

Occupational Safety and Health Council

Submission to the Subcommittee Meeting on

Factories & Industrial Undertakings

(Loadshifting Machinery) Regulation

on 13 September 1999

The Occupational Safety and Health Council fully supports the Factories & Industrial Undertaking Regulation to ensure workers operating specific loadshifting machines are adequately trained and competent to operate such machines.

1. Mandatory training

The Council concurs that among the many measures to improve safety standard at work, training would be the most effective means to provide employees with the technical know-how and knowledge in identifying potential workplace hazards and preventive measures to protect themselves from injuries. The Council has been a key provider of occupational safety and health training programme in Hong Kong, especially for the high-risk industry. Programme in the area of forklift truck training has been offered since 1997 and so far 300 operators and 36 instructors have been successfully trained. The OSHC is willing to increase our training capacity when needed.

2. Refreshment course

It is noted that the new Regulation imposes a duty on responsible persons to provide training courses designed to ensure that operators are adequately trained and competent to operate loadshifting machines. Operators are required to attend training course provided by responsible persons. The safety knowledge and awareness of these trained operators shall be periodically updated or refreshed. We suggest that a code of practice or guideline should be made under the Regulation stipulating a requirement for the operator to attend refreshment courses when the certificate expires.

3. Implementation

There are about 2,000 forklift trucks currently in use in various industrial in Hong Kong. However, the number of workers seeking such training may far exceed those estimated forecasts. It is not uncommon that more than one operator using the same machine. We need more time to clear the demand from the industry during the initial implementation stage of the legislation. We recommend the Administration should review the training demand and to consider giving a longer time or grace periods for the industry to train up all the loadshifting machinery operators.

4. Training and Promotional programme for safe operation of forklift truck

The programme offered by the OSHC aims to train existing operators to become competent operators of forklift trucks, focusing on both theory and

practice. Participants on the programme do not only learn the operating skills but also their knowledge on assessment of the potential hazards in the workplace and preventive measures. To ensure the quality of our programme, all training material, video, practical session and assessment methods have been carefully scrutinized and designed by OSHC's professional staff who are accredited as qualified forklift truck instructor and examiner by a U.K. training association. The ratio of trainees to truck to instructor is kept to 3:1. Training video is also available for referencing in the industry. Besides the OSHC certificates, students, who have successfully completed the training course may also apply for a certificate issued by an U.K. forklift truck training association. For the training fee of OSHC's training courses, we adopt a policy of recovering the cost incurred for the training; in this case, it includes the lecturers' honorarium, the hiring of forklift truck, venues, training materials etc.

In promoting the compulsory training for forklift truck operators, we will organize outdoor events, which include safe operation of forklift truck competition, exhibitions, etc in mid December.

5. Conclusion

The mandatory training for workers operating loadshifting machines is necessary and the introduction of the F&IU Regulation is timely. The OSHC is committed to provide high quality training programmes in these areas for the smooth implementation of the Regulation to enhance safety and health standard in the industry.