

National Occupational Safety Association (NOSA)

NOSA is a non-profit association, funded by the Workmen's Compensation Commissioner (WCC). NOSA's purpose is to advise management on accident prevention through a star grading system and "loss control".

The star grading system

NOSA visits factories to check on safety. They use a checklist and award points to the factory if it does the tasks outlined in the list. They are awarded with 1 to 5 stars.

Problems with NOSA

- Points are given for what NOSA thinks is important and often gives few points for things which are important for workers' health and safety. For example, 40 out of 160 points are given for investigating accidents, whilst 120 points are given for keeping records and doing paper work around the accident. While keeping records is important, it won't in itself reduce the number of accidents.

- 20 points are given to companies which display safety boards and their star rating at the gate to the factory. The boards, however, only shows those accidents which are "lost time" accidents, ie which stop the work process. "Smaller" accidents are not counted.

- Only 20 points are given for doing medical examinations on workers.

- NOSA does not:

- consult workers for their opinion;

- give enough attention to things which would make the workplace safer;

- look at processes in the workplace which can affect safety, like production pressure or production bonuses. NOSA blames accidents on workers who work too fast, rather than blaming production pressure by bosses.

- NOSA is more concerned with preventing loss of production time than injury to workers. Workers, however, see health and safety as protecting their lives.

The "loss control policy"

Management and NOSA use a loss control policy to control safety in

terms of:

- cost of time lost through injuries to workers;
- cost of time lost when work stops due to an accident;
- cost of damage to machines, property or materials;
- cost of loss of production.

In other words, accidents are measured in terms of the production time that is lost and not in terms of the effects on the injured worker.

NOSA claims that 88% of accidents are caused by unsafe acts (working too fast, fooling around and taking chances) and only 10% are caused by unsafe working conditions. NOSA therefore supports management's view that most accidents are the workers' fault. It provides bosses with an excuse not to make the factory safer.

Machine and Occupational Safety Act (MOSA)

MOSA laws deal with health and safety at the workplace. Some of the issues dealt with by MOSA are:

- the structure and duties of a safety committee and the appointment of safety representatives;
- management's responsibilities in the area of health and safety;
- workers' responsibilities;
- duties and powers of inspectors;
- inquiries, for example when a worker dies at work;
- penalties to management and workers who do not obey the law;
- exemptions: the Minister of Manpower can free management and workers from any part of the Act or even from the entire Act;
- practices which the Minister may not allow. He may declare a workplace unsafe or a job too dangerous;
- appeals: any person unsatisfied with the findings of the inspectors can appeal within 60 days.

Structures

1. *Safety reps* - the law says management must appoint these reps, but the union can negotiate to have these reps elected by workers.

Safety reps have the following duties:

- to inspect the workplace at least once a month;
- to inform the Safety Committee (SC) and management about the