

## **Article for Publication**

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### **Raising the Bar - Increasing Health & Safety Awareness within all local work Industries.**

The importance of protecting employees in various work settings from accidents, injuries, exposure to harmful substances and harmful practises is of paramount importance. It is overt knowledge that every industry has or may have health and safety hazards of some sort. This is why the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) of Malta, has upped the ante in strengthening occupational health and safety preparedness for workers in Malta.

Lacking the implementation of effective measures and safeguards will automatically lead to lack of employee productivity, increased worker absence because of accidents occurred and other detrimental facets to companies and society at large. It is the Occupational Health and Safety Authority's (OHSA) mission to inform and provide knowledge on health and safety issues to various industry players and stakeholders, for the benefit of the same stakeholders, employees, and the wider community.

The importance of introducing health and safety adaptation strategies to ensure worker safety was recently highlighted during a conference, attended by around 75 work professionals and key industry players, held by the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) in collaboration with the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA). The event intended to explore the impact of climate change on health and safety in the workplace in Malta.

During the event Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr Josianne Cutajar explained why a proactive and preventative work culture is pivotal across all work industries, she stated, "aiming to prevent workplace accidents and illnesses should be a goal high on the list of every employer. Prevention is better than cure. Primarily, we aim to educate and inform. As an Authority we are working hard, to transfer the message to employers across various industrial settings that this can be achieved through prevention strategies such as risk assessments, the provision of training to all employees, and the inclusion of environmental control barriers. Having a strong workforce entail having comprehensive, holistic, and efficient health and safety protocols that protect all employees."

Apart from providing knowledge to employers the Authority is also amendment to providing knowledge to employees, since they also play a climacteric part in bolstering a safe work environment. As part of its pledge to ensure safe workplaces, the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) will be launching awareness campaigns aimed at informing employees about the momentousness of intently participating in safety training programmes,

following health and safety guidelines and procedures on their respective workplaces, prioritising their mental and physical wellbeing, and raising the alarm in case of having any safety concerns or incidents on respective places of work.

The newly published Health and Safety at Work Act (Act XXXIII of 2024 Chapter 646) sets the tone for improved health and safety measures in the local sphere and empowers the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) in its committed persistence to ensure health and safety measures are enforced and taken seriously amongst all stakeholders. The new legal Act provides for several novelties, particularly as regards the creation of the role of a Health and Safety Reporting Officer ('HSRO') as well as the establishment of a Health and Safety Tribunal.

The Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) has undergone significant growth and evolution over the past year. This change underscores the importance of having a healthy, and strong workforce. Importantly, the Authority's evolutionary change also signifies its commitment to fostering a workforce which can contribute to local economic growth in a sustainable manner.

**OHSA Communications Department**

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