

# Safety and Health in Japan

A Newsletter from Japan Industrial Safety and Health Association (JISHA)

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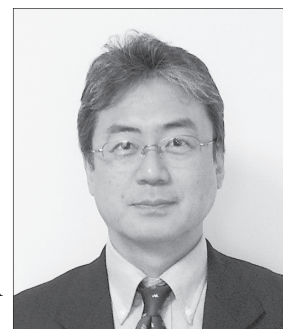
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# Creating Preemptive Safety Environments in the Workplace and Hazard Prediction Training (KYT)



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The first step to ensuring safety is to promote safety policies from a physical, or mechanical, perspective. Promoting safety policies from a mechanical perspective means incorporating failsafe and foolproof mechanisms into machinery and equipment. That is, ensuring safety starts with the use of mechanisms that could prevent an accident even if an abnormality or failure occurs. These consist of mechanisms like fuses, in which a fuse melts and shuts down if the power current flowing through it exceeds a certain level, or railroad crossing gates, at which the weight of the gate is used to shut the gate if a problem arises. They may also consist of mechanisms that prevent an accident from occurring even if a machine is operated improperly, like the mechanism used to prevent the lid on an electric washing machine from being opened by the user during the spin cycle.

Safety must also be taken into consideration in the way that people interact with physical objects and the way they interact with processes. For example, it is important to promote process-oriented measures, such as preparing procedure manuals based on safety standards, educating workers, and conducting training sessions.

Companies are fundamentally responsible for preparing a full range of process-oriented and hardware-oriented measures, eliminating workplace hazards, and ensuring the safety of workers. Nonetheless, even when attempts are made to implement mechanical measures, workplaces face many restrictions, such as cost, time, and technological limitations, that prevent their full implementation. The same applies to process-oriented measures.

Human beings are inevitably going to see things incorrectly, hear things incorrectly, and make errors due to misconceptions. They also engage in risky behaviors, like cutting corners and not allowing for the labour hours required for a task, and taking risks just for the thrill of it. This is part of human nature.

No matter how thoroughly a situation is managed, it is difficult to completely prevent problems that arise from risks that cannot be completely eliminated through process or hardware-related measures, and risks related to problems of motivation or desire. Thus, it is important to enlist the cooperation of those workers who are actually working in the workplace and to make efforts every day to eliminate hazards. These efforts are voluntary workplace activities.

To prevent unsafe behaviors, it is essential for working people themselves to voluntarily and autonomously “recognize dangers as dangers, and decide to take specific actions in light of those dangers.” For this to happen, it is essential to create a workplace and corporate environment where safety is assured in advance, and where workers are focused on avoiding injury to themselves, and most certainly avoiding injury to others. This is done by getting workers to see safety and health as their own individual concern as well as their concern as a group, and to engage in a series of joint efforts day after day by talking to one another openly about what needs to be done.

It is important to create a workplace environment where managers are actively involved in voluntary workplace activities, where the level of trust between higher-ranking and lower-ranking workers is enhanced by the provision of guidance and assistance, where there is an increased eagerness to have everyone work together to find forward-looking solutions to workplace problems, where people watch out for one another, and where safety is assured in advance. The active implementation of voluntary workplace activities allows accurate workplace hazard information to be quickly communicated from line workers to higher-ranking workers, thereby serving to enhance sound management.

Voluntary workplace activities, such as the popular hazard prediction training (or KYT, which stands for “*kiken*” (hazard), “*yochi*” (prediction), and training), aim not only to merely identify, assess, and resolve hazards, but ultimately to create a preemptive, participatory, and vibrant workplace environment. Over the long term, efforts to solve problems related to hazards are likely to lead to solutions to all kinds of workplace problems, and thus to have a positive overall impact on product quality and production efficiency.

JISHA launched its Zero-Accident Total Participation Campaign in 1973. Based on a fundamental respect for human life as represented in the slogan “No one is replaceable,” the organization promotes activities that focus on the individual. Under this campaign, activities like KYT training, pointing a finger with verbal confirmation, and near-miss meetings have been introduced and implemented in many industrial workplaces. These specific preemptive safety activities can be practiced by the entire workforce, and have resulted in a decrease in industrial accidents.

# Activities of Industrial Safety and Health Organizations

## 65th National Industrial Safety and Health Convention, Green Cross Exhibition 2006, and Comfortable Workplace Forum 2006 Held in Niigata

The three-day 65th National Industrial Safety and Health Convention was held September 20 to 22, 2006 in Niigata, and attracted more than 10,000 participants and visitors. This was the first time the convention was held in Niigata. The plenary session on the first day of the conference was held at Toki Messe Convention Center. On days two and three, convention participants split up to attend 15 breakout sessions in three different tracks, which were held at meeting locations around the city. The Comfortable Workplace Forum 2006 (at the Niigata Citizens Plaza NEXT21) and the Green Cross Exhibition 2006 (at the Niigata City Convention Center) were also timed to coincide with the convention.

After the opening ceremony at the plenary session on the first day, awards were presented to honor those individuals and companies that had demonstrated meritorious service in the promotion of safety and health. A seminar and special seminar were then given by Akira ONO, Director General, Industrial Safety and Health



Plenary Session of the Convention

Department, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), and Fujio CHO, Vice Chairman, Toyota Motor Corporation.

On days two and three, 15 breakout sessions were held in locations around the city. These consisted of presentations about sample activities being implemented in workplaces, and seminars and symposia conducted by specialists. The breakout sessions included research presentations, seminars, and symposia on 15 different topics in three divisions— (1) Comprehensive Safety and Health Division topics: occupational safety and health management systems, risk assessment, small and medium-sized

companies, tertiary industries, the zero-accidents campaign, RST, overseas safety and health, and chemical substance management; (2) Safety Division topics: safety management activities, machinery and equipment safety, the human factor, and transportation safety; and (3) Health Division topics: occupational health management activities, health promotion, and mental health. As indicated by the lively question and answer sessions that followed, these breakout sessions were important venues for presenting studies by people in the field of safety and health nationwide, and for sharing information.

## Comfortable Workplace Forum 2006

Having attracted more than 600 visitors, the Comfortable Workplace Forum 2006 remained essentially at full capacity from the afternoon symposium onward. The first floor atrium of the venue featured 37 panels highlighting hints for creating more comfortable workplaces, samples of actions implemented, and smoking policy ideas.

