Health Hazards and Occupational Security and Safety at Human Workplace: Problems and Remedies
By

Loveday Okere PhD
Professor of Human Resource Management
Faculty of Business Studies
Department of Management
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.
&
Itong Awani PhD
Post Graduate Student
Faculty of Business Studies
Department of Management
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

Abstract

Health is a positive and dynamic concept and implies more than an absence of illness. It is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It refers to a system of public health and preventive medicine which is applicable to industrial concerns. Employees in an industrial establishment are often subjected to certain health hazards and occupational diseases the normal occupational health hazards are classified into chemical, biological, environmental and psychological hazards. This paper reviewed issues in health hazards and occupational security and safety at human workplace. The study adopted literature survey design to gather information relevant to the work. The information obtained was qualitatively analyzed due to the nature of the study. The research observed that typical

workplace hazards include chemicals, biohazards, and improperly designed equipments. Managing workplace hazards like these comes under the area of industrial hygiene, and involves recognition, evaluation and control. The paper also recommended among others that management of organizations first duty should be to formulate a safety policy. Their second duty should be to implement and sustain this policy.

Introduction

Most workplace hazards are not obvious like unguarded equipment or slippery floors. Many are unseen hazards like mold that the company's inadvertently produces as part of its production processes. Other problems, like drug abuse, the employees may create for themselves. In either case, these hazards are often as much or more dangerous to workers' health and safety than are obvious hazards like slippery floors. Typical workplace exposure hazards include chemicals and other hazardous materials, temperature at extremes, biohazards, including those that are normally occurring, such as mold, and man-made, such as anthrax, and ergonomic hazards such as poorly designed, uncomfortable equipment (Paul, 2003).

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health has identified over 15,000 toxic substances, of which some 500 might require regulation as carcinogens (cancer-causing substances). The list of harmful chemical, physical, and biological hazards is a long one. It includes carbon monoxide, vinyl chloride, dusts, particulates, gases and vapour, radiation, excessive noise and vibration, and extreme temperatures. When present in high concentrations, these agents can lead to respiratory, kidney, liver, skin, neurological, and other disorders.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to review health hazards and occupational security and safety at human workplace: problems and remedies. The areas delved into include basic industrial hygiene programme, asbestos exposure, infectious diseases, alcoholism and substance abuse, stress, burnout, and depression, computer-related ergonomic problems, workplace smoking, violence at work, importance of Industrial health and internet-based safety improvement solutions.

Methodology

The study adopted literature survey method to gather information necessary for the work. The study also employed qualitative technique to analyze the information obtained due to the nature of the work.

Basic Industrial Hygiene Programme

Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) standards list exposure limits for about 600 chemicals. Hazardous substances requires air sampling and other preventive and precautionary measures. They are also more widespread than most managers realize. For example, cadmium pigments provide colour to many paints and coatings, and manufacturers use ethyl alcohol as a solvent in industrial processes. Managing exposure hazards like these come under the area of industrial hygiene and involves recognition; evaluation, and control. First, the facility's health and safety officers must recognize possible exposure hazards. This typically involves conducting plant/facility walk-around surveys, employee interviews, records reviews, and reviews of government (OSHA) and nongovernmental standards. Having identified a possible hazard, the evaluation phase involves determining how severe the hazard is. This requires measuring the exposure, comparing the measured exposure to some bench-mark, and determining whether the risk is within tolerance (Paul, 2003).

Finally, the hazard control phase involves eliminating or reducing the hazard. Note that personal protective gear, such as face masks is generally the last option for dealing with such problems. Before relying on these, the employer must install engineering controls such as process enclosures or ventilation, and administrative controls including training and improved housekeeping. This is mandatory under OSHA.

Asbestos Exposure at Work

There are four major sources of occupational respiratory diseases: asbestos, silica, lead, and carbon dioxide. Of these, asbestos is a major concern, in part because of publicity surrounding asbestos in building constructed before the mid-1970s (Gary, 2011). Major efforts are still underway to rid these buildings of the substance. On this note, OSHA standards require actions with respect to asbestos. Employers must monitor the air whenever they expect the level of asbestos to rise to none-half the allowable limit, which is 0.1 fibres per cubic centimeter (Gary, 2011). Engineering controls such as walls, special filters, and so forth, are required to maintain an asbestos level that complies with OSHA standards. Only then can employers use respirators if additional efforts are required to achieve compliance.

Infectious Diseases

With many employees traveling to and from international destinations, Sandy (2003) observed that monitoring and controlling infectious diseases has become an important safety issue. Employers can take steps to prevent the entry or spread of infectious diseases into their workplaces. These steps include:

1.   Closely monitor Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) travel alerts. These inform travelers about health concerns and provide precautions.
2.   Provide daily medical screenings for employees returning from infected areas.

3. Deny access to your facility for 10 days to employees or visitors returning from affected areas, particularly those who have had contact with suspected infected individuals.
4. Tell employees to stay home if they have a fever or respiratory system symptoms.
5. Clean work areas and surfaces regularly.
6. Stagger breaks. Offer several lunch periods to reduce overcrowding.
7. Emphasize the importance of frequent hand washing and make sanitizers containing alcohol easily available.

