

Impact of Safety Committees on Organizational Safety and Health:

(A case of Listed Companies at the Nairobi Stock Exchange)

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to examine the impact of Safety Committees on organizational safety and health of Listed Companies at the Nairobi Stock Exchange (NSE). In particular it was to establish the extent to which Safety Committees in these companies have impacted on occupational safety and health. Upon the enactment of the Safety and Health Committees at the workplace through Legal Notice Number 31 of 14th May, 2004, no such study has been undertaken in Listed Companies at the NSE. This study sought to establish the extent to which Safety Committees affect accident rates, man-hours lost, work injury compensation cost and employee safety awareness. The target population was all listed companies at the NSE as at 31st March, 2009. The study was carried out from Nairobi where over ninety percent of the head offices of these companies are situated. A census method and a descriptive research design were used to evaluate the factors in the study. Data was obtained by use of questionnaire method. Face to face interview, electronic mail, drop and pick methods were used to collect data. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel Computer Packages. Frequency tables, Cross-tabulations, Percentages and Charts were used to present the results.

The findings showed that Safety Committees in Listed Companies at the NSE contributed greatly in ensuring safety and health through increased employee training on safety issues (93%), reduced occupational accident rates (84%) and enhanced employee safety awareness (90%). The study confirmed that a safety committee was the right tool for promotion of safe and healthy practices at the workplace. Continuous safety and health training programs that are in tandem with change of technology at the workplace are recommended for these Committees. Further

studies are recommended on such other factors (organizational culture, management commitment and support, employee recognition and resource allocation) that also affect safety and health in order to improve on safety and health at the workplace. The findings of this study will benefit various groups including the Board of Directors and Top Management of organizations, Safety Committees, the Directorate of Occupational Health and Safety Services, future researchers and academicians among others.