

Bosses, Workers have role in work safety

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MALACCA: Raising national occupational safety and health standards to equal that of developed countries is not the sole responsibility of the government but also of employers and employees.

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye said the misconception that safety and health in the workplace was the sole responsibility of the government must be eradicated before standards could be raised.

He said the benchmark for developed countries was three to four accidents per 1,000 workers.

"Although the average number of industrial accidents per 1,000 workers in Malaysia has been reduced by about half over the past 10 years, we have yet to reach the standards held by developed countries.

"To achieve such standards, we must realise that ensuring the safety and health of workers is a collective responsibility of the government, employers and employees."

Lee said organisations should also set up a safety and health committee to ensure compliance.

"Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act 1994, any workplace with 40 or more employees must establish a safety and health committee. So, employees must work together with employers for the joint formulation of a committee," he said in his keynote address at the 13th International Malacca Twin Cities Convention 2013 here yesterday.

Earlier, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam launched the two-day convention attended by about 520 participants, including those from Chile, Bosnia, the Netherlands, Ukraine, Japan and Uzbekistan.

This year's convention, themed "Occupational safety and health culture: Inspiring world-class quality in organisations", was organised as a platform to exchange knowledge on fostering safe and healthy work environments.

Seven papers discussing occupational safety and health were presented to federal and state government officers, academicians, researchers and professionals.

Ali said on an average, the manufacturing sector recorded a higher percentage of accidents compared with other sectors.

He said in 2009, the state Occupational Safety and Health Department recorded 2,386 accidents, which was 149 cases fewer than in 2008, when 2,535 cases were recorded.