## Green Cross Exhibition 2006

Nearly 13,200 people attended the Green Cross Exhibition, whose theme was “Using Information and Technology to Create Safe, Healthy, Comfortable Workplaces.” The event featured exhibits by 94 companies and organizations relating to safety and health protective equipment and equipment for improving workplace

environments. It also had an area where visitors could try out the protective equipment, a Niigata industrial technologies exhibit demonstrating the information technologies related to safety and health being used in Niigata, an exhibit related to disaster prevention presented in cooperation with the Niigata Fire Department, a disaster prevention exhibit showing the latest developments in earthquake-related disaster prevention technologies and equipment, and a Niigata Hometown fair showcasing the specialty products of Niigata Prefecture.

This year’s National Industrial Safety and Health Convention, Green Cross Exhibition, and Comfortable Workplace Forum will be held in Kobe, Hyogo Prefecture from November 7 to 9, 2007.

## National Occupational Health Week 2006

The 57th National Occupational Health Week was held October 1 to 7, 2006, following a preparatory period lasting from September 1 to 30. The Week was promoted by the MHLW and JISHA with the cooperation of five sector-specific industrial safety and health associations, and workplaces nationwide participated.

The 57th Week’s slogan was “Feeling tired? Working together to create physically and mentally healthy workplaces.” During this week, efforts are made to raise awareness of



Green Cross Exhibition



National Occupational Health Week poster

occupational health in the workplace and to further promote voluntary occupational health management activities. Efforts are also being made to implement policies included in the revised Industrial Safety and Health Act (which went into effect in April 2006) based on feedback provided by managers, occupational health management staff, and workers.

## 2006 Year-End and New Year Zero-Accident Campaign

The Year-End and New Year Zero-Accident Campaign is held in workplaces nationwide by JISHA with the support of the MHLW for the purpose of preventing the occupational accidents that tend to occur frequently around the year-end and New Year period.

2006 marked the 36th anniversary of the campaign, which extended from December 15, 2006 to January 15, 2007.

The slogan for the 36th campaign was “Fundamental safety checks: stay protected during the New Year’s season.” During this campaign, participating workplaces conducted various activities aimed at promoting occupational safety and health, such as promoting safety and health management reviews and improvements, offering medical guidance, and educational activities like displaying posters

on occupational safety and health-related issues.

Every year JISHA accepts slogan suggestions for the Year-End and New Year Zero-Accident Campaign slogan and the following year’s annual slogan. JISHA received 1,757 suggestions for the 2006 Year-End and New Year Zero-Accident Campaign slogan, and 3,920 suggestions for the 2007 annual slogan. The following slogans were selected.

*2006 Year-End and New Year Zero-Accident Campaign slogan*  
Fundamental safety checks: stay protected during the New Year’s season (three other entries received honorable mention)



Year-End and New Year Zero-Accident Campaign poster

## 2007 Annual slogan

Treasures passed down from veterans to novices: skills, pride, a commitment to safety first (three other entries received honorable mention)

## Winners of the 2006 Distinguished Service Award and JISHA Chairperson’s Award

Every year at the National Industrial Safety and Health Convention, JISHA presents the following awards to recognize the achievements of individuals and companies in the promoting of safety and health.

The Distinguished Service Award was established in 1971 and is conferred upon individuals or organizations that have contributed to society by working tirelessly to promote safety and health. The recipient for the year 2006 was Taijiro MATSUSHIMA, Professor Emeritus at the University of Tokyo.

The JISHA Chairperson’s Award was established in 1985 and recognizes companies that have shown outstanding performance in promoting and improving safety and health, and that have achieved remarkable success in educating people and conveying the importance of health and safety issues. The winners of the 2006 award were Sumitomo Chemical Co., Ltd. and Tokyo Metro Co., Ltd.

# Labour Administrative Activities

## MHLW Launches Efforts to Improve the Quality of Industrial Physicians and to Strengthen Regional Industrial Health Centers

The MHLW recently decided to make an effort to enhance the education and training provided to industrial physicians so as to improve the quality of their services and to strengthen the industrial health services provided to small workplaces, particularly those offered through regional Industrial Health Centers. To do this, the MHLW has begun preparations to include these items in its budget request for next year.

This decision is based on the policies identified as requiring urgent implementation by the Committee to Investigate Industrial Physicians and the University of Occupational and Environmental Health, which is investigating the effective use of industrial physicians and the University of Occupational and Environmental Health (UOEH) in light of the current challenges being faced in the field of industrial health. There is a shortage of industrial physicians available to meet mental health needs and to deal with problems caused by overwork, and the revised Industrial Safety and Health Act requires that even small workplaces provide in-person

counseling with an industrial physician, under certain conditions, starting in 2008. Given these conditions, the MHLW is preparing to provide education and training on health maintenance in the workplace, such as mental health promotion policies, for UOEH graduates and other industrial physicians. The Ministry is also working to provide education and training on health promotion policies in small workplaces for industrial physicians working on a contract basis.

Industrial health services will be strengthened based on local community conditions through efforts to bolster regional Industrial Health Centers, to expand the system of establishing “satellites” using Chambers of Commerce and Industry and other facilities in cities with a low ratio of centers to workplaces, and to further expand the network of industrial physicians and psychiatrists who operate through Industrial Health Centers.

## Manual of Measures to Prevent Asbestos from Entering the Environment during Building Dismantling

The Ministry of the Environment (MOE) has issued a Manual of Measures to Prevent Asbestos from Entering the Environment during Building Dismantling. This

manual was compiled by the Japan Association for Working Environment Measurement on behalf of the MOE to strengthen efforts to prevent asbestos from being dispersed into the air.

The manual consists of three chapters: (1) general information about asbestos; (2) an analysis of the measures to prevent asbestos from entering the environment described in the Air Pollution Control Act; and (3) measures to prevent asbestos from entering the environment during building dismantling. Chapter 3 in particular diagrams the procedures for removing certain construction materials, and describes the specific advantages and disadvantages of different methods.

## Strengthening Efforts to Reduce Elevator Accidents and to Combat Rainstorms and Earthquakes

### *Key Measures of the MLIT Announced*

The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation (MLIT) recently issued the Key Measures of the MLIT. This publication compiles the measures that are going to be given priority attention in the future, and addresses: (1) strengthening global competitiveness and Japan’s efforts to become a major

tourist destination; (2) strengthening local autonomy and competitiveness; (3) establishing the basis for safety and security; (4) creating flexible and enriching living environments; and (5) policy platforms for the formation of a “new mature society.”

