

Does Occupational Health and Safety Training have Effect on Employees? A case of Selected Hotels in Kenya

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Abstract: Occupational health and training is an essential element in maintaining a healthy and safe work place as it provides employees with the knowledge that has impact on improved performance. Both induction and refresher training have been associated with reduced cases of accidents at work place. This study assessed the impact of occupational health and safety training on employees' performance in selected hotels in Kenya, Busia County. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Purposive sampling was used in selecting a sample size of seven hotels while stratified random sampling was employed in selecting the respondents. Yamane (1967) formula was used in calculating a sample size of 154 respondents. Data was collected using open ended questionnaire and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results indicated that induction training does not necessarily reduce accidents in work place however refresher training was found to increase productivity. The findings will benefit the hotel employees, hotel owners and policy makers.

Keywords: Training, Employees, Occupational Health and Safety, Performance.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Most of accidents at work place are caused by lack of knowledge related to occupational health and safety. According to International Labor Organization report of 2017, over 2.78 million workers die each year as a result of occupational accidents and work related diseases. This cost global economy 3.94 of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Jozan *et al.*, 2023)

Thobora and Thuita (2015) emphasize that employers have a fundamental responsibility to protect employees from workplace hazards by providing comprehensive training on occupational health and safety (OHS). This includes instruction on safe systems of work, proper handling of equipment and substances, effective use of health and safety control measures, and adherence to personal protective equipment (PPE) guidelines. Additionally, employees should be educated on accident reporting procedures, emergency response protocols, and their individual responsibilities in maintaining a safe working environment. Through continuous training, organizations can minimize workplace accidents, enhance employee well-being, and promote a culture of safety and compliance.

Effective occupational health and safety (OHS) training enhances employees' awareness, technical knowledge, and

problem-solving competencies, enabling them to identify, assess, and mitigate workplace hazards proactively (Labetubun and Dewi 2022). By integrating safety education into routine operations, organizations not only comply with legal and regulatory requirements but also cultivate a workplace culture that prioritizes employee well-being. Training is not merely a compliance requirement but a strategic investment that enhances operational efficiency, reduces absenteeism due to work-related injuries, and improves overall workforce morale and productivity (Demeke, 2015).

Moreover, workplace training fosters a culture of accountability and collective responsibility, where employees actively contribute to maintaining a secure work environment. By reinforcing safe work practices, training enhances individual efficiency and confidence in handling occupational risks while simultaneously improving overall workplace safety. This, in turn, leads to increased productivity, reduced absenteeism due to work-related injuries, and greater organizational efficiency.

Ultimately, investing in OHS training not only safeguards employees' well-being but also strengthens the organization's commitment to safety, fostering long-term sustainability, improved performance and operational success (HSE, 2019).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

➤ *Theory of Planned Behavior*

The study was guided by the Theory of planned behavior developed by Ajzen (Ajzen,1991).The theory explains how employees behavior is driven by intentions which are influenced by attitudes subjective norms and perceived control.

In terms of attitude, OHS training helps employees to understand the benefits of safety practices which leads to increased compliance with safety procedures reducing accidents and thereby boosting productivity. The employees are expected to conform to safe behavior which leads to improved performance at work place. In relation to subjective norms, OHS training emphasizes that employees are expected to act safely. This helps the employees to conform to expected behavior that creates a safety culture which leads to deduced accidents and improvement of team performance. Finally in relation to perceived behavioral control, OHS training increase employees' confidence and skills in handling hazards. This makes the employee to feel in control which encourages safer and effective work habits at work place.

➤ *Employee Training*

Training is a crucial process that equips employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to function effectively within the frameworks and standards established by management (Osei *et al.*, 2015). It serves as a vital tool for both individual and organizational growth, as it enhances employee's performance by improving their competencies, abilities, and overall workplace behavior (April, 2018). Well-trained employees are more confident, efficient, and capable of adapting to workplace demands, ultimately contributing to increased productivity. The two main approaches in occupational education is through induction and refresher course training.

• *Induction Training on Occupational Health and Safety*

OHS induction training is a strategic investment to any organization as it encourages safety, saves money and enhances employee engagement and performance. Integrating new employees in a work place helps them to adopt to the new work environment and their jobs. The effectiveness of an organization is promoted through employee orientation from the start of their employment. (Fard, 2013).Employees receive an induction from co-workers from the organization in which new employees learn how to function effectively within the organization culture by obtaining the information, values and behavioral skills associated with their new role in the organization (Karade, Gankar and Sam, 2015). Hughes and Ferrett (2016) stress the need for mandatory safety training before employees commence work, allowing them to familiarize themselves with occupational risks, protective measures, and best safety practices.

