

## Occupational Health and Safety in Algeria: A Diagnostic Perspective

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### Abstract:

Occupational health is receiving growing attention due to the numerous risks in the workplace that threaten the physical and psychological well-being of employees, ultimately affecting their professional performance. In general, workplace hazards can be classified into three main categories: occupational accidents, work-related illnesses, and job-related stress.

Based on this context, the present research paper aims to assess the current state of occupational health and safety in Algeria, while also highlighting the preventive measures in place to reduce workplace-related risks across the country.

**Keywords:** Health; Occupational Safety; Occupational Hazards; Preventive Measures; Algeria.

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## **1. The Introduction**

The human element represents the true wealth and the essential foundation for the growth of any organization. Despite the successes achieved by many institutions throughout their development and prosperity, they are not immune to challenges that may hinder the realization of their goals. Among these challenges are workplace accidents, which can result in significant financial losses. The degree of attention given to occupational safety within an organization serves as an indicator of administrative maturity and effective planning. Moreover, it reflects both public and institutional awareness of the importance of maintaining a safe work environment.

Algerian legislation establishes occupational safety as a primary issue which the national labor laws declare as a fundamental right. Workers under these laws receive protection for their health together with workplace safety conditions and hygiene standards and their right to physical and moral integrity and dignity and rest. The legal and regulatory framework of Algeria together with national policy goals to prevent workplace dangers demonstrate their commitment to occupational safety through these rights. The ratification of international conventions by Algeria strengthens its existing commitment. The national occupational health and safety policy establishes prevention as a fundamental right to protect workers from occupational dangers and maintains it as an essential ongoing priority.

Algeria continues to develop its occupational health and safety standards because government authorities strengthen their protection of employees while working toward safe and healthy workplaces without accidents. The government implements full preventive protocols and safety guidelines that work to lower dangers and decrease incidents in work environments. The study focuses on its main research question:

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### **What is the current reality of occupational health and safety in Algeria?**

Following this introduction, the paper is divided into three sections and a conclusion.

- The first section addresses the conceptual framework of occupational health and safety.
- The second section examines the national policy for the prevention of occupational hazards.
- The third section explores the methods and mechanisms for protecting workers from workplace accidents.

The significance and objectives of this study are outlined as follows:

The primary reason for conducting this research emerges from the essential requirement to defend human resources because they function as the foundation which supports organizational achievement and long-term viability. The health and safety risks facing personnel directly endanger organizational performance alongside its capability to maintain operations.

This investigation sets out to achieve the following objectives:

- Diagnose the current status of occupational health and safety in Algeria.
- Highlight the methods for preventing workplace hazards in Algeria.
- Emphasize the role of occupational medicine and other relevant actors in prevention, as well as their importance in supporting occupational health and safety in Algeria.

### **2. Conceptual Framework of Occupational Health and Safety**

The main goal of human resource management involves protecting employees against all harmful effects which occupational incidents may

cause. Occupational safety means stopping workplace accidents from causing bodily harm while occupational health works to stop physical and mental illnesses that occur on the job. Safety in all its professional and health-related dimensions demands human resource management to establish complete safety measures and services which protect employees from workplace dangers (Mutali, 2017, p. 158). The study defines its essential terms through the following definitions:

### **2.1 Health:**

Health is defined as "a state of relative balance in bodily functions, encompassing both the science and art of disease prevention and health promotion through various multidisciplinary efforts" (Al-Siddiqi & Ramadan, 2004, p. 23). The term describes the state of bodily functions which have found balance through environmental condition adaptation. The concept encompasses widespread health development which includes physical and mental health advancement as well as social and cultural aspects and relationship connections. A value system exists which creates equilibrium between physical health alongside mental health and social well-being (Qandli, 2012, p. 219).

### **2.2 Occupational Safety:**

According to the Arab Institute for Occupational Health and Safety occupational safety constitutes a discipline that protects employees against workplace dangers by analyzing risk sources and enhancing workplace conditions to maintain their physical and mental and social wellness (Al-Waleed, 2009, p. 133). Occupational safety focuses on protecting workers from workplace accident injuries while occupational health deals with stopping work-related physical and psychological diseases from occurring. A workplace environment becomes secure when it prevents both employee

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injuries from accidents and occupational health conditions from developing. An organization needs to establish this type of environment because of several important reasons:

- Workplace accidents have a direct impact on individual performance and productivity, often leading to work disruptions and, in severe cases, permanent disability or death.
- Accidents and injuries affect employee satisfaction and the organization's ability to retain qualified human resources.
- Accidents and injuries negatively affect the overall productivity and performance of the organization, as the resulting losses diminish both output and operational efficiency.
- These losses extend to society and the economy at large, causing a depletion of both human and material resources ([Al-Hariri, 2014, pp. 286-287](#)).
- Occupational safety refers to the establishment of workplace conditions which do not expose staff members to any hazards inside an organization. The essential goals of occupational health and safety demonstrate its critical value to the following points:
  - Promoting occupational health and safety behaviors.
  - Ensuring a safe work environment, which leads to positive outcomes for the organization, its employees, and society as a whole.