Section 3, on establishing the basis for safety and security, addresses the construction of systems for rebuilding citizens’ trust in the safety and security of buildings and public transportation systems, and the development of natural disaster policies that take into consideration the damage that has been caused in recent years by intense rainstorms and the possible occurrence of a greatly feared large-scale earthquake.

With regard to the construction of safety systems, the measures call for a review of elevator technical standards and the strengthening of periodic inspections, and also promote the rapid widespread adoption of collision damage reduction brakes on large vehicles through the creation of a support system for their installation.

Natural disaster policies include efforts to identify target flood regions, to develop flood exacerbation prevention facilities (such as secondary levees), to enact regulations to preserve water recreation functions, and to develop support measures for the private development of flood prevention facilities. Earthquake and tsunami disaster prevention measures include efforts to complete measures to make the transportation infrastructure (elevated

shinkansen lines and bridges along expressways and general roadways) more seismic resistant, and efforts to reduce damage by beginning to provide emergency earthquake news reports.

### 2006 White Paper on Health, Labour and Welfare

The MHLW has issued its 2006 *White Paper on Health, Labour and Welfare*. The first part of this white paper focuses on “sustainable social welfare systems and the cycle of support.” In addressing how social welfare should be provided in the future, it examines ways to create a society in which families and communities can support one another as much as possible. It also focuses on communities and workplaces (work patterns), or the institutions with which families have the deepest ties, to explore new venues for mutual support.

In discussing families, the white paper describes a 2006 survey conducted by the MHLW regarding the ideal family in which respondents were asked about the “gap between their predictions about what the future will really be like, and their vision of an ideal future.” Although many respondents predict that they will one day live in a society in which people are not supported by their families, they nonetheless view a society in which family members support one another as the

ideal. Likewise, while they predict community ties will weaken, they view a society with strong community ties as the ideal. When asked about birth-rate decline, many respondents predict the birthrate will continue to decline in the future, yet still idealize the notion of finding a way to put the brakes on this trend. Clearly there is a gap between reality and these ideals.

With regard to the ideal workplace, the white paper addresses changing attitudes toward the workplace and shows that there has been a slight increase in attitudes favoring lifetime employment in recent years. A survey of ideal work patterns showed that while respondents in younger age groups focus on work hour issues, such as overtime reduction and paid vacation time, respondents in the older age groups tend to idealize work that emphasizes income security. These results provide important suggestions for thinking about the development of the social security system in the future.

The second part of the white paper examines the major actions of the health, labour, and welfare administration, summarizes the efforts taken in 2006 with regard to health and welfare administration, and presents the future direction of these efforts.



### 6th Council of Cabinet Ministers on the Asbestos Problem Held

**A**t the recent 6th meeting of the Council of Relevant Cabinet Ministers on the Asbestos Problem, a report was given on the efforts taken thus far by the relevant ministries and agencies based on the Comprehensive Measures for Addressing the Asbestos Problem compiled by this council on September 8, 2006, as well as on the burden on business owners with regard to providing relief for asbestos-related health problems.

According to this report, the MHLW, Ministry of Defense (MOD), Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), MLIT, and MOE have confirmed the removal of asbestos from almost all facilities where it existed. However, since there are still some facilities that have not been treated, early asbestos removal and other related work for those facilities is necessary.

The report indicates that the total amount of the burden on business owners with regard to providing relief for asbestos-related health problems will be ¥7.38 billion/year (average for FY 2007 to 2010), and deems it appropriate to fix the amount at this level

for this four-year period. However, the report also indicates that the business-owners' burden should be reexamined during the system review that is to be conducted within five years after system implementation.

According to the List of FY 2007 Budget Requests Related to Asbestos Policies issued by the ministries and agencies that comprise this Council of Relevant Cabinet Ministers, the total budget requested is ¥13.29 billion. Of this firstly, ¥10.22 billion will be used as relief for those with health impairments for the purpose of "effectively enacting a new relief measures act," "thoroughly disseminating information about industrial accident compensation," and "promoting research." Second, ¥2.3 billion is allocated to measures to prevent future damage, of which ¥1.21 billion will be used for "the prevention of asbestos dispersal and exposure during dismantling," ¥710 million for "asbestos removal from existing buildings," and ¥20 million for providing "policy support to the countries of Asia." Thirdly, ¥770 million is allocated to addressing the uncertainties of citizens, of which ¥550 million is to be used for "providing health consultations," and ¥220 million for "assessing situations and providing information to citizens."

### Conference of Industrial Accident Health Care Specialists Held: Enhancing "Aftercare"

**T**he MHLW recently held the 2006 Conference of Industrial Accident Health Care Specialists. The purpose of the conference was to study appropriate aftercare measures from a medical and professional perspective. A patient who is undergoing treatment in accordance with the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Act may, even after their symptoms have been confirmed, be susceptible to a disease associated with a residual disability based on the nature of his or her illness or injury. "Aftercare" refers to preventive or other health-related measures taken based on concerns about the patient's vulnerability to such diseases. The Outline for Aftercare Implementation as a Labour and Welfare Program stipulates the specific illnesses and injuries targeted, as well as the measures that can be taken, but this conference called for a review of these aftercare services to ensure that they comply with the latest medical treatments and are appropriately administered.

### FY 2006 Campaign to Promote Better Eating Habits

The MHLW held the Campaign to Promote Better Eating Habits from October 1 to 31, 2006. With major social problems being posed by the increase in lifestyle diseases, such as cancer, heart disease, cerebral stroke, and diabetes, this campaign, first launched in 1949, aims to raise awareness of preventive measures and better eating habits, and to promote the adoption of these habits in everyday life.

The key activities of the FY 2006 campaign, like the previous year's, were to identify people's bad eating habits using the balanced diet guide, and to provide support to increase people's desire to improve their eating habits and enable them to maintain better eating habits over the long term. Efforts were also made to improve people's understanding of the metabolic syndrome and to help them more accurately assess their own body type. These efforts were based on the targets (raise the ratio of citizens who base their eating habits on the balanced diet guide to 60% or more by 2010, and raise the ratio of citizens who are aware of the metabolic syndrome to 80% or more by 2010) established in the Basic Plan for the Promotion of Food Education that was formulated in March 2006.

