

50pc drop in workplace accidents in 10 years

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PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE : NIOSH credited with raising awareness.

KUALA LUMPUR: WORK-RELATED accidents have been steadily declining in the last 10 years, said Human Resources Minister Datuk Richard Riot Jaem.

"This is because of the continuous training and conferences held by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOOSH)," he said when launching the 16th Conference and Exhibition of Occupational Safety and Health (COSH 16) 2013 here yesterday.

Jaem said the number of industrial accidents last year was nearly half from that 10 years ago -- from 63,423 accidents in 2002 to 35,311 last year.

"We have to thank NIOSH, which has been tackling this problem for a long time.

"Kudos to their hard work in making employers and employees realise the importance of preventive measures. As they say, prevention is better than cure."

The annual three-day event is being held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. It will be attended by 1,700 local and foreign participants.

Earlier, NIOSH chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye said the conference's main aim was to instil greater awareness and understanding of the importance of occupational safety and health towards zero-accident at work.

"Since its inception in 1998, COSH has served as the premier platform for OSH professionals in Malaysia to share and update their knowledge and skills to meet changes in the Malaysian working environment."

According to the International Labour Organisation, of the 2.34 million occupational fatalities every year globally, only 321,000 deaths were caused by accidents, he added.

Lee said the rest was caused by work-related diseases.

He said diseases, such as pneumoconiosis, remained widespread, while new ones such as mental and musculoskeletal disorders were on the rise.

He also said there were some 160 million cases of non-fatal work-related disease worldwide annually.