Induction training will equip employees with the necessary skills, knowledge, and techniques to perform their tasks efficiently, ultimately contributing to business growth and improved service delivery. Induction training in OHS

will help New employees learn how to identify hazards and how to use safety equipment. This will minimize the risk of accidents, protecting both employees and hotel's assets. The induction training will make the New employees will feel valued because their safety is prioritized. This will lead to employees' loyalty, sense of belonging and reduction of turn over.

• *Refresher Training on Occupational Health and Safety*

Refresher training ensures that the employees retain key health and safety information, improves long term compliance and safe working habits. Ebbinghaus forgetting Curve describes the rate at which information is forgotten over time when there is no attempt to review it. His research indicated that regular exposure to material through refresher courses will ensure that people retain critical knowledge and skills (Loftus, 1985).Its estimated that employees forget 50% of what they learn within one hour, 80% of what they learn after two days and 90% of what they learn after thirty one days (Averell and Heathcote (2011) Refresher training will also help the employees to maintain competence and understand Health and safety policies and procedures in work places. The employees will be able to address the knowledge gaps that can prevent accidents and injuries.

Refresher training is a systematic and continuous process designed to equip employees with the essential skills, knowledge, and competencies required to perform their roles effectively while maintaining workplace safety standards (Demeke, 2015). Within the field of occupational health and safety (OHS), training is an ongoing requirement rather than a one-time initiative, ensuring that employees stay informed about emerging risks, regulatory changes, and industry best practices. Additionally, continuous OHS training ensures that employees remain updated on emerging risks, evolving industry standards, and best practices for accident prevention.

➤ *Occupational Health and Safety Training Program*

Most developed countries implement occupational health and safety training programs for workers in order to encourage safe behavior in reducing the cost of occupational accidents and their negative outcomes (Burke *et al.*, 2006) According to Armstrong (2014), well-structured training programs enable employees to become proficient in their roles more quickly, increasing their confidence and effectiveness. A well-structured OHS training program also empowers employees to identify workplace hazards, apply appropriate safety measures, and respond effectively to emergencies. It promotes a proactive safety culture where workers are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding workplace health and safety. Furthermore, managers and supervisors receive targeted training to enhance compliance with legal and organizational safety regulations, improve risk management strategies, and strengthen accident prevention measures.

To maximize effectiveness, training programs should be tailored to the organization's specific needs, taking into account the nature of work, industry-specific hazards, and employees' experience levels. This may include practical demonstrations, simulations, workshops, and refresher

courses to reinforce knowledge. Incorporating OHS training into onboarding processes ensures that new employees understand safety protocols from the beginning. Ultimately, continuous and well-structured training benefits both employees and employers by enhancing productivity, ensuring compliance with safety regulations, and fostering a safe, healthy, and efficient work environment. Effective training programs equip employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to identify, assess, and mitigate

workplace hazards, thereby reducing the likelihood of accidents and injuries (HSE, 2019). Through continuous education on safety procedures, employees develop a proactive approach to risk management, ensuring compliance with established safety standards and regulations that leads to improved performance.