This year's activities focused on three specific groups: (1) obese males aged 30 to 60; (2) single people; and (3) parents in their childrearing years. This focus was based on the targeted efforts promoted by the Food Guide Investigative Committee (tentative).

The MHLW is developing ties with relevant organizations, such as the prefectural governments, to develop effective campaigns based on these efforts.

### Ministerial Ordinance and Guidelines Issued on the Revised Equal Employment Opportunity Act

The MHLW recently issued a ministerial ordinance and guidelines pertaining to the revised Equal Employment Opportunity Act. The ministerial ordinance and guidelines were issued following a report presented at the Labour Policy Council meeting held on October 10, 2006.

Three documents were issued: (1) Ministerial Ordinance Regarding the Development of Related Ministerial Ordinances Accompanying the Enactment of the Act on Securing, Etc. of Equal Opportunity and Treatment Between Men and Women in Employment and the Act to Revise the Labour Standards Act; (2) Guidelines

to Help Business Owners Appropriately Handle Matters Stipulated in the Regulations Regarding the Prohibition on Gender-Based Discrimination Against Workers; and (3) Guidelines on the Employment Management Measures Required of Business Owners Regarding Problems Caused by Sexual Speech and Behavior in the Workplace.

The ministerial ordinance describes specific work activities that are covered by the stipulation partially lifting the ban against the performance of underground work by women pursuant to the Labour Standards Act Article 64-2, Clause 2. The above item 2 Guidelines clearly identify the prohibited measures, as stipulated in the revised Equal Employment Opportunity Act Articles 5 to 7, and Article 9, Clauses 1 to 3. To ensure that workers do not suffer any disadvantage related to sexual harassment in the workplace and are not harmed by their workplace environment, the above item 3 Guidelines advise business owners to: (1) clarify related policies and ensure that they are fully understood by the entire staff; (2) establish the systems necessary to ensure that reports (including complaints) receive appropriate responses; and (3) take prompt and appropriate action when a case of workplace sexual harassment is discovered. The Guidelines also stipulate that when these measures are taken, the business owner must protect the privacy of the person making the

report and ensure that workers are not disadvantaged by a decision to report an incident or to corroborate the story of another worker who reports an incident. The entire staff is to be made aware of this information.

### Manual for Tracking the History of Asbestos Exposure

Based on a report compiled in February 2006 regarding health measures related to asbestos, the MHLW has issued a statement indicating that “examinations to identify asbestos-related ailments must be performed on people who may have been exposed to asbestos.” The Manual for Tracking the History of Asbestos Exposure was developed because of the importance of interviewing patients about the possibility of their exposure to asbestos.

The manual was created to help counselors at asbestos counseling offices and physicians involved in providing respiratory treatment to ascertain whether a patient has been exposed to asbestos. It contains many photos to help counselors and physicians understand the types of jobs that involve asbestos, and has two versions of a questionnaire (a basic version and a more detailed version) for patients to complete.

Whether a worker was exposed to asbestos can depend on their work

site, work conditions, and work time-frame. Thus, the MHLW requires that the questionnaires be supplemented with interviews.

### Calls for More Thorough Industrial Accident Prevention Measures

The preliminary results of a report issued in November 2006 indicate that the number of industrial accidents is increasing. The MHLW is therefore calling for more thorough industrial accident prevention measures.

According to the MHLW, the recent increase in industrial accidents is attributed to personnel shortages and work pressure caused by efforts to revitalize the economy, the inability to secure safety and health personnel due to the retirement of veteran workers, the lack of safety and health education for unskilled workers, and the lack of awareness of the importance of safety and health among business owners. The ministry is therefore calling for businesses to: (1) conduct intensive inspections on whether their safety and health management systems are suitably developed for increased production and work volumes, and as part of this, to have managers take the lead in ensuring that when new employees are hired or when employees take on new tasks, the necessary time is being taken to provide those workers with

safety and health education and the required information is being taught; (2) combat the increase in accidents (such as falls from temporary structures, buildings, and other structures, and the collapse or destruction of the environment (such as sand and civil engineering), and fires caused by hazardous or harmful materials) by taking intensive measures to prevent them; and (3) recognize the New Year’s season and the fiscal year end period as peak activity periods, and promote intensive industrial accident prevention activities and safety and health outreach activities during these periods.

### Draft Report on Revisions to the Part-Time Work Act

The MHLW compiled a draft report regarding future part-time work policies at a recent meeting of the Equal Employment Opportunity Subcommittee of the Labour Policy Council. Because of the rising importance of part-time workers in the Japanese labour force, this subcommittee began discussing the measures that need to be implemented as part-time work policies in July 2006.

According to the draft report, legal developments are needed on four matters: (1) clarification of labour conditions that apply to part-time workers; (2) assurance of equal treatment of

part-time and full-time workers; (3) promotion of the transition of part-time workers to full-time workers; and (4) assistance with complaint handling and conflict resolution.

The main matters are enumerated here. (1) In addition to the stipulations of the Labour Standards Act that require that documentation stating working conditions be issued, regulations should require businesses to issue documentation regarding wage increases, bonuses, and retirement funds. Also, the current regulation, which stipulates that “the business owner shall strive to respond to any request for an explanation regarding treatment,” in the Guidelines Regarding Measures for Improving the Employment Management of Short-Term Workers Required of Business Owners (Part-Time Guidelines), should be incorporated into the Act Concerning the Improvement of Employment Management, Etc. of Part-Time Workers (Part-Time Work Act) in the form of a stipulation that “when a part-time worker has a question, the business owner is obligated to explain the issues considered when the part-time work conditions were established.” (2) Regulations should prohibit the use of human resources structures and management through business duties to discriminate against part-time workers, as compared to full-time workers, based on their part-time status. (3) Regulations should require that measures be taken to promote

the transition of part-time workers to full-time work (for example, by disseminating information on full-time job openings throughout the workplace and introducing a system of transitioning from part-time to full-time work), and the national government should take measures to support business owners who are promoting this transition.

