

Feature

Why is Occupational safety, Health and Environment (OSHE) important for Laos?



Mr Phonesavanh Xaypanya is the Managing Director of IndusTek Company Ltd, a leading supplier of safety equipment and industrial supplies, and the largest supplier of general protective equipment, providing full solution of OSHE training and consultancy in Laos.

Advertorial Desk

Vientiane Times interviews him regarding challenges and the growth of this business amid economic difficulties in Laos.

Q: What role does your company play in this industry?

A: Our company does not only provide safety equipment to factories and companies but provides consultancy and training to the industrial sector. We are constructing the first occupational safety training centre in Laos to provide job-related safety training which will be beneficial to employers and employees.

We provide consultancy to factories, notably those in the



of workers could face the risk of workplace accidents if no safety standards are applied to minimise those risks.

Established in 2016, our company started by providing equipment to various companies and factories. In principle, anyone

occur, it will directly impact on the factories.

Q: How can you promote occupational safety in Laos? Because if companies realise its importance, it could benefit your company as well.

A: In developed and industrial countries, occupational safety has been given top priority in all industrial projects. Laos is perceived as being at the start of the industrial sector.

Lack of occupational safety can impact the investment climate in Laos as investors will study if Laos attaches importance to this matter. The fact is that when foreign investors come to invest in Laos, they will employ local people and if occupational accidents occur, it will affect their businesses.

Q: How serious is the issue of occupational accidents in Laos? Do companies realise the importance of occupational safety?

A: We have to acknowledge that occupational safety culture is a new thing in our country. If no accidents happen, people will not realise the importance of work-related safety. I understand that the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has issued a decree relating to safety at workplaces and is in the process of enacting a law in this regard.

In developed countries, workers are properly protected. In Laos, much more needs to be done. For example, workers melting steel without protective equipment, which would be illegal in other countries. Those workers will face health consequence later in their lives.

work safety as a means to boost their outputs and profits. If a workplace accident occurs, the company or factory will need to spend on compensation and their business operations will be affected. Therefore, when foreign investors look for investment opportunities in Laos, they will study how safety standards at workplace and related laws are enforced in Laos. In principle, contractors will need to carry out occupational safety training before their project construction can take place. In big companies, they will have working safety officers to ensure all operations include workers' protection measures.

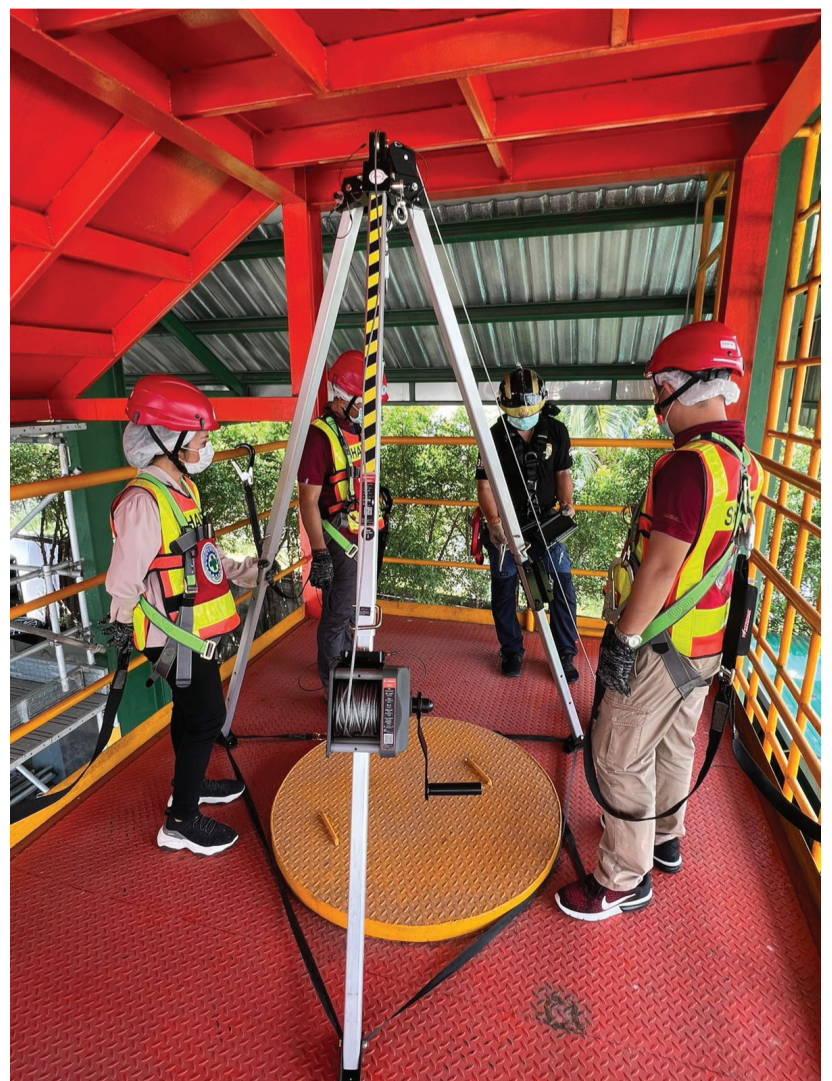
Q: Do you face challenges in operating this kind of business?

A: Indeed, I want more companies to be established in Laos so we can jointly promote safety at workplaces as this will bring real benefits to national development.

We faced some challenges during Covid 19 pandemic, but not much as our company is related to health, and occupational and environmental safety.

Q: Is it expensive for a company to invest in occupational safety? Why many Lao companies do not pay attention to this matter?

A: Indeed, measures to ensure safety do not require large expenditure. A company requires to spend less than 1 percent of their total investment on this issue but many companies do not spend much on this issue because of a lack of awareness. I would say that occupational safety culture is a new thing in our country and we need time to campaign in this matter. Our company is trying to encourage companies in Laos to realise the significance of this issue.



tourism, energy, mining and food processing sectors. Occupational safety is essential for sustainable development as workers' protection can benefit both wage earners and employers.

Factories that employ a lot

working at a height of 1.8 metres or higher requires safety equipment because an occupational accident at this height can lead to loss of life or disability.

Occupational safety is important for all factories because if accidents