Alcoholism and Substance Abuse
Alcoholism and substance abuse are widespread problems at work. A research reported via htt://www.ensuringsolutions.org/resources/resources-show.htm?doc-id-673239 in Gary (2011) about two-thirds of people with an alcoholic disorder, work full-time. About 15% of the U.S. workforce (Just over 19 million workers) has either been hung over at work, been drinking shortly before showing up for work, or been drinking or impaired while on the job at least once during the previous year. Some experts estimate that as many as 50% of all "problem employees" are alcoholics. Todd (2000) and Claussen (2009) demonstrated that drug-using employees are more than three and a half times more likely to be involved in workplace accidents.

Effects of Alcohol Abuse
The effects of alcoholism on the worker and work are severe (Kathryn, 2002). Both the quality and quantity of the work decline are as a result of on-the-job absenteeism. The alcoholics on-the-job accidents usually do not increase significantly, apparently, because he or she becomes much more cautious. However, the off-the-job accident rate is higher. Morale of other workers drops, as they have to shoulder the alcoholic's burdens (Gary, 2011). Therefore, alcoholic is recognized as a problem on the job. Early symptoms such as tardiness are similar to those of other problems and thus

hard to classify. The supervisor is not a psychiatrist, and without specialized training, identifying and dealing with the alcoholic is difficult.

Table 1: Alcohol-Related Problems

Alcoholism Stage	Some Possible Signs of Alcoholism Problems	Some Possible Alcoholism Performance Issues
Early	Arrives at work late Untrue States Leaves work early	Reduces job efficiency Misses deadlines
Middle	Frequent absences, especially Mondays Colleagues mentioning erratic behaviour Mood swings Anxiety Late returning from lunch Frequent multi-day absences	Accidents Warnings from boss Noticeably reduced performance
Advanced	Personal neglect Unsteady gait Violent outbursts Blackouts and frequent forgetfulness Possible drinking on job	Frequent falls, accidents Strong disciplinary actions Basically incompetent performance
Source: Gopal Patel And John Adkins Jr., "The Employer's Role In Alcoholism Assistance," Personal Journal62, No, 7 (July, 1983), P. 570; Mary-Anne Enoch and David Goldman, "Problem Drinking and Alcoholism: Diagnosis and Treatment," American Family Physician, February 1, 2002, www.aafp.org/afp/20020201/441.html.accessedJuly20,2008; and Ken Pidd et al., "Alcohol and Work: Patterns of Use, Workplace Culture, and Safety," www.nisu.flinders.edu.au /pubs/reports/2006/injcat82.pdf,accessedJuly 20,2008.		

Table 1 represents observable behaviour patterns that indicated alcohol-related problems. As we can see, alcohol related problems range from tardiness in the earliest stages of alcohol abuse to prolonged, unpredictable absences in its later stages (Gary, 2011).

Dealing with Substance Abuse
For many employers, according to Gary (2011) dealing with alcohol and substance abuse begins with substance abuse testing. It is increasingly unusual to find employers who do not at least test job candidates for substance abuse before formally hiring them. Pre-employment drug testing discourages those on drugs from applying for work or going to work for employers who test. Diane (2003) in a study found that more than 30% of regular drug users employed full-time said they were less likely to work for a company that conducted pre-employment screening. Some applicants or employees may try to evade the test, for instance, by purchasing "clean" specimens to use. However, Sally (2006) a Human Resource Manager, Observed that a newer oral fluid drug test eliminates the "clean specimen" problem and is less expensive to administer. The big question is what to do when a current employee tests positive. Disciplining, discharge, in-house counselling, and referral to an outside agency are the four cardinal and traditional prescriptions (Gary, 2011). Most professionals seem to counsel for treatment rather than outright dismissal, at least initially. They also emphasize that whether it is the supervisor or just a friend who notices the employee's problem, the worst thing to do is to ignore it.

However, in practice, each employer tends to develop its own approach to dealing with substance abuse. Sally (2006) posits that "some employers have zero tolerance and terminate immediately. Some employers don't have a choice such as pharmaceutical labs". Others are lenient. The policy is a three-strikes and someone is out of the process. The first step is a warning notification and permission given to test the employee at any time we want for a period of five years. The second step is a mandatory

substance abuse rehabilitation programme at the employee's own expense. The third step is immediate termination for cause.

Substance Abuse Policies

Employers should establish and communicate a substance abuse policy. This policy should state management's position on alcohol and drug abuse and on the use and possession of illegal drugs on company premises. It should also list the methods such as urinalysis used to determine the causes of poor performance: state the company's views on rehabilitation, including workplace counseling; and specify penalties for policy violations. Additional steps employers take include conducting workplace inspections (search employees for illegal substances) and using undercover agents (Gary, 2011).

Supervisor Training

Training supervisors to identify alcoholics or drug abusers and the problem they create is advisable. However, supervisors are in a tricky position (Gary, 2011). They should be the company's first line of defense in combating workforce drug abuse, but should avoid becoming detectives or medical diagnosticians. According to Gary (2011), guidelines supervisors should follow include:

1.   If an employee appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, ask how the employee feels and look for signs of impairments such as slurred speech. Send an employee judged unfit for duty home.
2.   Make a written record of your observations and follow up each incidents. In addition, inform workers of the number of warnings the company will tolerate before requiring termination.
3.   Refer troubled employees to the company's employee assistance programme.

Legal Aspects of Workplace Substance Abuse

The Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act requires employers to ensure a drug-free workplace by taking a number of steps. For example, employers must agree to:

1. Publish a policy prohibiting the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of controlled substances in the workplace.
2. Establish a drug-free awareness programme that informs employees about the dangers of workforce drug abuse.
3. Inform employees that they are required, as a condition of employment, not only to abide by the employer's policy but also to report any criminal convictions for drug-related activities in the workplace.