# Research and Statistics

## Promoting OSHMS in the Advanced Companies in Asia Known to Be Implementing Outstanding Safety and Health Efforts

According to a research report issued by the Nippon-Keidanren International Cooperation Center, 80% of 65 advanced companies in Asia that have been recognized as having made outstanding efforts in safety and health have implemented Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems (OSHMS). This joint study was conducted with the cooperation of employer's associations in 13 countries: China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The companies surveyed were recommended by the associations. The survey asked 40 questions regarding the safety and health activities conducted in each of the company's workplaces.

The results showed that 57% of the companies examined have established their own OSHMS and 23% have implemented some OSHMS components, for a total of 80% that have introduced OSHMS in some form. Of these, 28% have adopted guidelines such as ILO-OSH, and

20% are compliant with domestic occupational safety and health management system standards. Also, almost all of the companies (95%) agree with the notion that investments in safety and health produce profits, and recognize that safety and health efforts are linked to improvements in productivity and worker motivation. Respondents also indicated that the establishment of a safety culture in the workplace is important.

## Workplaces Adopting Anti-Smoking Measures Increase to 90%

The MHLW conducts an annual survey of the implementation of anti-smoking measures in the workplace, and recently released the results of its 2005 survey. These results show that the ratio of workplaces that have adopted anti-smoking measures increased from 82.8% in the previous year to 88.2%, or nearly 90%. Of these, 20.7% have made all of their buildings smoke-free (doubled from 10.2% in the previous year). In addition, 28.9% have established smoking rooms with outdoor exhaust systems (up from 25.4% in the previous year).

With regard to anti-smoking education, 5.3% are "in the planning process," while 38.0% have this topic "under consideration." Also, 4.3% of companies report that they are planning to lower their ratio of smokers by

providing support for those who want to quit, while 37.5% indicate that they have this matter "under consideration."

Workplaces that are not making any efforts to adopt anti-smoking policies account for 11.8% of those surveyed (down from 17.2% in the previous year). The most common reason given for this inaction was "We do not have the space to create a designated smoking area" (48.1%), followed by "We do not have an internal consensus on the issue" (37.3%), "We do not have the money to implement such efforts" (17.9%), and "We do not feel such efforts are necessary" (16.0%). However, the number of workplaces indicating that they would investigate the installation of smoking rooms if they could do so in a small space and at a low cost (64.2%) far outnumbered those that said they "would not want to consider the matter even under those conditions" (28.4%).

## Increasing Number of Companies Have Sense of Crisis Regarding Year 2007 Problem

### 2005 Skill Development Basic Survey Results Released

The MHLW recently compiled the results of the 2005 basic survey of skill development, which has been conducted since 2001. They show that the percentage of

companies with a sense of crisis regarding the Year 2007 Problem\* increased by 11.1 points, from 22.4% in the previous year to 33.7%. A breakdown by industry shows that this sense of crisis is most prevalent in the electricity, gas, heat, and water utility industry at 60.2%, followed by the manufacturing industry (41.1%) and the construction industry (41.0%). The sense of crisis is lowest in the health and welfare industry (13%) and the telecommunications industry (13.5%).

On the other hand, the specific action plan most frequently reported by respondents was “We plan to select the people we need and rehire them and use them as advisors,” at 33.8% (versus 40.7% the previous year), followed by “We will increase the number of mid-career workers” at 28.0% (versus 21.2%), “We will extend the employment of those who want to continue working and will rehire non-regular workers” at 27.3% (versus 18.9%), and “We will increase hiring of new, young workers” at 21.4% (versus 19.3%). While some plan to navigate the situation by extending employment or hiring mid-career workers, efforts to promote skills transference are on the decline. Only 9% report that they are making efforts “to transfer skills and know-how down to young and mid-ranking workers” (versus 12.8% in the previous year), and only 8.5% (versus 12.6%) report they are making efforts to “document the skills and know-how

that will have to be handed down from those planning to retire.”

The survey also examined education and training implementation. While full-time employees receive OFF-JT at 60.1% of companies, and systematic OJT at 48.9% of companies, non-full-time workers, which include a lot of young people employed as temporary workers and subcontractors, are being offered OFF-JT at only 17.4% of companies, and systematic OJT at only 18.3%. This clearly indicates a significant gap between full-time employees and non-full-time workers.

The 2005 *White Paper on Manufacturing Infrastructure* was compiled based on these findings. It indicates that in a society whose population is declining, it is important not to postpone the problem of skills transference by extending employment, but to utilize veteran workers to teach their skills to younger generations. It also argues for the need to strengthen national policies to support the creation of environments that facilitate the acquisition and transference of their experience and skills. It also includes a recommendation that young people be hired and trained, and calls for efforts to promote the career development of young people, including non-full-time workers.

\*Year 2007 Problem: The various ways that the start of en masse retirement of baby-boom generation workers will impact society

### Concerns of Working People Shared in Nearly 20,000 Telephone Counseling Calls

The Japan Labour Health and Welfare Organization has been providing free telephone counseling services for workers since 2000, and recently released its FY 2005 report. The organization received 19,178 calls to discuss the emotional concerns of working people in the year starting April 2005. This represents a 17.0% increase over the 16,398 calls received the previous year.

The most frequently cited workplace problem involved callers' relationship with their boss (1,685 calls), followed by their relationships with coworkers (1,372), and then by other relationships (957). The most frequently cited emotional problems were “a sense of uncertainty about the future” (6,125), “anxiety” (4,745), and “frustration and insecurity” (4,234).

The physical ailments most frequently reported were “insomnia” (1,971), “being easily fatigued” (1,181), and “chronic fatigue” (1,054). Broken down by age, most calls came from those in their 30s at 19.9%, followed by those in their 40s (19.5%), and then by those in their 50s (12.5%).

## Number of Full-Time Employees Drops at More than Half of Workplaces

The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training recently announced the results of its Survey of Personnel Strategies Based on Diversifying Work Patterns and Workers' Attitudes. The purpose of this survey was to identify the effects that work pattern diversification is having on company activities and employment management, and it was conducted among workplaces and workers.

The results show that the number of full-time employees has fallen over the past three years in 52.4% of workplaces, and that in about 40% of those workplaces, the ratio of non-full-time workers is increasing. The survey asked workplaces with rising ratios of non-full-time workers about the effects of this trend. About 40% pointed out the negative effects on personnel and work management, saying "too much work is being given to some full-time employees" and "it has become difficult to amass and transfer skills and know-how."