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- Improving working conditions.
- Instilling a sense of security among employees during the execution of their tasks (Al-Barbari, 2025) (<http://education.gov.bh/divisions/safety/salama.htm>).

### 2.3 Occupational Hazards:

According to (Bourgeois & Belleghem, 2003), risk exists when a hazard interacts with a person to produce potential harm that includes accidents, injuries or illnesses. Uncertainty represents a measurable state which combines with individual behavioral factors that researchers find difficult to measure through quantitative methods (Margossian N. , 2007). The term occupational risk means the probability of encountering dangerous conditions which might trigger work-related accidents or occupational diseases. All compensated work activities face this risk since workers receive payments for their labor. The combination of production methods and various chemical substances and diverse work activities results in higher accident and occupational disease rates within organizations (Margossian N. , 2006, p. 13).

All accidents consist of a cause-effect relationship which makes it difficult to determine both their causes and the dangers that people face. The main elements which lead to accidents include several critical factors:

- Human Factor: The human element is the primary focus and main concern of occupational safety and health systems. It is also the leading cause of workplace accidents, often related to factors such as the worker's age, physical and psychological condition, fatigue, exhaustion, negligence, and lack of awareness.
- Unsafe Working Conditions: The physical and non-physical conditions at a workplace become critical elements which expose

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employees to dangers when they surpass the acceptable thresholds which differ according to specific job roles. Implementing suitable preventive strategies enables the reduction of these risks. The identification of workplace hazards serves as a fundamental component for successful risk management practices.

- Nature of the Enterprise's Activity: The type and frequency of accidents, injuries, and occupational diseases vary across industrial sectors. Factors such as working hours, shift patterns (including night shifts), extended hours, and overtime also influence risk levels (Namour, 2023, p. 211).
- Nature of the Job: The nature of the job determines the tasks involved, the use of machinery and equipment, working conditions, and workload factors that directly influence the type and severity of occupational risks (Mohammad, 2014, p. 215)

### **3. National Prevention of Occupational Hazards in Algeria**

Work-related accidents and diseases kill 5,000 people daily according to International Labor Organization (ILO) statistics. The workplace experiences about 270 million occupational accidents and 160 million work-related illnesses each year. The illness causes workers to miss four or more working days in approximately one-third of these cases.

The Algerian government developed three thousand eight hundred fifty-seven internal prevention units for workplace health and safety as part of its national risk prevention strategy. More than thirteen thousand establishments have reported joining this program. The limited impact persists because employers who bear full responsibility for health and safety of their workers fail to participate enough in the implemented measures.

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Algeria has officially accepted multiple important international and Arab agreements especially International Labor Organization Convention No. 155 regarding Occupational Safety Health and the Working Environment. The country has validated Arab Labor Convention No. 07 on Occupational Safety and Health through Presidential Decree No. 05-280 dated 9 Rajab 1426 AH (14 August 2005) which was established in Alexandria during March 1977. The Algerian legislative body demonstrates its serious dedication to enhance workplace conditions and protect employees through preventive measures.

Algerian legislation on occupational risk prevention identifies the main actors within the enterprise as follows:

### **3.1 The Head of the Enterprise:**

The national legislation assigns the main health and safety prevention duty to the employer as the leading authority. Prevention responsibilities belong mainly to the employer who acts as the primary prevention actor inside the organization through appropriate health and safety measures that follow general prevention rules. Through its organizational power which stems from internal company rules the employer takes on this responsibility.

The enterprise leader must legally keep accident documentation which contains full worker identification along with their job position together with the exact accident time and location and detailed explanations of what happened and the resulting time off from work. The organization must implement every required action which grants labor inspectors access to review these records throughout their inspection operations ([Kahoul & Bouhouch, 2022, pp. 209-210](#)).

### **3.2 Occupational Physician:**

Occupational medicine is the branch of medicine that focuses on wage-earning workers or employees in the workplace. It deals the health,

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functional, and productivity-related aspects of human resources within institutions. Occupational medicine, also known as occupational health, is defined as the absence of physical and psychological illnesses related to work (Bernouti, 2007, p. 467).

Employing organizations must provide occupational medicine as an on-site service. The organization takes full responsibility for all related financial expenses. The legal requirement to establish an occupational medicine service exists because of Articles 2 and 3 of Executive Decree No. 93-120 about occupational medicine. Every worker must undergo mandatory medical examinations before joining the workforce along with periodic medical check-ups and specific examinations and evaluations for returning to work. Workers who perform dangerous work need to receive specialized medical care. The employer has the authority to request voluntary medical examinations to be performed (Salem, 2014, p. 26).