Charlene (1999) in his work pointed out that U.S. Department of Transportation has rules regarding drug testing in transportation industry. These rules require random breath alcohol tests as well as pre-employment, post accident, reasonable suspicion, and return-to-duty testing for workers in safety-sensitive jobs in transportation industry.

In general, employers can hold alcohol dependent employees to the same performance standards as they hold non- alcoholics. Whether the alcohol abuse reflects a disability, depends on several things, including whether the person is alcohol dependent (Beth, 2008). However, there are other legal risks. Employees have sued for invasion of privacy, wrongful discharge, defamation, and illegal searches (Gary, 2011). On this premise, before implementing any drug control programme:

1. Use employee handbooks, bulletin board postings, pay inserts, and the like to publicize your substance abuse plans.
2. Explain the conditions under which testing may occur and the procedures for handling employees who refuse to be tested.
3. Explain what accommodations you make for employees who voluntarily seek treatment.

Stress

Problems such as alcoholism and drug abuse some-times reflect underlying psychological causes such as stress and depression. In turn, a variety of workplace factors can lead to stress (Eric, 2006). These include work schedule, pace of work, job security, routine to and from work, workplace noise, poor supervision and the number and nature of customers or clients. In the words of Gary (2011), personal factors also influence stress. For example Type A personalities such as people who are workaholics and who feel driven to be on time and meet dead-lines, normally place themselves under greater stress than do others. Stress is also caused by non job problems like divorce, etc.

Job stress has serious consequences for both employer and employee. For the employee, the human consequences include anxiety, depression, anger, cardiovascular disease, headaches, accidents, and even early onset Alzheimer's diseases (http:www.sciencedaily.com /releases/2007/06/070604170722.htm. accessedNovember 3, 2009) in Gary (2011). For the employer, consequences include diminished quantity and quality of performance, and increased absenteeism and turnover. A study by Drug-Free Workplace (1989) of 46,000 employees discovered that high-stress workers' health care costs were 46% higher than those of their less-stressed co-workers. Yet only 5% of surveyed U.S. employers say they are addressing workplace stress.

Reducing Job Stress

There are a number of ways to alleviate dysfunctional stress. These range from commonsense remedies such as getting more sleep and eating better to remedies such like biofeedback and mediation. Finding a more suitable job, getting counseling, and planning and organizing each day's activities are other sensible responses (Elizabeth, 2008). In their works Karl (1979), James (1994). Todd (199, suggested the following strategies for a person to reduce job stress.

1. Build rewarding, pleasant, cooperative relationships with colleagues and employees.
2. Do note bite off more than you can chew.
3. Build an especially effective and supportive relationships with your boss.
4. Negotiate with your boss for realistic deadlines on important projects.
5. Learn as much as you can about upcoming events and get as much lead time as you can to prepare for them.
6. Find time every day for detachment and relaxation.
7. Take a walk around the office to keep your body refreshed and alert.
8. Find ways to reduce unnecessary noise.
9. Reduce the amount of trivia in your job; delegate routine work whenever possible.
10. Limit interruptions.
11. Do not put off dealing with dissatisfied problems.
12. Make a constructive "worry list" that includes solutions for each problem.
13. Get more and better quality sleep (Sabine, 2008).

Meditation is another option. Choose a quite place with soft light-and sit comfortably. The mediation takes place by focusing your thoughts, for instance by counting breaths or by visualizing a calm location such as a beach. When your mind wanders, bring it back to focusing your thoughts on your breathing or the beach (Gary, 2011).

The employer and its human resource team and supervisors also play a role in reducing stress. Supportive supervisors and fair treatment are two obvious steps. Other steps include reducing personal conflicts on the job and encouraging open communication between management and employees (Kathryn, 2006). Also researchers have suggested three-tiered employee stress-reduction approach. First, is "primary prevention", and focuses on ensuring that things like job designs and workflows are correct. Second involves "intervention", including individual employee

assessment, attitude surveys to find sources of stress at work and personal conflicts on the job, and supervisory intervention. Third is "rehabilitation", through employee assistance programmes and counseling.

Burnout

Burnout is a phenomenon closely associated with job stress. Experts define burnout as the total depletion of physical and mental resources caused by excessive striving to reach an unrealistic work related goal (Gary, 2011). Burnout builds gradually, manifesting itself in symptoms such as initiation, discouragement, exhaustion, cynicism, entrapment, and resentment (Mina and Dov, 1997). Employers can head off burnout, for instance, by monitoring employees in potentially high-pressure jobs (Christina and Michael, 2008). What can a burnout candidate do? Research has suggested that:

1.   Break your pattern of doing things.
2.   Get away from it all periodically.
3.   Reassess your goals in terms of their intrinsic worth.
4.   Think about your work whether you will do good job without being so intense.