While the most frequently cited type of work expected of full-time employees was "work that integrates the planning and management of the organization or group" (77.9%), contract workers (27.5%) and non-regular workers (34.4%) are expected to

perform "technical duties that require the worker to make independent decisions based on their expert knowledge and experience." Part timers (48.6%) and temporary workers (28.3%) are most often responsible for "simple, repetitive work that does not require any special experience."

With regard to the motivation of full-time employees, workplaces reported that the ratio of those whose "motivation has risen" (22.9% among those in their 20s, 30.0% among those in their 30s, 25.5% among those in their 40s, and 15.9% among those in their 50s) is higher than the ratio of those whose "motivation has fallen" in all age groups (11.8%, 8.3%, 6.7%, and 12.5%, respectively). As reported by full-time employees, however, the ratio of those whose "attitudes have worsened" (21.8% of those in their 20s, 22.9% of those in their 30s, 22.7% of those in their 40s, and 20.9% of those in their 50s) is higher than those whose "attitudes have improved" (18.7%, 17.3%, 17.0%, and 16.3%, respectively).

The results regarding workers' independent vocational skill development efforts show that more than 60% of both full-time and non-full time workers "do not actively engage in" vocational skill development. The most frequently cited reason was "I don't have time, I'm too busy with work" (52.8%) among full-time employees, and "There are costs involved" (34.0%) among non-full-time workers.

## Turnover Rate among Part-Time Workers Increases over Previous Year

The MHLW recently released the result of the 2005 Survey on Employment Trends. This survey asked 13,809 workplaces nationwide (valid response rate: 77.7%) about employee hiring and separation to identify the actual trends in labor movements. The results showed that in 2005, 7.48 million people were hired (versus 6.73 million the previous year), and 7.56 million people left their jobs (versus 6.85 million the previous year). These figures equate to a hiring rate of 17.4% (versus 15.7%) and a separation rate of 17.5% (versus 16.0%). The hiring rate increased 1.7 points while the separation rate increased 1.5 points over the previous year, virtually eliminating any gap between them.

Labor trends by gender indicate that men have a hiring rate of 14.2% (versus 13.6% in the previous year) and a separation rate of 14.6% (versus 13.4%), while women have a hiring rate of 21.8% (versus 18.6%) and a separation rate of 21.7% (versus 19.6%). Unlike the previous year, the hiring rate among women surpassed the separation rate. Viewed by work pattern, the results show that ordinary workers have a hiring rate of 13.4% (versus 12.6%) and a separation rate of 13.8% (versus 13.1%), while part-time

workers have a hiring rate of 31.0% (versus 27.1%) and a separation rate of 30.3% (versus 26.7%). Both the hiring and separation rates of part-time workers rose more than three points over the previous year.

An age breakdown of workers who were hired from other jobs shows that 20-24 year olds accounted for the highest percentage of those hired from other jobs at 19%, followed by 25-29 year olds (16.8%), and then by those under the age of 19 (15.3%). The rate of hiring from other jobs is highest among those in the relatively younger age groups.

## Anxiety and Disparity since 1998

### *2006 White Paper on the Mental Health of Industrial Workers Released*

The Japan Productivity Center for Socio-Economic Development (JPC-SED) has released its 2006 *White Paper on the Mental Health of Industrial Workers*. This report has been published every year since 2001, and consists of essays (section 1), research reports (section 2), a list of resources (section 3), and an annual report (section 4).

The essays on mental health and the workplace in section 1 were written by five experts in this field. The second essay provides an analysis of the revised Industrial Safety and Health

Act enacted in April 2006, and examines measures to address overwork and mental health issues. The fifth essay features a report on recent changes in the topics addressed during counseling sessions provided at the mental health counseling offices operated by the JPC-SED's Mental Health Research Institute.

Chapter 1 of the second section (research reports) features the results of a survey on mental health efforts released in July 2006. Chapter 2, entitled "The 1998 Turning Point," provides the results of a study that focuses on 1998, a year of major upheavals that included successive financial institution failures and more than 30,000 suicides. It identifies that year as a turning point in terms of an increase in feelings of self-doubt, depression, anxiety, and feelings of inferiority.

On the other hand, there is a correlation between one's "sense of adaptation to work" and the tendency to take tenacious and diligent efforts to overcome problems rather than running away from them (meticulousness). Cultivating this tendency can lead to future improvements in mental health and workplace revitalization. Also, companies need not only to hit numerical targets, but also to adequately explain to workers what is expected of them in their jobs, offer rewarding jobs that allow employees to discover their place in the world through their work, and increase people's "sense of adaptation to work."

## The Transition to Employment Diversification (1994-2003): Research Results Released

The Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (JILPT) recently released a report entitled "The Transition to Employment Diversification (1994-2003)." This report analyzes the trends that have affected full-time and non-full-time employees over the past 10 years given the recent diversification of work patterns. This study uses data from the Survey on the Diversification of Work Patterns conducted by the MHLW (or Ministry of Labour) in 1994, 1999, and 2003.

The results show that the number of non-full-time employees rose from 9.82 million in 1994 to 16.37 million in 2003. Also, the average hours of weekly overtime (measured since 1999) reported by senior (61 and older), male, part-time workers was 3.4 hours in 1999, but rose to 7.8 hours in 2003. A wage comparison between 1994 and 2003 revealed that while the wages of full-time employees decreased by ¥12,000, there had been a large ratio wage decrease among non-full-time workers, amounting to a decrease of ¥31,000 among contract employees, ¥41,000 among employees temporarily transferred from an affiliated company,



and ¥24,000 among temporary workers (working in regular positions). Based on this data, the JILPT concluded that non-full-time workers often face working conditions inferior to those of full-time employees. The report pointed out the need to ensure the more equal and balanced treatment of non-full-time workers, who are very likely to ultimately become the core labor force, given their long work hours and the nature of their jobs.

In looking at the work patterns of young people (ages 15-34), the survey showed that 91.4% were full-time employees and 8.6% were non-full-time workers in 1994, but that 74.8% were full-time employees and 25.3% were non-full-time workers in 2003. The young non-full-time workers who cited “personal reasons” for selecting their current work pattern, meaning that it offered them the work hours and job type best suited to them, accounted for 65.1% of respondents in 1994, but 50.5% in 2003. Those who indicated “reluctance” to select their current work pattern because they would not be able to become full-time employees rose from 21.9% in 1994 to 31.8% in 2003. The JILPT therefore highlighted the need to promote the vocational skill development of young non-full-time workers, and to expand systems for recruiting and transferring those workers into full-time positions.

