

**Press Release
Department of Labor and Employment
Bureau of Working Conditions
25 July 2018**

MAKING SAFETY AND HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE WORK FOR ALL

Good health and safety measures simply make sense. Fewer accidents at work and less illness translate directly into better results for a company. Healthy and safe workplaces increase workers' motivation and commitment. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) renders its best efforts to make employers and workers commit to a safe, healthy and productive environment.

Through OSH inspection, it has been discovered that implementation of the occupational safety and health standards (OSHS) unfortunately does not always work in practice. Far more accidents and illnesses could be prevented in companies. Series of workplace accidents such as fire at a mall in Davao City, killing 38 call center and mall workers and the most recent being the fall of a concrete beam in a flyover project in Imus Cavite. These incidents show the need for a better tool to support the effective implementation of OSHS.

Seeing this need, the Bureau of Working Conditions (BWC) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) thru its SafeYouth@Work Project have jointly conducted a training for Labor Inspectors on General OSH Inspection on 11-12 July 2018 at Sequoia Hotel, Quezon City. It was attended by a total of thirty (30) Labor Inspectors. The activity aimed to enhance the competencies of Labor Inspectors in enforcing OSH standards through the effective conduct of OSH Inspection and performing quality OSH inspection with greater ability and confidence.

To lend support, the technical working group for the ongoing revision of the OSH standards agreed to include the development of disaster preparedness program in the Safety Officer's duties and responsibilities.

Importantly, Senate Bill No. 1317 or "An Act Strengthening Compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Standards", sponsored by Senator Emmanuel Joel J. Villanueva, was approved by the Senate on third and final reading in February 2018 which mandates employers to promote the right of Filipino workers to healthy and safe workplaces.

In May 2018, a bicameral conference committee of the Senate and House of Representatives has approved a measure strengthening the compliance of employers with OSHS. House Appropriations Committee Chairman, Davao City 1st District Representative Karlo Nograles said House Bill 64 and Senate Bill 1317 have been consolidated under the title: "An Act Strengthening Compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) and Providing Penalties for Violations Thereof". Under the proposed measure, Senator Villanueva said, "the fine imposed shall depend on the frequency or gravity of the OSH violation committed or the damage it has caused, provided, however, that the maximum amount shall be imposed only when the violation exposes the workers to a risk of serious injury or serious illness or death." With its bicameral approval, the consolidated measure now

only needs ratification by the House of Representatives and the Senate before President Duterte signs it into law.

We all share the same interest: “Health and Safety at work is indeed everybody’s responsibility”. It is a shared responsibility of both employers and workers, to make sure that the workplace is safe and that their health and safety are not put at risk. Moreover, it is the Labor Department’s mandate to protect workers’ welfare by providing for just and humane working conditions and to enforce social and labor legislation to protect the working class and regulate the relations between the worker and his employer.

The consolidated measure, once enacted into law, will help increase productivity in workplaces and businesses will be more successful and sustainable as it shall ensure that employers will follow the standards in protecting their workers by providing safe working conditions.

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