



OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH POLICY IN THE STATE OF QATAR

Based on Qatar's commitment to upholding workers' health and safety and the efforts it continues to exert to improve its occupational safety and health (OSH) system, this policy sets out the universal principles concerning OSH endorsed by the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs (MADLSA) and the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) of the State of Qatar.

The close collaboration between the two Ministries ensures coherence of action and facilitates the flow of and access to information. These joint efforts are taking institutional shape in the sub-taskforces established under the "Healthy and Safe Employee", one of the "Priority Populations" groups identified by the MoPH under its National Health Strategy for 2018-2022.

One of the sub-taskforces works on the development and implementation of an OSH policy in all sectors. In collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the sub-taskforce prepared an OSH Profile to evaluate the current situation on OSH in the State of Qatar. The profile describes and analyses the relevant legislation and practice, institutional infrastructure, and available resources.

In drafting this policy, the Ministries have considered the ILO Occupational Safety and Health Convention (No.155), 1981, the Protocol of 2002 to the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981, and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187), as well as their accompanying recommendations.



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Background

This policy rests on the Guiding Principles established in the Permanent Constitution, and in particular the values of justice, benevolence, freedom, equality, and high morals (Article 18), the promotion of public health and prevention of diseases and epidemics (Article 24), and the ideals of social justice upon which the workers and employer relationship shall be based (Article 30).

This policy operates alongside the following national policies and strategies:

Qatar National Vision 2030, which defines broad future trends and reflects the aspirations, objectives, and culture of the Qatari people. The first pillar of the Vision, Human Development, recognizes that a capable and motivated workforce, whose rights are protected and safety is ensured, is instrumental to the achievement of long-term national goals. The pillar stresses the commitment of the State to the provision of world-class health services and a distinguished education system to the entire population.

The Second National Development Strategy (2018-2022) aims at promoting human development through a comprehensive and integrated healthcare system, quality education and training, and an efficient and committed workforce.

- The National Health Strategy (2018-2022) focuses on Healthy and Safe Employees amongst seven priority populations. It aims to work with employers and employees to improve data collection and analysis, increase occupational health-based programs, and strengthen regulation.
- The National Policy on Labour Inspection, adopted in April 2019, reaffirms the role of Labour Inspection as a core Governmental service committed to ensuring effective compliance and enforcement of the legislation. The Labour Inspection Department of MADLSA acts as a catalyst for the prevention of occupational accidents, diseases, and fatalities.



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Aim of the policy

The policy aims to promote the protection of workers' health and to prevent accidents, injuries and illnesses arising out of, linked with or occurring in the course of work, by eliminating or minimizing the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment.

The policy aims to enhance the provision of quality occupational health and safety services at the national level.

The policy covers all employers and workers in all sectors of the economy and all forms of the employment relationship.

The following guiding principles and actions enunciated in this policy are deemed to be instrumental to its implementation.

Guiding principles

The following principles are recognized as guiding the action on OSH at the national level:

- Key focus on the principle of prevention.
- Continuous improvement through the assessment of occupational risks and control of hazards at source for addressing issues arising from a constantly changing world of work.
- Development of nationwide preventative safety and health culture by raising public awareness; providing training to workers and employers on OSH; and taking measures to ensure that workers are informed of safety and health hazards associated with their work.
- The right to a safe and healthy working environment, through the establishment of a system of defined rights, responsibilities, and duties.



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Areas of Action

The Actions below comprise all activities – at any level in the national context – which will be further elaborated in the OSH National Strategy and undertaken to ensure prevention of accidents, injuries, and illnesses at work.

- A. Coordination, cooperation, and consultation mechanisms to ensure dialogue and exchange of best practices between the different authorities with responsibilities for OSH at the various levels in the national OSH system, including joint activities for dissemination of information, prevention, promotion, and protection.
- B. Development of systems for identification, recording, notification, compilation, analysis and annual publication of statistics on occupational accidents (including injuries and fatalities) and diseases to (i) foster transparency and facilitate the exchange of OSH statistics and data among relevant authorities (ii) measure progress and the effectiveness of OSH systems.
- C. Harmonization, regular update, and communication of the OSH legislation and standards.
- D. Provision of occupational health services entrusted with essentially preventive functions, responsible for advising employers and workers in the undertaking on the requirements for the establishment and maintenance of a safe and healthy working environment. The services facilitate the adaptation of work to the capabilities of workers in the light of their state of physical, social, and mental health and wellbeing.
- E. Broaden access to OSH education and training both at the national level and in the workplace, including the integration of OSH at all levels, to ensure that training, capacity building and raising awareness activities include all relevant stakeholders.



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Responsibilities

The MADLSA and MoPH are responsible for the implementation of the National Policy on OSH, without prejudice to the participation of other organs and institutions that work on OSH.

MADLSA will be responsible:

- A. To elaborate, review and revise the labor legislation and regulations on OSH, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders;
- B. To elaborate and review periodically the national policy concerning the action of labor inspection services, and to supervise and coordinate labour inspection activities;
- C. To participate in the development and implementation of special programs for OSH, including specific studies and research;
- D. To promote compliance, at the national level, with the agreements and conventions ratified by the State of Qatar together with international organizations, in particular the ILO, in the areas of its competence;
- E. To collect, analyze, share information and report on data concerning occupational accidents and diseases;
- F. To develop and implement educational actions on topics related to the improvement of working conditions in health, safety and environmental aspects of work;
- G. To disseminate information that contributes to the protection and promotion of workers' health and safety;
- H. To conduct investigations to identify the causes of accidents and diseases in the workplace, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders;
- I. To establish partnerships and technical exchanges with related national and international organizations and institutions to strengthen institutional performance, and train public officials.
- J. To foster the availability and training of human resources devoted to occupational safety and health.



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MoPH (including all health facilities under MoPH) will be responsible:

- A. To promote a healthy working environment, prevention of work-related injuries and diseases, protection from health hazards.
- B. To promote integrated health care services for workers and provision of comprehensive physical and psychosocial services including rehabilitation, and strengthening occupational health surveillance.
- C. To define standards and indicators for the follow-up of activities concerning workers' health;
- D. To collect, analyze, share information and report on data concerning occupational accidents and diseases;
- E. To conduct periodic review and update the official list of work-related diseases, contained in table No.1 of the Labour Law (Law No. 14 of 2004); and table No.3 of HR law (Law No.15 of 2016)
- F. To contribute to the dissemination of information on health services available to workers;
- G. To support the development of studies and research on workers' health, and dissemination of the findings;
- H. To foster the availability and training of human resources for health devoted to occupational safety and health.

Follow-up and periodic review

The situation regarding OSH and the working environment will be reviewed by representatives of both Ministries at appropriate intervals, or if necessary with a view to evaluating results, identifying major problems, and establishing priorities of action.