



# METAL WORKERS ALLIANCE OF THE PHILIPPINES

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## **Forum-Workshop on Strengthening Health & Safety Measures in the Workplace 22 August 2015, 9:00am-5:00pm College of Arts & Letters University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City**

### *Brief Description*

On 22 August 2015, MWAP conducted a “Forum-Workshop on Strengthening Health & Safety Measures in the Workplace”. The activity was held from 9:00am-5:00pm at the College of Arts & Letters, UP Diliman, Quezon City.

Twenty two workers from eight companies attended. Original target was 30 participants but some were not able to come due to the strong winds and rains brought by an occurring southeast monsoon.

The activity was made possible with support from the Developing World Outreach Initiative (DWOI) and the Maquiladora Health and Safety Support Network (MSSHN).

### *Program*

The morning session was spent for inputs on two major topics.

Ms. Emma Celada of the Institute for Occupational Health Safety and Development (IOHSAD) discussed the State of Occupational Health and Safety in the Philippines. Meanwhile, Ms. Frances Bondoc of the Gabriela Women’s Partylist (GWP) discussed the Legislative Actions on OHS Concerns and the importance of WORKERS’ Shield. Ms. Bondoc represented Rep. Emmi de Jesus who wasn’t able to come due to an illness. WORKERS’ Shield is a bill filed by GWP which proposes stiffer penalties and criminalization of OHS violations.

Because of smaller number of attendees, it was decided not to have break-out groups. Instead, where workers collectively shared the existing health and safety practices in their respective workplaces at the plenary session. From the sharing, the participants also came up with proposals on how to improve occupational health and safety programs and practices.

All of the eight unions have joint venture committee with the management. Out of this, 60% have union health and safety committee aside from the joint venture committee. Joint venture committees hold monthly meetings to discuss OHS situation in their companies.

### *Workshop Result*

<b>Company</b>	<b>Existing OHS Committee</b>	<b>OHS Issues/Situation</b>	<b>Actions/Recommendations</b>
Supreme Steel	Union health & safety committee	1) Lack of ventilation. Workplace is not	Grievances have been held. Company’s action is to put blowers to supposedly blow

	<p>There is also a joint venture committee but only the union president is allowed to join in the meetings</p>	<p>airconditioned.          There is only a blower intended for the machines          2) Too much iron dust. When it rains, the workplace is all covered with fogs because the smoke can't get out          3) Zinc ash          4) Common illness is pulmonary tuberculosis (PTB). Some cases became acute and later categorized as habitual. Workers who have habitual PTB were declared unfit to work and were dismissed from work or forced to resign          5) For the current year, many workers were found to have high blood and hypertension due to iron dust          6) Too much heat. At the galvanizing section, heat is 450 degrees. There is only an exhaust fan for the melting device          7) Protection is only apron, helmet and ordinary gasmasks.          8) So far, no lead content</p> <p>Some accidents that occurred:          July 3 - a worker was pinned down by a 750-ton steel being lifted by a forklift. A contractual worker</p>	<p>off the smoke but it is not enough</p> <p>Filed a case against the dismissal of workers with habitual PTB, but lost the case. Union asserts that PTB is a direct result of zinc ash, iron dust and lack of ventilation inside the company.</p> <p>Now coordinating with MWAP and other health and safety institutions on how to solve this problem</p>
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		<p>was operating the forklift when the accident happened</p> <p>From May-August 2015: 67 cases of minor accidents recorded</p>	
NXP	<p>Union health &amp; safety committee</p> <p>Joint venture committee</p>	<p>Incidence of cancer, especially to women, for retired workers</p> <p>There are members in the plating area which were found to have high lead content</p>	<p>Need to do a study on the incidence of cancer on retired workers and see if these are work-related</p> <p>How to give assistance to former employees</p> <p>Make a thorough study on the chemicals being used at the workplace</p> <p>For the next CBA, to include in the provision to conduct blood chemical examination for workers every 6 months</p>
Emi Yazaki	<p>No union health &amp; safety committee</p> <p>Joint venture – 8 representatives each from union and company</p>	<p>Heat inside the workplace. Production line is not airconditioned as the building is designed only for electric fans. Almost each worker has an electric fan in their work area</p> <p>Provision for optional maternity leave for pregnant workers. Workers have the option to avail of this once they learn that they are pregnant. 20% of salary provided.</p> <p>There are relievers for pregnant workers</p> <p>Management provides PhP 70,000 monthly for</p>	<p>Monthly meetings of joint venture committee</p> <p>Existence of a safety patrol</p> <p>Company to install more blowers, exhaust fan and a cooling pipe</p> <p>Temperature monitoring</p>

		<p>medicine assistance to workers. However, monthly medicine assistance amounts to PhP 150,000 so the union provides for the remaining balance</p> <p>Existence of a safety patrol</p> <p>Workers are standing almost the whole day while doing work</p>	
SMT	union health & safety committee - newly-formed	<p>In one department (Toshiba) workers have been on night shift for almost two months already. Many of the workers are already suffering from highblood</p> <p>Common sickness: lung and respiratory illnesses, UTI</p> <p>Use of hazardous chemicals</p>	<p>Held grievance meetings with the management but still no action</p> <p>Conducted ribbon-wearing as a form of protest</p>
Sun Logistics	union health & safety committee - newly-formed	<p>Smoke coming from the fork lifts is only circulating inside the workplace</p> <p>No exhaust fan</p>	Absence of exhaust fan has been complained to the management several times but still no action
Jardine Schindler	Joint venture	<p>With PPE and tool box</p> <p>Provision of helmets and raincoats for technicians who are mostly driving motorcycles. As of now, no replacement given yet despite the request filed since last year</p>	Monthly meeting of joint venture committee

		Common illness: cough and colds due to contrasting environment (heat inside the elevator shaft and then airconditioned environment outside)	
Honda Cars	Union health & safety committee	Common illness is lumbar  New illness detected at the welding department is carpall tunnel. Attributed to twisting of welding gun	Will hold dialogues with the management about the new illness detected
Aichi Forging	Joint venture	Common complaints: lung illness, back pains  Too much heat at the production area. 40-45 degrees heat instead of the normal 37 degrees  Unsafe working conditions  Iron dust. Company provides masks but workers feel inconveniences so they buy their own cotton masks  Lack of ventilation. Not enough blowers at the production area	Holds dialogues with management

MWAP reiterated the need for unions to have its own health and safety committees, aside from existing joint ventures. This is needed so as to have a free hand in designing OHS programs for the union and the workers. MWAP is willing to help and train OHS officers. It also reiterated the call for unions to have representatives in MWAP Health & Safety Committee.

As part of the recommendations and plans, the workshop agreed to work on the following:

- Formation of union health & safety committee
- Look on possibility to have bio-monitoring for electronics workers
- Come up with a primer on the OHS situation in the metal industry
- Hold a benefit activity: Run for a cause event in 2016: Run for Occupational Health & Safety