### Results of the 2005 Survey of Private Company Working Conditions

The National Personnel Authority recently announced the results of a survey conducted in October 2005 among 4,602 companies with 100 or more employees nationwide (valid response rate: 55.9%). The survey was intended to ascertain the working conditions of private companies so as to provide basic information for an investigation into the working conditions of public officials working for the national government.

The survey asked questions in nine categories, such as non-statutory benefit systems (for benefits such as leave and accident compensation), work hours, the promotion of childcare leave for male employees, and the availability of industrial physicians specializing in psychiatry or psychosomatic medicine.

The results show that 14.3% of companies have leave systems for self-development education (school attendance, research and development, skills acquisition, certification courses, and foreign language skill development), and 3.6% have leave systems for other forms of self-development education. In addition, 10.9% have leave systems for volunteer activities.

In terms of the promotion of childcare leave for male employees, 69.7% of companies have systems (or plans)

for supporting and promoting a balance between work and childrearing, but only 39.9% have programs actually aimed at encouraging male employees to take their childcare leave.

The results regarding non-statutory benefit systems for accident compensation show that 61.5% of companies have a benefit system for occupational accidents, and 54.4% have one for commuting accidents.

In the area of labor hours, or specifically, shortened work hour systems for administrative and managerial occupations (departments), 45.4% of companies have introduced shortened work hour systems (including those that approve leave for any reason), 44.5% have introduced such systems for childcare, and 41.6% have similar systems for nursing care.

In a survey of the availability of industrial physicians specializing in psychiatry or psychosomatic medicine, 15.1% have such physicians.

### 2005 Warm Biz Campaign Survey Results

The MOE recently announced the results of a survey on its Warm Biz campaign. Launched by the Ministry in 2005, the Warm Biz campaign promotes a style of business wear that allows workers to stay warm and work efficiently even when the heater is set at 20°C.

The survey was performed among 1,200 randomly sampled men and women. The results show that 90.2% of all respondents indicated that they “were familiar with Warm Biz.” When the 554 of those familiar with the campaign and also employed were asked about the temperatures at which the heaters in their workplaces are now being set as compared to previous years, 30.5% reported that they “are set lower than usual.” This ratio equates to a carbon dioxide reduction of about 1.41 million tons (or the equivalent of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions produced by three million households in one month).

The Ministry is promoting the Warm Biz campaign from November 1 to March 31, and hopes that people will extend the campaign from their workplaces into their homes. It is hoped that the campaign will further develop to also encompass clothing, food and housing.

### Significant Growth in the Employment of Persons with Disabilities

According to figures announced by the MHLW, the number of employment referrals of persons with disabilities in the first half of FY 2006 (April to September) was up 17.9%, to 21,652 referrals, over the same period the previous year.

The number of new job applications was also up to 51,224, a 5.8%

increase over the same period the previous year.

A breakdown by industry of the 21,652 job placements shows that most were accounted for by the service industry (7,523), followed by the manufacturing industry (5,531).

The reasons for the increase in the number of job placements for workers with disabilities as reported to the MHLW from regional Labor Bureaus include: “an increase in the number of job openings for persons with disabilities due to the overall increase in the number of job openings that has resulted from economic improvements;” “an increase in the number of job openings particularly suited to candidates with disabilities;” and “an increase in the number of job openings in corporate awareness of employment of candidates with disabilities due to strengthened advisements to companies that had not achieved an adequate ratio of employees with disabilities.”

The MHLW set a goal of increasing the number of job placements of persons with disabilities in FY 2006 at 2,500 higher than the previous year. The Ministry is continuing to actively promote efforts in this area, including offering comprehensive job counseling and job referrals, and offering of various kinds of employment support policies.

### More Than 1,000 Claims in the Six Months since the Enactment of the Asbestos Relief Act

With the end of September 2006 marking six months since the enactment of the Asbestos-related Health Hazards Victim Relief Act (Asbestos Relief Act), the MHLW has examined the claims for special survivor benefits and industrial accident compensation insurance benefits, and has collected information on the claims and decisions regarding these benefits that it can use to ensure the best possible management of these systems.

According to its examination, 1,334 claims were filed based on the Asbestos Relief Act between March 27 and September 30, 2006. Of these, 632 were approved for payment and 313 were rejected. A breakdown by disease shows that the most frequently reported disease, identified in 452 claims, was mesothelioma.

Between April and September 2006, 1,138 claims were filed for industrial accident compensation insurance benefits due to asbestos-related lung cancer and mesothelioma under the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Act. 840 of these claims were approved for payment, while 203 were rejected (some of the approved claims may have been filed in previous fiscal years). A breakdown by disease

shows that mesothelioma was the most frequently reported disease, indicated in 512 claims.

A breakdown by prefecture shows that Osaka Prefecture had the highest number of claims for special survivor benefits under the Asbestos Relief Act (173), followed by Hyogo Prefecture (163), and Kanagawa Prefecture (114). The number of approved and paid claims was highest in Hyogo Prefecture (98), followed by Osaka Prefecture (80), and the Tokyo Metropolitan Area (61).

A breakdown by prefecture of the claims filed and compensation awarded under the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Act shows that Osaka Prefecture had the highest number of claims (145), followed by the Tokyo Metropolitan Area (131), and Hyogo Prefecture (119). The number of claims approved for payment was highest in Osaka Prefecture (113), followed by the Tokyo Metropolitan Area (110), and Hyogo Prefecture (89).

The annual trends in the number of claims filed under the Industrial Accident Compensation Insurance Act reveal that the 1,796 claims filed in FY 2005 represent an 8.5-fold increase over FY 2004, and that the 722 claims approved for payment likewise represent a 3.8-fold increase.

The MHLW will continue to work with local public agencies and business owners to publicize information and ensure that no potential claims eligible for filing under these systems are overlooked.

## Half of Mothers Work Full-Time after Childbirth

The MHLW recently published the findings of the 5th Tracking Survey of 21st Century Childbirth. This survey has been conducted since 2001 to track children born in the first year of the 21st century and to observe the changes taking place as society ages.

The results show that 15.9% of mothers are working full-time, while 22.2% are working in part-time positions.