Employee Depression

Employee depression is a serious problem at work. Todd (2002) observed that depression results in more than 200 million lost workdays in the United States annually, and may cost U.S. businesses $24 billion or more per year just in absenteeism and lost productivity. Depressed people also tend to have worse safety and records (Todd, 2002). Employers need to work harder to ensure that depressed employees utilize available support service. In a survey BNA Bulletin (2004) found that while about two-thirds of large firms offered employee assistance programmes covering depression, only about 14% of employees with depression said they ever used one. Employers therefore need to train supervisors to identify depression's warning signs and to counsel those who may need such

services to use the firm's employee assistance programme (Felix, 2004). Depression is a disease. It does no more good to tell a depressed person to "snap out of it" than it would to tell someone with a heart condition to stop acting tired. Typical warning signs of depression, if they last for more than two weeks include persistent and, anxious, or empty models; sleeping too little; reduced appetite; loss of interest in activities once enjoyed; restlessness or irritability; and difficulty concentrating (Felix, 2004).

Computer – Related Ergonomic Problems

Even with advances in computer screen technology, there is still a risk of monitor – related health problems at work (Gary, 2011). Problems include short-term eye burning, itching, and tearing, as well as eyestrain and eye soreness. Backaches and neck aches are also widespread. These often occur because employees try to compensate for monitor problems such as glare by maneuvering into awkward body positions. There may also be a tendency for computer users to suffer from cumulative motion disorder, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, caused by repetitive use of the hands and arms at uncomfortable angles (BNA, 2001). OSHA has no specific standards that apply to computer workstations. It does have general standards that might apply, regarding, for instance, radiation, noise, and electrical hazards (OSHA, 2005). Research has provided general recommendations regarding computer screens. Most relate to ergonomics or design of the worker-equipment interface. These include according to Gary (2011).

1.   Employees should take a 3-5 minutes break from working at the computer every 20-40 minutes, and use the time for other tasks, like making copies.
2.   Design maximum flexibility into the workstation so it can be adapted to the individual operator. For example, use adjustable chairs with mid-back supports. Do not stay in one position for long periods.
3.   Reduce glare with devices such as shades over windows and recessed indirect lighting.

4.   Give workers a complete replacement vision exam to ensure properly corrected vision for reduced vision strain (Anne, 1999).
5.   Allow the user to position his or her wrists at the same level as the elbow.
6.   Put the screen at or just below eye level, at a distance of 18 to 30 inches from the eyes.
7.   Let the wrists rest lightly on a pad for support.
8.   Put the feet flat on the floor or on a foot rest (Sandra, 1996).

Workplace Smoking

Gary (2011) in his book says that smoking is a serious health and cost problem for both employees and employers. For employees, these costs derive from higher health and fire insurance, as well as increased absenteeism and reduced productivity, which occurs, for instance, when a smoker takes ten minutes break behind the building or inside toilet to smoke. Furthermore Ronald (1998); Karr (2000) pointed out that nonsmoking employees, who are concerned with secondhand smoke are suing their employers. Now what can the employer do? This depends on the state in which employer is located and whether or not his or her firm is unionized. For example, instituting a smoking ban in a unionized facility that formerly allowed employees to smoke may be subject to collective bargaining (Kenneth, 1999). In general, a manager can deny a job to a smoker as long as the manager do not use smoking as a surrogate for some other kind of discrimination. A "no-smokers hired" policy does not, according to Daniel (1994), violate the Disabilities Act, and in general "employers adoption of a no-smokers-hired policy is not illegal under the federal law. Steve (2005) observed that some firms take a hard-line approach by first giving employees some months warning and offer smoking succession assistance. Then they begin firing or forcing out all its workers who smoke, including those who do so in the privacy of their homes.

Violence at Work

Violence against employees is an enormous problem at work. Homicide is the second biggest cause of fatal workplace injuries. Surveys by Guy and Janice (1994); Robert (2002); Chuck (2008) found that non-fatal workplace assaults resulted in more than one million lost workdays in one recent year. While robbery was the main motive for homicide at work, a coworker or personal associate committed roughly one of seven workplace homicides. Kelly (2005) also in a survey of over half of human resource or security executives in a firm reported that disgruntled employees had threatened senior managers in the past twelve months.

Who is at Risk?

Violence is more associated with some jobs. In a study Manon and Kevin (2002) constructed a "risk for violence scale". This listed 22 job characteristics that the researchers found correlated with violence on the job. Jobs with a high likelihood for violence include those jobs that involve physical care of others or decisions that influence other people's lives, handling guns, security functions, physical control over others, interacting with frustrated individuals, and handling weapons other than guns. Although men have more fatal occupational injuries than do women, the proportion of women who are victims of assault is much higher (Kenneth, 2000). Most women, many working in retail establishments, murdered at work were victims of random criminal violence by an assailant unknown to the victim, as during a robbery, coworkers, family members, or previous friends or acquaintances carried out the remaining homicides.

Steps to Reduce Workplace Violence

Paul and Doug (2002) disclosed that employers can take several steps to reduce workplace violence. These include:

Heightened Security Measures

Heightened security measures are an employer's first line of defense. Claussen (2009) suggests the following: improved external lighting, use drop sales to minimize cash on hand and post signs noting that only a limited amount of cash is on hand, install silent alarms and surveillance cameras, increase the number of staff on duty, provide staff training in conflict resolution and nonviolent response, and close establishments during high-risk hours late at night. Employers can also issue weapons policy, for instance barring firearms and other dangerous weapons. For the fact that half of workplace homicides occur in the retail business, OSHA issued voluntary recommendations aimed at reducing homicides and injuries in such establishments. Particularly for late-night or early –morning retail workers, the suggestions include the following: Install mirrors and improved lighting, provide silent and personal alarms, reduce store hours during high-risk periods, install drop safes and signs that indicate little cash is kept on hand, erect bullet-resistance enclosures, and increase staffing during high-risk hours (OSHA, 1998).

