Objectives

In order to systematize collection, detection and measurement of representative samples from the work environment and to evaluate hazards and determine levels of exposure to physical factors, chemical substances, and hazardous materials or substances, the labor inspectors may conduct WEA with the following objectives:

- a) To determine the extent of exposure to harmful levels of physical and chemical agents as well as hazardous materials present in the workplace using as reference the Philippine Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS), as amended.
- b) To evaluate both actual and potential exposures to environmental hazards encountered by workers.
- c) To set inspection priorities based on regional assessment of WEA data.
- d) To utilize obtained measurements for recommending appropriate control measures in the workplace in order to minimize the exposure levels, if not to eliminate the hazards.
- e) To provide policy formulators with WEA data which will be used for improvement of Philippine Standards and other issuances.

Section 3. Definition of Terms

The following terms as used in these guidelines and in the field shall have the meanings as stated:

- a) "Work environment" - refers to the combination of all physical, biological, chemical, medical, physiological, psychological, social, technological and technical elements that directly affect the workplace.
- b) "Physical factors or hazards" - refer to temperature, humidity, noise, ionizing radiation, abnormal pressure (due to altitude), ventilation, illumination and the like which may place added stress on the body.
- c) "Chemical substance" - means any organic or inorganic substance of a particular identity, any element or uncombined chemical and any combination of such substances, or any mixture of two or more chemical substances.
- d) "Hazardous materials or substances" - refer to substances in solid, liquid or gaseous forms known to constitute toxic, flammable, explosive, corrosive, oxidizing and radioactive properties.

- e) "Establishment" - refers to any single proprietorship, partnership, corporation or similar entity operating an economic activity and engaging the services or workers.
- f) "Hazardous establishment" - is one where the employee is exposed to potential risk of disabling injury, illness or death, either because of the presence of biologic agents, radiation, chemical substances, hazardous materials or physical hazards in the work processes performed or equipment used therein.
- g) "Hazardous work processes" - refer to work operations or practices performed by a worker in the establishment or workplace in conjunction with or as an incident to such operations or practices and which expose the worker to hazards likely to cause any disabling injury, illness, death or physical or physiological harm.
- h) "Imminent danger" - means a condition or practice that could reasonably be expected to cause death or serious physical harm before abatement under the normal enforcement procedures can be accomplished.

Section 4. Functions and Responsibilities of DOLE Regional Offices

The DOLE Regional Offices shall be tasked with the following functions and responsibilities:

- a) To keep an updated list of establishments in their jurisdiction classified as hazardous or having hazardous work processes pursuant to the guidelines set by Memorandum Circular No. 2 series of 1998.
- b) To identify establishments where WEA activities shall be prioritized based on the following criteria:
 - i) establishments where conditions and processes pose imminent danger on the worker (e.g., presence of hazardous airborne contaminants);
 - ii) establishments with dangerous occurrence resulting from hazardous work processes;
 - iii) establishments where WEA is needed to aid in the resolution of current occupational safety and health concerns that are of national significance; and
 - iv) establishments identified with Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) complaints.
- c) To determine reasonable monthly targets for the conduct of WEA activities in their jurisdiction.
- d) To develop WEA database using information collected from inspection activities.
- e) To allocate adequate funds for the support and conduct of WEA activities.
- f) To coordinate with any department, bureau, office, agency, educational institutions and other resources, as the need arises, in the discharge of its OSH related functions.
- g) To provide the Bureau of Working Conditions (BWC) with data on the WEA activities and findings made on establishments in aid of its standards setting and policy formulation.

Section 5. Duties of Labor Inspectors

The labor inspectors who have adequate training in WEA shall be tasked with the following responsibilities:

- a) To implement WEA activities in establishments prioritized for inspection using the appropriate industrial hygiene instruments.
- b) To validate findings of WEA conducted in establishments by personnel other than DOLE in the establishments.
- c) To record data obtained from WEA activities in IF-5 (hereto attached as Annexure "A" and

Guidelines in Accomplishing Supplemental Form IF No. 5 as Annexure "B") which shall correspondingly be submitted together with Inspection Form No. 3 to BWC.

- d) To send collected samples, where laboratory analysis is needed, for analysis to the Occupational Safety and Health Center (OSHC) when the need arises, although other qualified laboratories may also be tapped in the absence of adequate facilities in the OSHC.
- e) To identify necessary actions for the abatement of exposure to hazards or enforcement of OSH Standards resulting from assessments and give recommendations to establishments based on WEA findings.
- f) To perform WEA activities periodically as may be necessary as required by the Standards particularly in cases where an establishment is unable to perform or secure the services of qualified personnel and institutions to conduct such activities.

Section 6. Effectivity

This issuance shall serve as policy and procedural guidelines in the administration and enforcement of the provisions of Rule 1070 of the Standards and shall be for the information and guidance of all concerned.

19 June 2000.



BIENVENIDO E. LAGUESMA
Secretary

