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THE ROLE OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE IN SHAPING THE CULTURE OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE ENTERPRISE

Grzegorz KOPIJ

Research and Development Center for Mechanical Equipment "OBRUM" sp. Z oo, Gliwice; grzegorz.kopij@obrum.pl

Purpose: The current legal requirements in the field of occupational health and safety require the company to adapt the plant to the applicable regulations and the needs of the employee. Every employer is obliged to show care for the working environment. However, it is also necessary to care for the broadly understood health and safety culture and work efficiency. The article was written to present the role of the OHS service in shaping the culture of occupational health and safety in an enterprise and the correlation between increasing the level of occupational health and safety in an enterprise and shaping the culture of occupational health and safety.

Design/methodology/approach: In order to define the role of the OHS service in shaping occupational health and safety, the article introduces the rights and obligations resulting from the Ordinance of the Council of Ministers and secondary laws. The concept of culture as a whole material and spiritual heritage and the way of shaping it in the enterprise were also defined. The theoretical basis used in the article is to define the advisory and control function of the OHS service in the enterprise.

Findings: The role of the Occupational Health and Safety Service, which acts as an advisory and opinion-forming body and often also performs a supervisory function on behalf of the employer, is to skillfully perceive possible threats and, consequently, to prevent and minimize damage. When perfecting activities aimed at improving occupational health and safety, the OHS service must take into account not only visible signs of non-compliance with the rules, but also include those elements of culture that may remain invisible without careful analysis.

Research limitations/implications: The highlights of the article is the need for the employee to participate in the process of building a culture of occupational health and safety in the enterprise, and the necessary increase in trust in communication between the employer and employee.

Keywords: OHS, health and safety, health and safety service, safety culture.

Category of the paper: Point of View.

1. Introduction

Each employer who employs employees must meet all the guidelines that have been included in specific legal acts and standards. The main legal act that defines the responsibility of the employer and the employee in the field of health and safety regulations as well as the shaping of the health and safety culture is the Labor Code. Article 207 of the Labor Code defines the basic obligations of the employer in the field of health and safety (Kodeks Pracy, 2022), from which it is clear that the employer is fully responsible for the health and safety in the enterprise. The Labor Code imposes a number of obligations on the employer and, consequently, on the health and safety service as a unit aimed at advisory and supervisory activities.

The main obligations of the employer are (Kodeks Pracy, 2022):

- 1. organizing work in a manner ensuring safe and hygienic working conditions,
- 2. ensuring compliance with the provisions and rules of occupational health and safety at the workplace, issuing an order to remedy deficiencies in this respect and controlling the implementation of these orders,
- 3. responding to the needs in terms of ensuring occupational health and safety and adjusting measures taken to improve the existing level of protection of the health and life of employees, taking into account the changing conditions of work performance,
- 4. ensuring the development of a coherent policy to prevent accidents at work and occupational diseases, taking into account technical issues, work organization, working conditions, social relations and the influence of working environment factors,
- 5. taking into account the protection of the health of adolescents, pregnant or breastfeeding workers and disabled workers as part of the preventive measures taken,
- 6. ensuring the execution of orders, statements, decisions and orders issued by the supervisory authorities over working conditions,
- 7. ensuring the implementation of the recommendations of the social labor inspector.

The total cost of failure by employers to provide proper working conditions in the European Union oscillates around 2.8% of GDP (Pęciłło, 2005, pp. 18-21). The contemporary volatility of the economic reality becomes a premise for taking actions aimed at verifying working conditions, the personnel function, or the workplace itself. Working conditions that are adequate to the needs and capabilities of employees, as well as to the proper operation of the enterprise, favor the increase in job satisfaction and, consequently, the increase in employee productivity (Pocztowski, 1998, p. 261; Kuzior et al., 2022). Accordingly, it is possible to work in unfavorable conditions while maintaining productivity, caring for health only in an environment that meets the mental, physical and social needs and capabilities of the employee (Cierniak-Emerych, 2006, p. 117). A health and safety culture is a component of the company's safety culture. In this context, it is considered in the concept of sustainable

development (Kuzior, 2014) and present in Agenda 21, (1992). The terminology of "safety culture" was also used by the Atomic Energy Agency in the Chernobyl disaster report (Safety Series 75-INSAG-4, 1999) and is part of the organizational and social culture, as well as a collection of practices designed to protect workers and his working environment. So what is the task of the OHS service in promoting a work culture? The basic task is to create specific patterns of behavior (Shaw, Blewitt, 1996, pp. 185-191), which will be based on intraorganizational values and beliefs. It is worth noting that the OHS service should base its activities on trust and respect for preventive activities. In order to ensure safe working conditions, appropriate scientific and technical achievements should also be used, which affects the variability of occupational health and safety management. New technical or organizational solutions should be consulted with the OHS service in order to ensure compliance with applicable legal requirements.

