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Occupational Safety and Health in Plantation Agriculture: The Malaysian Perspective*

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The nature of work in plantations, as in the case of many agriculture settings, creates many challenges, hazards and risks in the working environment. Workers are often exposed to various kinds of work safety and health hazards, including mechanical, chemical, physical, ergonomic and psychosocial hazards. The Malaysian Government through the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) under the Ministry of Human Resources is encouraging planters to improve occupational safety and health (OSH) by making mandatory the requirements for safety and health policy and the safety and health committee. Besides this, planters are also required to introduce self regulations such as self safety and health auditing, risk assessment and control and the mechanization of their work processes. With respect to the law, employers and employees have an obligatory role in ensuring safety and health in their workplace. DOSH on the other hand is continuously monitoring OSH in this industry via audits and inspections. Lack of awareness in terms of the need to properly manage safety and health at the workplace is apparent, especially in smallholdings. However, with the continuous efforts of DOSH combined with the efforts from various partners, it is believed that OSH in the agriculture industry is moving forward.

Keywords: DOSH, FMA, hazard, OSH, OSHA, workers, plantation, agriculture, safety, health.

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