Improved Employee Screening

Scott and Mark (2001) demonstrated that testing can screen out those prone to workplace aggression. In their study they measured the relationship among characteristics such as "trait anger", for instance how someone reacts when they do not receive recognition for doing good work, and "attitude toward revenge", which of course, measures a person's attitude toward revenge. They concluded that measurable individual differences like trait anger account for more than 60% of the violence in our measure of the incidence of workplace aggression. At a minimum, employer should carefully check references, obtain a detailed employment application, solicit and verify the applicant's employment history, educational background, and references. A personal interview, personal testing, and a review and verification of all information provided should also be included. Dawn (1994) observed that sample interview questions to ask might include,

"What frustrates you?" and Who was your worst supervisor and why?". Certain background facts suggest the need for a more in-depth background investigation. Red flags according to Alfred (1994) include:

1.   An unexplained gap in employment.
2.   Incomplete or false information on the resume or application.
3.   A negative, unfavourable, or false reference.
4.   Prior insubordinate or violent behaviour on the job.
5.   A criminal history involving harassing or violent behaviour.
6.   A prior termination for cause with a suspicious or no explanation.
7.   A history of significant psychiatric problems.
8.   A history of drug or alcohol abuse.
9.   Strong indications of inability in the individual's work or personal life, for example, frequent job changes or geographic moves.
10.   Lapsed or lost licenses or accreditations.

Workplace Violence Training
According to Gary (2011), vendors offer video violence training programmes. These explain what workplace violence is, identify its causes and signs, and offer tips to supervisors on how to prevent it and what to do when it occurs. Paul and Doug (2005) suggested that employers should also train supervisors to identify the clues that typically precede violent incidents. These include:

1.   **Typical Profiles:** The typical perpetrator is males, between the ages of 25 and 40, and exhibits an inability to handle stress, manipulative behaviour, and steady complaining.
2.   **Verbal Threats:** They harbor grudges and often talk about what they may do, such as "That propane tank in the back could blow up easily.
3.   **Physical Actions:** Troubled employees may try to intimidate others, gain access to places where they do not belong, or flash a concealed weapon.
4.   **Frustration:** Most cases involve an employee who has a frustrated sense of entitlement to a promotion.

5.   **Obsession:** An employee may hold a grudge against a coworker or supervisor, and some cases stem from romantic interest (Beverly, 1994).

Organizational Justice

At work, as Karl (2001) and Sandy (2007) believed "violence typically occurs in response to a perceived injustice". These researchers asked respondents to reply to this: "Think back over your time as an employee in your current organization when you have been offended by another person". The researchers also asked the respondents how they reacted to the offence. They discovered that an employee who blamed another for some personal affront was more likely to try to seek revenge, especially against less powerful offenders, and less likely to seek reconciliation.

Enhanced Attention to Employee Retention/Dismissal

Jean (2007) and Chuck (2008) opined that employers also need effective procedures for identifying and dealing with potentially lethal employees. Start with adopting a workplace violence policy that outlines unacceptable employee behaviour and a zero-tolerance policy toward workplace violence. Behaviours to watch out for include:

1.   An act of violence on or off the job.
2.   Erratic behaviour evidencing a loss of awareness of actions.
3.   Overly defensive, obsessive, or paranoid tendencies.
4.   Overly confrontational or antisocial behaviour.
5.   Sexually aggressive behaviour.
6.   Isolationist or loner tendencies.
7.   Insubordinate behaviour with a suggestion of violence.
8.   Tendency to overact to criticism.
9.   Exaggerated interest in war, guns, violence, catastrophes.
10.   The commission of a serious breach of security.
11.   Possession of weapons, guns, knives at the workplace.

12.   Violation of privacy rights of others, such as searching desks or stalking.

13.   Chronic complaining and frequent, unreasonable grievances.

14.   A retribution – oriented or get-even attitude.

Dismissing Violence Employees

An employer should use caution when firing or disciplining potentially violent employees. Therefore, in dismissing potentially violence employees, the following measures should be adopted as provided by Shari (1998) and Diane (2002).

1.   Analyze and anticipate, based on the person's history, what kind of aggressive behaviour to expect.

2.   Have a security guard nearby when the dismissal takes place.

3.   Clear away furniture and things the person might throw.

4.   Do not wear loose clothing that the person might grab.

5.   Do not make it sound as if you are accusing the employee; instead, say that according to company policy, you are required to take action.

6.   Maintain the person's dignity and try to emphasize something good about the employee.

7.   Provide job counseling for terminated employees, to help get the employee over the traumatic post-dismissal adjustment.

8.   Consider obtaining restraining orders against those who have exhibited a tendency to act violently in the workplace. Human resource managers, should understand restraining orders and the process for obtaining them.

Dealing with Angry Employees

Donna (1995) suggested the following to deal with angry employees.

1.   Make eye contact.

2.   Stop what you are doing and give your full attention.

3.   Speak in a calm voice and create a relaxed environment.

4.   Be open and honest.
5.   Let the person have his or her say.
6.   Ask for specific examples of what the person is upset about.
7.   Be careful to define the problem.
8.   Ask open-ended questions and explore all sides of the issue.
9.   Listen, as Helen (1997) says, "Often angry people simply want to be listened to. They need a supportive, empathic ear from someone they can trust.

