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**PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCTING TRAINING IN THE FIELD
OF OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY IN BLUE-COLLAR POSITIONS
IN CONSTRUCTION****E. Sielicka**
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Abstract. The construction industry has almost always been perceived as the economic sector, with one of the highest occupational risk levels and still unsatisfactory safety at work. Despite the decreasing number of fatalities in construction, the number of injured in accidents at work is continuously increasing. To reduce the overall number of accidents, employers and employees must labor law regulations regarding occupational health and safety. One of the guidelines imposed on employers by law is periodic training for employees. However, for doing it properly, it is necessary to learn the rules of their conduct in the construction sector, which will be this paper's subject. Because of the authors' practical experience in this field, the article was prepared based on polish law acts.

Keywords: occupational health and safety; employees training in construction.

The essence of occupational health and safety is to protect employees' life and health and prevent possible accidents at work and occupational diseases. Therefore, compliance with occupational health and safety regulations, which is aimed at our protection, is a fundamental duty both to ourselves and our relatives.

According to Article 237 § 1 of the Polish Labor Code, an employer may not admit an employee to work for which he or she does not have the required qualifications or the necessary skills, as well as sufficient knowledge of the provisions and principles of health and safety at work. According to Article 237 § 21 of the Polish Labor Code, the employer must also undergo training in occupational health and safety and update his knowledge to the extent necessary to fulfill his obligations. All employees, regardless of the type of work performed, are subject to training, including persons employed based on civil law contracts and employees to perform a specific job, interns, and apprentices.

According to Article 237 § 2 of the Polish Labor Code, the employer is obliged to provide training for the employee in occupational health and safety before allowing him to work. These training sessions take place during work and at the employer's expense. The employer is obliged to provide training participants (employees) with all the methodological facilities:

- getting acquainted with the work's environmental factors that may pose a threat to the safety and health of employees at work, and with the appropriate preventive measures and actions,
- getting acquainted with the provisions and principles of occupational health and safety to the extent necessary to perform work at individual positions and with the scope of responsibility in the field of occupational health and safety,
- acquiring the ability to act in emergencies, as well as to assist people who have suffered accidents [1].

The training organizer is also obliged to ensure:

- programs of particular types of training developed for specific groups of positions,
- trainer training programs in the field of teaching methods,
- highly qualified lecturers/instructors, appropriate to the training programs being implemented,
- appropriate premises for conducting training activities,
- teaching equipment necessary for the proper implementation of training programs,
- proper course of training and improvement in the field of health and safety,
- keeping documentation in the form of training programs, class logs, examination reports, and a register of issued certificates [3].

On the other hand, the employee is obliged to confirm in writing that he is familiar with the provisions and rules of occupational health and safety. The regulations provide for two types of training:

- Initial training-organized before the employee is allowed to work. Their goal is to provide the employee with the knowledge and skills necessary to perform work, consider the safety regulations and rules, and familiarize with the dangers of specific workplaces,
- Periodic training – they are repeated during the employment period. They aim to recall and consolidate knowledge in health and safety and familiarize participants with new technical and organizational solutions in this area. The frequency of this training depends on the type and conditions of work.

Initial training includes general and workplace training. General instruction should familiarize the employee with the Labor Code's health and safety regulations, in the work regulations, and with first aid principles. This training is carried out, before admission to work, by newly hired

employees, interns, student apprentices, and vocational school students employed for practical vocational training.

The general instruction is provided by an employee of the occupational health and safety service, a person performing this service's tasks at the employer's or an employer who performs such tasks himself. It can also be carried out by an employee designated by the employer, having the knowledge and skills, ensuring the proper implementation of the instruction program, and holding a current certificate of completion of the required training in health and safety at work. The training time must not be less than 90 minutes.

On-the-job training takes place at the workplace where the employee will work. Its purpose is to familiarize the employee with the risks in this position, methods of protection against threats, and safe work performance methods. It should include the following steps:

- an introductory conversation with the instructor (e.g., employee's supervisor, master, foreman) with an employee,
- demonstration and explanation by the instructor of all activities to be performed by an employee at the workplace while maintaining safe working methods,
- trial performance of activities by the employee and their possible correction by the instructor,
- independent work of an employee under the supervision of an instructor.

On-the-job training should end with a test of knowledge on safe work performance (e.g., in the form of a test). The positive passing of such a test is the basis for allowing an employee to work in a specific position. The duration of this training should depend on the employee's professional background, previous work experience, and the type of work and risks at the workplace where the employee is to be employed. The completion of the employee's general and job training should be confirmed by him in writing in the

"initial training card" and recorded in the employee's files [2].

Periodic training is provided for workers employed in blue-collar positions, employers, and other people managing employees, OHS service workers, administrative and office workers, and engineering and technical workers. The first periodic training of the employer and other people managing employees, particularly managers, masters, and foremen, should be held within six months from a work placement in these positions. The remaining groups of employees should undergo the first periodic training within 12 months.

Only those persons may be exempted from periodic training which:

- provide an up-to-date certificate of completion of the required periodic training with another employer during the period as mentioned above (6 or 12 months),
- persons who at the same time completed periodic training required for persons employed in positions belonging to a different group of positions, if the thematic scope of the training program on the current position corresponds to the training program applicable to the new position.

Periodic training may be organized and conducted by employers or, at their request, by organizational units conducting training activities in the field of occupational safety and health. Such a unit should be understood as:

- a lifelong learning facility, a practical training facility, a training, and professional development center,
- upper secondary school,
- research and development unit, university or other scientific institution,
- an association whose statutory goal is a related activity with occupational health and safety,
- a legal or natural person conducting educational activities by the provisions on the freedom of economic activity, if they

conduct training activities in the field of occupational health and safety [4].

Initial and periodic training programs, specifying the complicated subject matter, forms of implementation, and duration of the training, for individual job groups, are developed by the employer or in consultation with the employer – an organizational unit conducting training activities in the field of occupational health and safety, based on the developed training programs. Periodic training programs should be designed in such a way as to individualize the training as much as possible concerning the positions that exist at the employer's. Training programs based on which employee training is conducted should be kept and, if necessary, presented to the labor inspector during the inspection.

Periodic training may be conducted in the form of:

- course – lasting 8–16 teaching hours,
- seminar – covers not less than five teaching hours,
- guided self-education – it is understood as a form of training that enables obtaining, updating, or supplementing knowledge and skills in the field of occupational health and safety, based on materials provided by the training organizer, particularly with the use of mail, the Internet, while ensuring consultation with people who meet the requirements for lecturers.

Periodic training for workers in blue-collar positions in the construction industry should be carried out in the form of instructions for specific work positions, using elements of a lecture, discussion, and film. During the training, it is necessary to discuss the circumstances and causes of accidents at work characteristics (for the work performed by training participants) and conclude the discussed cases (preventing the probable occurrence of accidents at work).

Art. 2373 § 3 of the Labor Code provides that all training occurs during work and at the

employer's expense. There are no exceptions to this rule. Consequently, the employee is not obliged to participate in training courses organized outside of regular working hours. However, if the employee participates in the training outside of regular working hours, it should be treated as overtime work. In addition to training employees, the employer must provide employees with up-to-date occupational health and safety instructions regarding:

- technological processes used in the plant and the performance of work-related to accident hazards or health hazards to employees,
- operation of machines and other technical devices,
- handling materials harmful to health and dangerous.

In the scope of operating machines and other technical devices, the employee must

be familiar with their Technical and Start-up Documentation. The knowledge of this manual should be confirmed with the signature [2].

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