

Lam Thye: Workplace safety culture vital

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KOTA KINABALU: Occupational safety and health in the hospitality industry needs to be given more attention as it is a rapidly growing industry.

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (Niosh) chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye said yesterday it was no longer a "safe and clean" sector and it merited more attention from employers.

Lee said this after attending a two-day seminar on occupational safety and health for the hospitality industry in Sandakan organised by Niosh.

He urged employers to empower workers through safety and health committees to reduce accidents, injuries and deaths in workplaces.

"While life-threatening and acute injuries are uncommon in the hospitality industry, work-related hazards do exist," he said.

"Although accidents can and do happen, there are measures we can adopt to limit their occurrence.

"Accidents can be reduced if we make prudent and cautious work practices part of our culture."

In the last 10 years, the industrial accident rate in Malaysia had been halved from 10.3 cases for every 1,000 workers in 2002 to 5.7 cases last year.

This reflected the strong commitment by the government, employers and the workers to reduce accidents.

Lee said Malaysians needed to set a higher benchmark at three to four cases every 1,000 workers, on a par with those in developed countries.

"Human behaviour and lackadaisical attitudes towards safety must change for the better.

"Anyone can be involved in an accident, unless safety is not taken for granted and safe work practices are implemented."