Prerequisites for a Crime Prevention Plan

As William (2009) said "Workplace security involves more than keeping track of who comes in through a window, installing an alarm system, or employing guards for an after – hours watch. Organizations that are truly security conscious plan and implement policies and problems that involve employees in protecting against identified risks and threats". Ideally, a comprehensive corporate anticrime programme should start with the following:

1.   Company philosophy and policy on crime. Make sure employees understand that no crime is acceptable and that the employer has a zero-tolerance policy with respect to workers who commit crimes.
2.   Investigation of job applicants. Conduct full background checks as part of selection process for every position.
3.   Crime awareness training. Make it clear, during training and orientation, that the employer takes a tough approach to workplace crime.
4.   Crisis management. Establish and communicate the procedures employees should following in the event of a bomb threat, fire, or other emergency.

Setting Up a Basic security Programme

Richard (2003) says, actually instituting a basic facility security programme requires four steps: analyzing the current level of risk, and then installing

mechanical, natural and organizational security systems. Employers should also review at least these six matters.

1. Assess to the reception area, including number of access points, and need for a "panic button" for contacting emergency personnel.
2. Interior security, including possible need for key cards, secure restrooms, and better identification of exits.
3. Authorities' involvement, in particular emergency procedures developed with local law enforcement authorities.
4. Mail handling, including how employees screen and open mail and where it enters the building.
5. Evacuation, including a full review of evacuation procedures and training.
6. Back up systems, for instance that let the company store data off site if disaster strikes.

Richard (2003) also pointed out that having assessed the potential current level of risk, the employer then turns its attention to assessing and improving natural, mechanical and organizational security.

Natural Security: Natural security means taking advantage of the facility's natural or architectural features in order to minimize security problems.

Mechanical Security: Mechanical security is the utilization of security systems such as locks, intrusion alarms, access control systems, and surveillance systems to reduce the need for continuous human surveillance (Bill, 2003).

Organizational Security: Organizational security means using good management to improve security. For example, it means properly training and motivating security staff and lobby attendants. Also ensure that the security staff has written orders that define their duties, especially in situations such as fire, elevator entrapment, hazardous materials spills, medical emergencies, hostile intrusions, suspicious packages, civil disturbance, and workplace violence.

Evaluation Plans

According to Graig (2002), the possibility of emergencies promoted by fires, explosions, and similar issues means that employers need facility notification and evacuation plans. Such plans should contain several elements. These include early detection of problem, methods for communicating the emergency externally, and communication plans for initiating an evacuation and for providing information to those the employer wants to evacuate.

Company Security and Employee Privacy

Security programmes like these have been accompanied by a significant rise in the monitoring of employee communications and workplace activities: this has prompted many people according to Gary (2011) to ask, are employee privacy rights being violated? Researchers have suggested that employers must consider employee privacy when using monitoring to control or investigate possible employee security breaches. Ideally, employers should get employees' consent for monitoring, for instance, when employees sign for receipt of company handbooks during orientation. But the employer may also use monitoring if it is clear from its policies and notices that employees should have known that monitoring might take place. Louis (2003) advised that employer can take several steps to make it easier to investigate employees for potential security breaches. These include as indicated by Gary (2011).

1. Distribute a policy that (a) says the company reserves the right to inspect and search employees as well as their personal property, electronic media, and files; and (b) emphasize that company provided conveniences such as lockers and desks remain the property of the company and are subject to its control and search.
2. Train investigators to focus on the facts and avoid making accusations.
3. Make sure your investigators know that employees can request that an employee representative be present during the interview.

4.   Make sure all investigations and searches are evenhanded and nondiscriminatory.

Importance of Industrial Health

Since a large number of workers spend a great deal of their time in an industrial setting, their environment is not usually conducive to a healthy life. Moreover, malnutrition, insanitary and psychological conditions, and the strains and stresses under which they live impair their health. On the one hand, efficiency in work is possible only when an employee is healthy: on the other, the industry, in which he is employed, exposes him to certain hazards which he would not meet elsewhere and which may affect his health. It is with the attention of reducing these hazards and improving the worker's health that the discipline of industrial health came into being as a branch of public health in its own right. The symptoms of bad health are a high rate of absenteeism and turnover, industrial discontent and indiscipline, poor performance and low productivity. That is the reason why when industrial health programmes are introduced, both employers and workers benefit. A reduction in the rate of labour turnover, absenteeism, accidents and occupational diseases has been the consequence of industrial health programmes. The other benefits, which cannot be easily measured, include spoilage, improved morale, increased productivity per employee and a longer working period of an individual.

Internet –Based Safety Improvement Solutions

In today's business environment, companies need to obtain efficiencies wherever they can, and internet – based systems can help them manage their safety programmes much more efficiently. For example, employees handling hazardous chemicals must be familiar with those chemicals' Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). In a dry-cleaning store, for instance, the cleaner-spotter should be knowledgeable about the MSDS for chemicals like hydrofluoric acid, used for stain removal and perchloroethylene, used for cleaning (Gary, 2011). For large organizations, managing the MSDS can

cost millions of naira annually. The employer needs to distribute the appropriate MSDS to each employee, ensure that the employees study and learn their contents, and continually update the data sheets based on new OSHA information. Mark (2003) observed that Web-based systems now provide a platform upon which the employer can mount all its relevant MSDS, make available to the employees who need them, monitor and test employees on the sheets' used, and update the MSDS as required.