2. Statutory rights and obligations of the OHS service

The OHS service in the enterprise performs an advisory and control function in the field of compliance with the provisions and rules concerning health and safety at work. Many studies aimed at defining the tasks of the OHS service are based on the provisions of the Act, pursuant to which, pursuant to Art. 237 ¹¹ § 5 of the Labor Code specifies the scope of activities of the OHS service to which it belongs (Rozporządzenie Rady Ministrów, 1997):

- conducting inspections of working conditions and compliance with the provisions and rules of health and safety at work, with particular emphasis on workplaces where pregnant or breastfeeding women, adolescents, the disabled, workers performing shift work, including night workers, and natural persons are employed performing work on a basis other than the employment relationship at the workplace or in a place designated by the employer,
- 2. informing the employer on an ongoing basis about identified occupational hazards, along with applications aimed at removing these hazards,
- preparing and presenting to the employer, at least once a year, periodic analyzes of the health and safety at work containing proposals for technical and organizational measures aimed at preventing threats to the life and health of employees and improving working conditions,
- 4. participation in the preparation of plans for the modernization and development of the workplace and presenting proposals for including in these plans technical and organizational solutions ensuring improvement of the health and safety at work,

5. participation in the assessment of assumptions and documentation regarding the modernization of the workplace or its part, as well as new investments, and submitting applications regarding the inclusion of occupational health and safety requirements in these assumptions and documentation,

- 6. participation in handing over for use of newly built or reconstructed buildings or parts thereof, in which work rooms, production devices and other devices affecting the working conditions and safety of employees are planned,
- 7. submitting applications regarding occupational health and safety requirements in the applied and newly introduced production processes,
- 8. presenting the employer with conclusions regarding the observance of ergonomic requirements at workplaces,
- participation in the development of corporate collective labor agreements, internal regulations, regulations and general instructions on health and safety at work and in determining the tasks of people managing employees in the field of occupational health and safety,
- 10. giving opinions on detailed instructions on occupational health and safety at individual work stations,
- 11. participation in determining the circumstances and causes of accidents at work and in the development of conclusions resulting from the examination of the causes and circumstances of these accidents and occupational diseases, as well as control of the implementation of these conclusions,
- 12. keeping records, completing and storing documents concerning accidents at work, diagnosed occupational diseases and suspicions of such diseases, as well as storing the results of tests and measurements of factors harmful to health in the work environment,
- 13. advice on the application of the provisions and principles of occupational health and safety,
- 14. participation in the assessment of occupational risk related to the work performed,
- 15. advising on the organization and methods of work at workplaces where there are dangerous, harmful or burdensome conditions, and on the selection of the most appropriate collective and individual protection measures,
- 16. cooperation with relevant organizational units or persons, in particular in the field of organizing and ensuring an appropriate level of training in the field of occupational health and safety and ensuring proper professional adaptation of new employees,
- 17. cooperation with laboratories authorized, in accordance with separate regulations, to carry out tests and measurements of factors harmful to health or nuisance conditions occurring in the work environment, in the scope of organizing these tests and measurements and methods of protecting employees against these factors or conditions,

- 18. cooperation with laboratories and other units dealing with the measurement of the state of the natural environment, operating in the state environmental monitoring system, specified in separate regulations,
- 19. cooperation with the doctor who provides preventive health care for employees, in particular when organizing periodic medical examinations of employees,
- 20. cooperation with the social labor inspection and with trade unions in: a) undertaking activities aimed at compliance with the provisions and principles of occupational health and safety, in the manner and to the extent specified in separate regulations, b) undertakings undertaken by the employer to improve the conditions work,
- 21. participating in consultations in the field of occupational health and safety, as well as in the work of occupational safety and health committees and other in-house committees dealing with occupational health and safety issues, including the prevention of occupational diseases and accidents at work,
- 22. initiating and developing various forms of popularizing the issues of occupational health and safety and ergonomics at the workplace.