The same survey shows that 32.3% of women were working full-time one year prior to giving birth, while 15.7%, or half, were working full-time six months after giving birth. While the full-time figure has remained steady around the 15% mark from the period when the first survey was conducted until the present, the ratio of part-time working mothers has increased from 3.8% at the time of the first survey to 22.2% today, a nearly 6-fold increase.

# Other Topics

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## Prime Minister's Award for Distinguished Safety Service

The 2006 Prime Minister's Award for Distinguished Safety Service was presented in the large hall of the Prime Minister's official residence on July 3, 2006. This award is conferred by the Prime Minister on individuals and organizations that have demonstrated distinguished service in preventing the occurrence of accidents that threaten the everyday safety of citizens, such as industrial accidents, traffic accidents, and fires. The award ceremony is held every year around July 1, National Safety Day.

The organization presented with the 2006 award in the field of industrial safety is the head factory of Hitachi Haramachi Electronics Co., Ltd. This factory has a well developed safety and health management structure. The company president serves as the general safety and health manager, the heads of each division serve as the safety promotion managers of their divisions, and the heads of each section and subsection serve as the safety and health managers of their respective teams. The company has sustained an accident-free record for 32 years by ensuring that managers and workers cooperate with each other in promoting safety and health activities.

The winner of the individual award was Kenichi UCHINO, Professor Emeritus at Kyushu University. As a member of the Central Mine Safety Committee, Prof. Uchino utilized his expert knowledge in the field of mining safety technologies to play a central role in ensuring mining safety, disseminating safety technologies, and promoting safety education.

Following the presentation of the award, then-Prime Minister Junichiro KOIZUMI gave the following congratulatory remarks: "As many as 38,000 people die every year as a result of traffic accidents and other unforeseen accidents. If we think about these dead, and about the lives of their families, we understand that preventing and reducing these kinds of accidents is a matter of national concern. I would like to see the creation of a safer society without accidents, and I hope that the experience and achievements you have accumulated thus far will be used to support activities aimed at educating people about the horrors of accidents, and teaching them to be vigilant in preventing such accidents every day. We are all looking forward to your continued work in this field."

## 2006 Fall National Fire Prevention Campaign

The 2006 Fall National Fire Prevention Campaign was promoted on November 9-15 under the slogan “Keeping the Spark of Vigilance Alive.” This campaign was timed to coincide with the season when the fire danger is greatest. Its aim is to further promote fire prevention awareness, prevent the outbreak of fires, reduce the number of fatalities among seniors and other vulnerable populations, and prevent the loss of property.

The key goals are to: (1) promote home fire prevention measures; (2) promote measures to prevent arson and serial arson; and (3) bolster fire prevention policies related to facilities designated for fire prevention efforts. The “Seven Tips for Saving a Life” were compiled and publicized to draw attention to the home fire prevention policies. They consist of Three Habits and Four Policies.

The Three Habits are: (1) never smoke in bed; (2) keep space heaters away from flammable materials, and (3) never leave lit gas burners unattended.

The Four Policies are: (1) install home fire alarms to prevent being trapped by a fire; (2) use products protected with flame repellent to prevent bedding and clothing from catching fire; (3) keep fire extinguishers in your home so fires can be put out while they are still small; and (4) to protect seniors and persons with physical challenges, create a plan to cooperate with neighbors during emergencies.

### 2006 Memorial Service to Honor Those Who Have Perished in the Line of Duty

The 2006 Memorial Service to Honor Those Who Have Perished in the Line of Duty was held on October 18, 2006 (sponsored by the Japan Labour Health and Welfare Organization, JLHWO).

This memorial service was held to honor the 3,953 individuals who perished in the line of duty in 2005 as the result of industrial accidents. The JLHWO has held a joint memorial service for all those who have perished in the line of duty since 1947 at Takao Mikoromo Temple, which was built in Hachioji, Tokyo in 1972.

At the memorial service, JLHWO President Shohei ITO made a speech, and then a condolence message from Prime Minister Shinzo ABE was read. The Prime Minister's remarks included a commitment to making greater efforts to eliminate industrial accidents. Additional remarks were given by Hirokazu MATSUNO, Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Labour and Welfare, who pledged to make further efforts to eliminate industrial accidents and to bolster the relief provided to survivors.

These remarks were followed by the reading of a poem. In the solemn atmosphere of the ceremony, a floral tribute was made, and Buddhist memorial tablets imprinted with a list of victims were dedicated. The ceremony closed with a renewed commitment by those present to work together to eliminate industrial accidents.

## **Securing Diverse Employment Opportunities for Baby Boomers: A Forum on the 2007 Problem and the Future of Senior Employment**

**A** labour policy forum entitled “Securing Diverse Employment Opportunities for Baby Boomers: A Forum on the 2007 Problem and the Future of Senior Employment” was held at Hamarikyu Asahi Hall on December 1, 2006.

Sponsored by the Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training (JILPT), this 4.5-hour forum featured reports by JILPT researchers and panel discussions with panelists from various fields on how to create desirable jobs for seniors, and how to continue to utilize seniors in the workplace.

The reports argued that the problem of securing job opportunities for seniors is one that must be urgently addressed, and indicated that evidence is now emerging that the employment of seniors may be linked to controlling health care expenses. Researchers suggested that one way to change the attitudes of workers regarding securing job opportunities is to encourage workers to start preparing for securing jobs after retirement from the age of 55, and to have those aged 60 and older devote themselves to mentoring their subordinates.

The panel discussion featured representatives from two private companies that are currently offering employment extensions, a personnel referral consulting company, and a non-profit organization. The panelists gave their reports and then exchanged opinions on the presented topics.

Companies that are currently allowing workers to postpone retirement while continuing in their current jobs are going to be faced with large numbers of workers who want to take advantage of employment extensions. Thus, they are working on finding solutions for situations in which the loss of physical capabilities that comes with aging makes aging workers, particularly those in technical positions, incapable of properly performing their former jobs. Participants also pointed out the importance of identifying which skills need to be transferred to younger workers, and developing methods for implementing skill transference.

**Japan Industrial Safety and Health Association (JISHA)**  
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JISHA was established in 1964 under the Industrial Accident Prevention Organization Act. Its purpose is to eliminate industrial accidents by improving Japan's industrial safety and health levels through voluntary accident prevention activities among businesses throughout Japan.

President: Mr. Yohtaro Sawada Executive Director: Mr. Hiroshi Yokota