Recommendations
Based on the above discussions and conclusions the following recommendations are made for improved reduction in health hazards and promoting occupational security and safety at human workplace by the employers of labour.
- Managements' of organizations first duty should be to formulate a safety policy. Their second duty should be to implement and sustain this policy.
- To reduce frequency of health hazards at workplace, management must be willing to spend money and to budget for safety.
- Organizations should develop in-house safety standards and ensure compliance.
- Employees and supervisors should be provided training on safety.
- Organizations should regularly conduct safety inspections.
- Organizations should continually promote the theme of job safety through the elimination of unsafe conditions and unsafe behaviours.
- Organizations should praise employees when they choose safe behaviours.
- Employers should listen when employees offer safety suggestions, concerns or complaints.
- Employers should reduce unsafe acts through selection, placement, training, and motivation.
- Employers should closely monitor Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) travel alerts.

- Employers should take steps to prevent the entry or spread of infectious diseases into their workplace.
- There should be alcohol and substance abuse test in organizations.
- Pre-employment drug testing should be carried out to discourage those on drugs from applying for work.
- Employers should establish and communicate a substance abuse policy.
- Training supervisors to identify alcoholics or drug abusers and the problems they create is advisable.
- Employers should hold alcohol dependent to the same performance standards as they hold non-alcoholics.
- Handbooks, bulletin board postings, pay inserts, and the like should be used to publicize substance abuse plans.
- To reduce job stress, employers should build rewarding, pleasant, cooperative relationships with employees.
- Employees to reduce job stress should make a constructive worry list that includes solutions for each problem.
- Employers can head off burnout by monitoring employees in potentially high-pressure jobs.
- Smoking is a serious health and cost problem for both employees and employers. Therefore, employers should institute a smoking ban and deny a job to a smoker as long as he or she do not use smoking as a surrogate for some other kind of discrimination.
- Violence against employees is an enormous problem at work. On this note vendors should be used to offer video violence training programmes, which explains what workplace violence is, identify its causes and signs, and offer tips to supervisors on how to prevent it and what to do when it occurs.
- Employers should adopt a workplace violence policy that outlines unacceptable employee behaviour and a zero-tolerance policy toward workplace violence. Make sure employees understand that no crime is acceptable.

- Employer should assess the potential current level of risk and improve natural, mechanical and organizational security.
- Employers must consider employee privacy when using monitoring to control or investigate possible employee security breaches.
- Substitute a less toxic substance for the hazardous chemical by isolating the process or by providing protective clothing handling and warning devices, and by providing safety education.
- Firms should ensure that using radiation in their manufacturing process insist that their employees wear badges which indicate the amount of radiation they have been exposed to.
- Control noise in factories, by segregating noisy equipment, by dampening vibration, or by redesigning noisy equipment or by the use of vibration- absorbing material at certain points. The employee may be asked to wear ear-covering or ear-plugs.
- Devote adequate attention to lighting, temperature and atmospheric conditions, by controlling dust, fumes and gases, and by providing protective devices, clothing, goggles and shields.

Conclusion

Most workplace health hazards are not obvious, like unguarded equipment. Typical workplace hazards include chemicals, biohazards, and improperly designed equipment. Managing exposure hazards like these comes under the area of industrial hygiene, and involves recognition, evaluation, and control. Obvious areas of concern include asbestos exposure and infectious diseases. Managers need to be familiar with alcoholism substance abuse, and their manifestations at work and particularly be familiar with signs of these problems and how to deal with them. Employers especially need to train supervisors to identify depression's warning signs and to counsel those who may need special services. Researchers also argued that violence against employees is an enormous problem. Women in particular are at risk. Heightened security measures are an employer's first line of defence and include improving

external lighting and using drop safers to minimize cash on hand. Improved employee screening can reduce the risk of hiring potentially violent employees. However, employers also need to provide workplace violence training, for instance, including what to watch for such as verbal threats, and enhanced attention to employee retention and dismissal processes. Most employers today have occupational security and safety programmes. Instituting a basic facility security programme involves analyzing the current level of risk, and then installing mechanical, natural, and organizational security systems.

References

Alfred F. (1994): Workplace Violence and the Duty of Care: The Scope of an Employer's Obligation to Protect Against the Violence Employee. Employee Relations Law Journal 20, 3, 395.

Anne, C. (1999): Computer Vision Syndrome: Relief Is In Sight. *Occupational Hazards*, 179-184.

Beth A. (2008): Accommodating the Alcoholic Executive. Society for Human Resource Management Legal Report, 1, 4.

Beverly, Y. (1994): Violence Against Women in the Workplace. Employee Assistance Quarterly, 9, ¾, 177.

Bill, R. (2003): Are You Ready for Biometrics? HR Magazine, 95 – 99.

BINA Bulletin (2004): Employers Must Move from Awareness to Action in Dealing with Worker Depression. BNA Bulletin to Management, 137.

BNA Bulletin (2001): Risk of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Not Linked to Heavy Computer Work, Study Says. BNA Bulletin to Management, 2003.

Charlene, S. (1999): Stressed to the Limit. Workforce, 48 -54.

Christina M. and Michael, L. (2008): Early Predictors of Burnout and Encouragement. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93m, 3, 493 – 512.

Chuck, M. (2008): How to Avoid becoming a Workplace Violence Statistic. Training and Development, 60 – 64.

Claussen, L. (2009): Can You Spot the Meth Addict? Safety and Health, 4, 48 – 52.