According to the Labor Code, the occupational health and safety service may not be burdened with tasks other than those mentioned in the above points. Such action is aimed at ensuring full implementation of the tasks resulting from the act.

In order to implement the above-mentioned tasks, the employer provides the OHS service with information that may have an impact on occupational safety and health protection of employees, in particular regarding:

- 1. the condition of the work environment, including the results of tests and measurements of factors harmful to health in the work environment,
- 2. measures applied so far, including technical and organizational ones, preventing threats to health or life of employees in relation to the workplace and individual workplaces,
- 3. measures provided for in case of need for first aid, fire-fighting and evacuation of workers.

In accordance with par. 3 of the Act, the OHS service is entitled to:

- 1. conducting health and safety inspections, as well as compliance with the provisions and rules in this regard at the workplace and at any other place of work,
- 2. appearing to people managing employees with recommendations to remove the identified accident hazards and occupational harmfulness as well as deficiencies in the field of occupational health and safety,
- 3. applying to the employer for rewarding employees who excel in activities aimed at improving the conditions of health and safety at work,
- 4. applying to the employer for the application of sanctions to employees responsible for neglecting duties in the field of health and safety at work,
- 5. immediately stop the operation of the machine or other technical device in the event of a direct threat to the life or health of the employee or other people,

- 6. immediate removal from work of an employee employed in prohibited work,
- 7. immediately remove from work an employee who, through his behavior or the way of performing work, poses a direct threat to his own or other people's life or health,
- 8. apply to the employer for immediate suspension of work in the workplace, in its part or in another place designated by the employer to perform work, in the event of a direct threat to the life or health of employees or other people.

However, to become an employee of the OHS service, it is necessary to meet the following qualification requirements:

- 1. a health and safety inspector may be a person having the profession of a health and safety technician,
- 2. a senior health and safety inspector may be a person who has: a) the profession of a health and safety technician and at least 3 years of work experience in the health and safety service or b) higher education in the field of occupational health and safety or postgraduate studies in occupational health and safety,
- 3. a health and safety specialist may be a person with a university degree in the field of occupational safety and health or postgraduate studies in occupational health and safety and at least 1 year of work experience in the OHS service,
- 4. a senior occupational health and safety specialist may be a person with higher education in the field of occupational health and safety or postgraduate studies in occupational health and safety and at least 3 years of work experience in the health and safety service,
- 5. the main occupational health and safety specialist may be a person with higher education in the field of occupational safety and health or postgraduate studies in occupational health and safety and at least 5 years of work experience in the OHS service,
- 6. an employee managing a multi-person organizational unit should meet at least the qualification requirements set out in point 3. An employee employed in a one-person unit should meet at least the qualification requirements set out in point 2.

Holding the position of the chief occupational health and safety specialist is the highest possible degree that can be achieved in accordance with the act, as well as the culmination of a professional career. According to the law, it is the employer who is the direct superior of the OHS service employee, which puts him on an equal footing with the highest management level in the company and generates the need to have high professional and social competences. Professional management of occupational health and safety generates the need for continuous improvement and raising qualifications, which is dictated not only by the desire to develop on a personal and professional level, but also by the need to know changing regulations and directives.

3. Culture and its shaping in the enterprise

Culture as the entire material and spiritual heritage of humanity includes the principles of social coexistence, adopted and binding patterns of behavior that have been passed down from generation to generation (Encyklopedia PWN, 2000, p. 521). In the general understanding of the concept of culture, it can be assumed that it is a condition of the mind that distinguishes social groups.

Everyone has many levels of culture conditioned by:

- 1. nationality (or in the case of migration multinational),
- 2. belonging to an ethnic group,
- 3. belonging to a religious group,
- 4. belonging to a language group,
- 5. subcultural affiliation,
- 6. belonging to a given gender,
- 7. generational differences (e.g. between parents and children),
- 8. social class level,
- 9. education,
- 10. the work performed, i.e. the position held and the role it plays in the company (Hofstede, 2007, pp. 23-24),
- 11. organization of work by the employer.