An occupational physician meets qualification standards established by Executive Decree No. 93-120 dated May 15 1993 which controls occupational medicine organization. According to the decree a qualified occupational physician needs both an occupational medicine specialty certificate and independent practice authorization. Occupational medicine exists within organizational structures which legislation establishes based on the institutional size and nature. A general practitioner might be hired to maintain continuous occupational medicine services when necessary (Article 16 of Law No 88-07).

(Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security – Algeria, n.d.) holds the main responsibility for occupational hazard prevention at Algeria's national level. The Ministry executes this through its main bodies which include the Directorate of Labor Relations (DRT) and the Directorate

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General of Social Security (DGSS) along with its affiliated institutions National Institute for the Prevention of Occupational Hazards (INPRP) Occupational Hazard Prevention Authority for Construction Public Works and Irrigation Activities (OPREBATPH) and National Social Insurance Fund for Salaried Workers (CNAS). The Ministry of Health, Population, and Hospital Reform executes critical functions by means of its occupational medicine services. The National Council for Health Prevention, Safety, and Occupational Medicine plays an active role in these efforts. The Minister of Labor takes direct part in creating standards for occupational hazard prevention while also keeping track of their implementation process (<http://www.mtess.gov.dz>).

### **4. Methods and Mechanisms for Protecting Workers from Occupational Accidents:**

The Algerian legislator addressed this issue in Law No. 88-07, specifically in Chapter Two, which outlines the general rules for health prevention and safety in the workplace. The main preventive measures against occupational accidents include the following:

- Eliminating mechanical causes of accidents by separating work areas, improving lighting, and installing protective barriers on machinery, furnaces, conveyors, lifts, electrical systems, and fire prevention equipment.
- Emphasizing guidance, training, and professional testing, including the administration of psychological assessments upon employment.
- Ensuring worker safety in the testing of technologies and techniques, as well as in the organization of work.
- The organization should implement rules regarding working hours and rest intervals along with pace restrictions to minimize worker

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fatigue and boredom because these factors contribute to higher accident risks at work.

- Supervisory personnel must receive training about accident prevention strategies and companies need to organize routine safety discussions regarding workplace danger factors. The workplace should distribute thorough information about hazardous material storage and handling risks together with machinery and equipment dangers through written materials and manuals and signage.
- Instilling safety habits among workers and sensitizing new employees through pamphlets, discussions, and announcements, thereby fostering a culture of caution.
- Awarding prizes within each unit or institution to workers who contribute to enhancing accident prevention methods, while imposing disciplinary actions on those who violate safety regulations.
- Every industrial unit or institution must record data on workplace accidents and compile regular statistics on their causes to support the identification of appropriate preventive measures. The government should also work to standardize this statistical data (Belloul & Bourgadda, 2020, pp. 08-09).
- The organizational climate requires attention because it produces powerful psychological effects on workers through meaningful relationships that exist among colleagues and between employees and their supervisors. The informal social connections employees form at work help them feel psychologically stable and comfortable while increasing their job satisfaction and well-being which leads to

better performance and higher productivity levels (Boudissa, 2024, p. 169).

## **5. Conclusion**

Work-related illnesses and injuries have harmful consequences for workers, diminishing their health and productivity and, in turn, affecting their families, the national economy, and broader social welfare. This has contributed to a growing global awareness of occupational safety and health.

In Algeria, the national policy on occupational safety and health is strongly supported by a robust legal framework. The Algerian Constitution, along with labor legislation particularly Law No. 90/11 on labor relations sets out fundamental principles that guarantee workers' rights to health protection, workplace safety, hygiene, and access to occupational medical services across all sectors. This framework firmly establishes occupational health and safety as both constitutional and legislative rights.

The responsibility for following occupational safety procedures operates as a collective duty which needs to be fulfilled by all members. Management holds the main responsibility to create safety procedures and to monitor worker implementation while providing necessary tools and resources. Workers must follow established procedures while recognizing their work responsibilities with full understanding of potential dangers.

### **Study Recommendations:**

In light of the foregoing, and to strengthen the effectiveness of occupational safety measures in reducing workplace hazards, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Broaden the scope of attention given to occupational safety.
- Conduct comprehensive assessments of latent and potential hazards in the work environment that may lead to future accidents.

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- Develop training policies that address the psychological, social, organizational, and relational aspects of occupational risks.
- Adopt internationally recognized standards and specifications to ensure institutional credibility in occupational safety performance.
- Strengthen government oversight of enterprises to ensure compliance with occupational safety standards and procedures, including the provision of protective equipment and devices.
- Promote awareness and active involvement in enforcing occupational safety and health regulations in all workplaces.
- Provide workers with thorough education on the importance of respecting and following occupational safety procedures.

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