Claussen, L. (2009): Disgruntled and Dangerous, Safety and Health, 180, 1, 44 – 47.

Daniel, W. (1994): We Do Not Hire Smokers: May Employers Discriminate Against Smokers? *Employer Responsibilities and Rights Journal* 7, 2, 138.

Dawn A. (1994): Deflecting Workplace Violence. *Personnel Journal*. 66 – 77.

Diane, C. (2002): And Stay Out! Using Restraining Orders Can Be an Effective and Proactive Way of Preventing Workplace Violence. HR Magazine, 83 – 86.

Drug-Free Workforce (2009): New Federal Law Requirements. BNA Bulletin, 1 – 4.

Duane, C. (2003): Are Your Employees Drug Tests Accurate? *Human Resource Magazine*, 41 – 45.

Elizabeth S. (2008): When a Coworker Is Stressed Out. *The Wall Street Journal*, B_1, B_2.

Eric, S. (2006): Office Noise, Satisfaction and Performance American Family Physician 74, 8.

Felix, C. (2004): Depression and the Workplace: Occupational Socuial Work Development and Information. Employee Assistance Quarterly 19,4, 1-20.

Gary T. and Janice W. (1994): The Changing Character of fatal Work Injuries. Monthly Labour review, 17.

Gary, D. (2011): Human Resource Management, 12th ed. Pearson Education Limited, Edinburgh Gate.

Graig, S. (2002): Evacuation Planning: A Matter of Life and Death. *Occupational Hazards*, 49 -51.

Helen, F. B. (1997): What to Do About Anger in the Workplace. Training and Development, 51, 9, 28 – 32.

Honna, R. (1995): New Industry Helps Managers Fight Violence. USA Today, August, 8, 1.

James, K. Jr (1994): An Epidemic of Depression? Across the – Board, 23 – 27.

Jean, T. (2007): In Case of Emergency. HR Magazine, 79 – 82.

Karl A. (2001): How Employees Respond to Personal Offense: Effect of Blame Attribution, Victim Status, and Offender Status on Revenge and Reconciliation in the Workplace. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 1, 52 – 59.

Karl, A. (1979): Stress and Manager. Eaglewood Cliffs. NJ.

Karr A. L. (2000: Lighting Up. Safety and Health. 162, 3, 62 – 66.

Kathryn, T. (2002): Happiness from a Bottle? *Human Resource Magazine*, 30 – 37.

Kelly, G. (2005): Workplace Violence on the Upswing. HR Magazine, 27.

Kenneth D. (2000): The Gender-Motivated Violence Act: What Employers Should Know. Employee Relations Law Journal, 25, 4, 29 -41.

Kenneth, S. (1999): Personnel Law, Upper Saddle River NJ: Prentice Hall, 76 – 79.

Louis, O. (2003): Investigating Security Breaches, Workplace Theft, and Employee Fraud. Society for Human Resource Management legal Report, 1-2

Manon, M. L. and Kevin, E. K. (2002): Predictors and Outcomes of Workplace Violence and Aggression. Journal of Applied Psychology 87, 3, 444- 453.

Mark W. (2003): A Prescription for Managing Chemicals: Use These Strategies for Successful Electronic MSDS. Industrial Safety and Hygiene News 37, 1, 42.

Mina W. and Dov. E. (1997): Effect of a Respite from Work on Burnout: Vacation Relief and Fadeout. Journal of Applied Psychology, 82, 4 516- 527.

OSHA (1998): Addresses Top Homicide Risks. BNA Bulletin to management, May 14th, 148.

Paul P. (2003): The Science and Art to Identifying Workplace Hazards. *Occupational Hazards*, 50 – 54.

Paul V. and Doug K. (2005): At Risk Terminations: Protecting Employees, Preventing Disaster, *Risk Management Magazine* 52, 5, 28 – 33.

Richard, M. (2003): Keeping Your Security Programme Active. Occupational Hazards, 49 – 52.

Robert, G. (2002): Bulletproof Practices. HR Magazine, 34 – 42.

Ronald, D. (1998): Exposure to Environmental Tobacco Smoke: Identifying and Protecting Those at Risk. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 147 – 148.

Sally, R. (2006): Random Drug Testing Can Help Reduce Accidents for Construction Companies: Drug Abuse Blamed for Heightened Risk in the Workplace. Business Insurance, 40, 6.

Sandra, L. F. (1996): Are Your Employees Working Ergosmart,. *Personnel Journal*, 19-92.

Sandy H. (2007): Predicting Workplace Aggression: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 1, 228 – 238.

Sandy, S. (2003): SARS: "What Employers Need to Know" *Organizational Hazards*, 33 – 35.

Scott, D, and Mark M. (2001): Exploring the Role of Individual Differences in the Prediction of Workplace Aggression. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 4, 554.

Shari, C. (1998): Target HR. Workforce, 44 – 52.

Steve, B. (2005): Where There Is Smoke, There Are Terminations: Smokers Fired to Save Health Costs HR Magazine 50, 3, 28 – 29.

Todd N. (1999): Stress Management Occupational Hazards, 100.

, N. (2000): Just Say Yes to Preventing Substance Abuse. Occupational Hazards, 39 – 41.

Tood, N. (2002): Depression: The Unseen Safety Risks. *Occupational Hazards*, 38-42.

William, A. (2009): Enterprise Risk Management at Wal-Mark.

www.OSHAgov.downloaded.2005