In connection with the above, the culture in the enterprise may be conditioned on many levels, which do not necessarily correspond to each other. An example of a conflict between the levels of culture can be education, which does not always have to correspond to the position held or the role played by the employee in the company. The safety culture shaped in the enterprise will be fundamentally different from the very concept of security understood by man, if only due to the fact that security as such accompanies us from early childhood, where primary socialization takes place. Organizational culture based on the activities of the OHS service is aimed at defining and adhering to the views, system of values, norms and expectations that have a direct impact on the safety of the employee.

When defining the value system in the enterprise, the employer defines the features desired in the employee through his attitude towards (Gableta, Karamalla, 1998, pp. 48-49):

- 1. work performed (timeliness, quality and commitment to the performance of entrusted tasks),
- 2. cooperation (approach to teamwork, readiness to train another employee, share knowledge),
- 3. authority figures (ability to express opinions, build trust and loyalty),
- 4. decision-making (taking responsibility for the actions of oneself and those of its subordinates).

Performing tasks in accordance with the value system specified by the employer depends mainly on the quality of management as well as the personality traits of the management staff. The selection of the appropriate management or supervisory staff, such as OHS services, has a direct impact not only on the efficiency or quality of work, but above all on the work culture, which is correlated with the OHS culture. Internal regulations in the form of ordinances, norms or adopted procedures are aimed at building a sense of security in employees, which will translate into loyalty and creating a bond with the employer.

Adequate supervision over occupational health and safety performed by the employer or its representatives in the form of the OHS service, as well as ensuring adequate resources to perform employee duties has a much greater impact on the efficiency and quality of work than in the case of their absence.

The employee works more efficiently and safely when:

- 1. has been admitted to work in a given position by an occupational medicine physician (no health contraindications for performing work in a given position),
- 2. has undergone initial and on-the-job training (they affect the sense of general security, but also at the workplace, the employee is aware of his rights and obligations, as well as the risks arising from the work process),
- 3. periodic inspections of machines and devices are carried out (this proves the proper technical condition of the machines operated by the employee and, consequently, the lack of a sense of threat of their improper operation),
- 4. the working time is maintained in accordance with the Labor Code (additional tasks extending the working time may have a significant impact on the rush in the performance of the commissioned work and, consequently, on the accident rate),
- 5. the right to an uninterrupted holiday leave of no less than 14 consecutive calendar days is maintained (a well-rested employee starts work with greater commitment and pays more attention to the quality of the tasks performed).

The awareness of the employer and employees in the field of occupational health and safety has a direct impact on the quality of the work culture. The most important factor shaping the work culture is the employee, who determines the way in which he uses the acquired knowledge and resources to ensure the safety of himself and his colleagues (Woźny, Pacana, Dobosz, Saja, 2015, pp. 189-199). Recent years have also brought a new dimension to occupational health and safety through the use of modern intelligent robots (Kuzior, 2017).

4. The role of the OHS service

The OHS service is to provide significant support to the employer in ensuring safe and hygienic working conditions through advice, supervision and control.

When perfecting activities aimed at improving occupational health and safety, the OHS service must take into account not only visible signs of non-compliance with the rules, but also include those elements of culture that may remain invisible without careful analysis. The most common definitions that define a high level of safety culture are (Lis, Nowacki, 2005, p. 16):

- 1. employee training and education,
- 2. involvement of senior management in the issues of occupational health and safety,
- 3. establishing internal standards, regulations and internal policies in the field of health and safety,
- 4. communication based on mutual trust,
- 5. immediate reaction to emerging safety problems,
- 6. implementation of the belief that occupational health and safety is a value that matches the goals adopted in the company's policy,
- 7. engaging employees in active participation in creating internal policies in the field of health and safety,
- 8. educating employees to care for the safety of their co-workers and their own,

It should be assumed that the main way to develop an occupational health and safety culture is to disseminate health and safety issues through employee orientation. It is realized by strengthening the message on safe work, by shaping a pro-ecological attitude, developing the ability to respond to fire, natural disaster, or other local threat (Rozporządzenie..., 1991). Pursuant to the applicable regulation, the employer is obliged to provide the employee with initial training and on-the-job training, however, the regulation only outlines general guidelines for the training program, and it is the role of the employer, in agreement with the OHS service, to adapt the program to the specificity of the enterprise. The obligation to conduct health and safety training is the basis for shaping the culture of occupational health and safety in the enterprise. Attention should also be paid to developing the employer's belief that there is a correlation between working conditions and the quality of a product or service. Improving working conditions will have a significant impact on the economy of the enterprise.

However, these activities cannot be done without providing the necessary knowledge to employees, for example with the use of new technologies. As an information medium, the Internet grows to the role of the basic tool shaping social awareness (Kuzior, 2007, p. 97). Currently, training in the field of occupational health and safety organized by teleconference or guided self-education conducted via websites is becoming more and more popular. The result of the development of information technology are social networking sites that enable communication with other people, as well as posting various content and sharing it with other users. Gaining knowledge about ergonomics and occupational health and safety by employees in social media or on websites carries the consequences of acquiring false or outdated information, which may cause unnecessary conflicts between the employer - employee and employee - OHS services. Therefore, such an important role is played by the occupational

health and safety services in the enterprise in the field of providing reliable information and knowledge in the field of ergonomics and occupational health and safety regulations.

In order to ensure safe work, the Occupational Health and Safety Service conducts regular occupational risk assessment, which is aimed at, inter alia, identification of hazards at the workplace. In order to conduct a reliable occupational risk assessment, it is necessary to involve not only the management of the given positions, but mainly the employees performing their duties (Kowal, Sadłowska-Wrzesińska, 2014). The assessment carried out in cooperation with employees has a real impact on a sense of security, but also a sense of not being overlooked by employees.

It is also necessary to verify other types of occupational threats, which are factors such as mobbing, discrimination, stress or the resulting burnout (Wang, 2008, pp. 42-47). In European Union documents, these factors are called psychosocial risks and they are currently one of the greatest challenges for the employer and the OHS service (EU-OSHA, 2007), and they pose a significant threat that may cause material, social and, above all, mental harm to the employer. at the employee (Cox, Griffiths, Rial-Gonzales, 2000). That is why it is so important that OHS services, in preparing detailed analyzes of occupational health and safety, not narrow down only to the employee's physical environment, but also take into account the psychosocial risk and its impact on the work process. The problem of psychosocial risks is often negatively perceived by both the employer and the employee. The role of the OHS service in the perception of these threats is to shape awareness by debunking myths associated with them and by eliminating mental barriers.

Conclusions

The health and safety culture is a fundamental element essential for the proper operation of the company. Based on the regulation on health and safety at work, it can be noted that the main role of the health and safety service is periodic analysis of the health and safety at work and the control of the realities of work. Nevertheless, it is important to immediately report to the employer about the identified threats occurring in the enterprise together with the concept of removing these threats. In order to be able to make appropriate decisions on the improvement of occupational health and safety conditions, the employer must obtain appropriate knowledge without which he will not be aware of the risk taking place in the enterprise and, consequently, will not be able to prescribe appropriate measures. Demonstrating care in ensuring safe work brings tangible benefits not only to the employee but also the employer in the form of increased employee involvement in the work process. Currently, OHS services have a variety of tools and methods to raise awareness of ergonomics and OHS. Most of the educational methods

contributing to the increase of employees' awareness and the safety itself do not require any particular financial outlays.

Each employer should define a vision of employee safety in the form of internal regulations regulating possible hazards in the workplace, but also be more focused on the expectations and needs of the employee than on the performance of tasks. All forms of education, aimed at influencing not only attitudes but also behavior, play a huge role in building the awareness of the employer and employee. Anticipating and monitoring the work environment in terms of pathological phenomena, makes it possible to take preventive and corrective measures and, consequently, to build a high culture of occupational health and safety. Taking care of occupational health and safety is also part of the area of corporate social responsibility (Kuzior, 2016; Kuzior, Staszek, 2021), in particular when it comes to obligations towards internal stakeholders.

The OHS service is designed not only to educate employees in the field of occupational health and safety, but also to predict the effects of pathological behavior in the workplace. Work culture reflects one system of meanings, which affects the level of communication and mutual understanding (Armstrong, 2005, pp. 248-250). The active participation of employees in improving working conditions directly influences the employee's confidence in the employer and creates awareness that employee expectations are not perceived as claims, but only as involvement in the company's policy. In this approach, it can be said that there is a direct link between the features of the health and safety culture and the actual state of occupational health and safety in the enterprise.

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