➤ *Conceptual Framework*

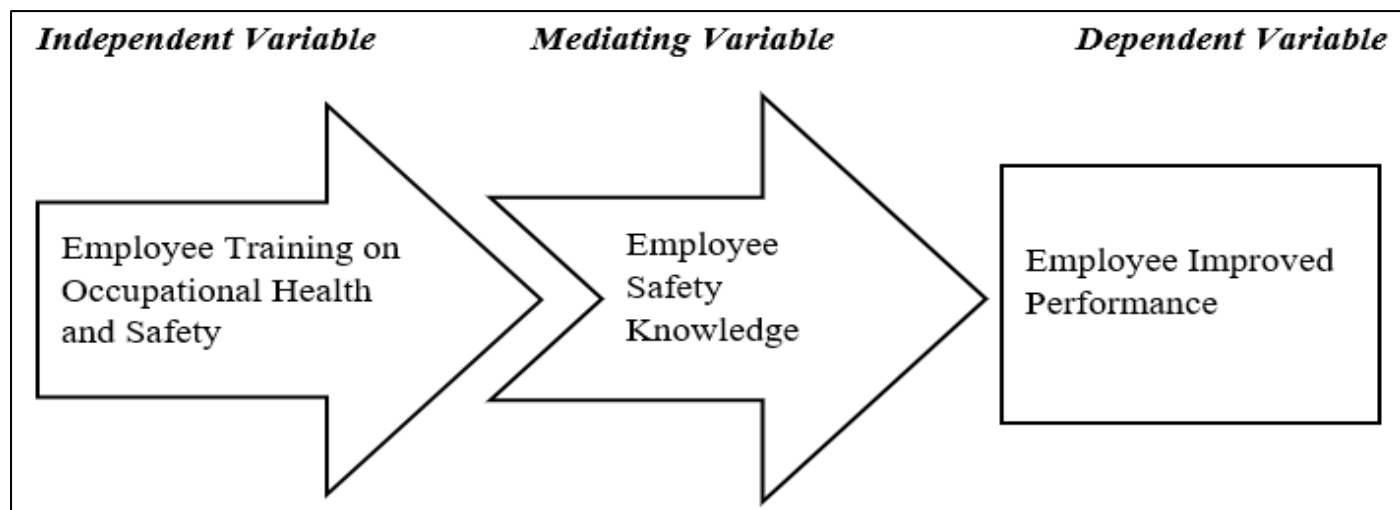


Fig 1 Conceptual Framework

III. METHODOLOGY

➤ *Research Design*

Descriptive survey design were used. This design was used to provide a clear and detailed picture of a phenomenon as it exists in a natural setting without manipulating the variables. It's useful for understanding the characteristics of a population or event. It helps organizations identify, assess and document workplace hazards, employee behaviors and safety conditions. By gathering data on employee perceptions and behaviors related to safety, descriptive research helps refine safety training programs.

➤ *Study Location*

The study was carried out in selected hotels within Busia County. The County occupies an area of 1,694.5 km². Its located in the extreme western province of Kenya, bordered to the north by Bungoma, to the east of Kakamega, south east of Siaya, south west by Lake Victoria, and to the west of the Republic of Uganda. It is situated between 0° and 0° 45° North and 34° 25° East. The closest access point is Kisumu International Airport, which is located 112 kilometers from the County. This county acts as the gateway to East Africa.

➤ *Target Population*

This study focused on managers and supervisors, who play a crucial role in implementing employee training, as well as cooks in the food and beverage sector and housekeeping staff in the selected hotels across Busia County. These groups were selected due to their increased exposure to occupational hazards, particularly those related to handling equipment and machinery. By targeting this population, the study aimed to

comprehensively evaluate the training practices within the hotel industry.

➤ *Sampling Procedures and Techniques*

To identify the study sites, purposive sampling was utilized. This method allowed the researcher to deliberately select hotels that provided relevant insights into occupational health and safety practices. To ensure a diverse and representative sample of hotel employees, probability sampling techniques were applied. Stratified sampling was first used to categorize participants into distinct subgroups based on department (food and beverage or housekeeping) and job designation (managers/supervisors, cooks, and housekeepers). This approach ensured adequate representation of different employee groups, enhancing the validity and reliability of the study. Within each stratum, simple random sampling was then employed to select participants.

➤ *Sample Size*

The sample size of the hotels were selected as follows: seven out of the 14 establishments (which practiced occupational health and safety) representing 50% of the total ($7/14 \times 100 = 50\%$). Following purposive sampling, the target population was stratified based on department and designation.

The sample size of respondents was established using Sample Size Tables based on the Yamane Formula (1967). With a Confidence Level of 95% and $P=0.5$, the $\pm 5\%$ precision level was chosen to ensure a high level of accuracy in the results, given the manageable size of the population.

➤ *Research Instrument*

An open ended questionnaire was constructed which examine the impact of occupational Health and safety training on employee performance. Instructions for completing individual sections appeared at the beginning of the questionnaire. The questionnaire had structured questions inform of a Likert scale that ranging from 1-5. 5- Strongly agree, 4 – Agree, 3 – Neutral, 2 – Disagree and 1 strongly disagree.

➤ *Testing for Validity and Reliability*

• *Validity*

In this study, content validity was employed to determine whether the research instrument effectively

captured all relevant aspects of occupational health and safety in the hospitality industry (Silverman, 2014). To establish content validity, the study relied on expert evaluations from occupational health professionals and hotel management experts. These professionals reviewed the survey instrument to assess whether the questions were clear, relevant, and adequately covered the scope of occupational health and safety concerns in hotel workplaces. Their feedback was instrumental in refining the questionnaire, eliminating ambiguities, and ensuring that all critical elements were represented.

• *Reliability*

Cronbach's alpha (measure of internal consistency) was used to measure the reliability of instrument.

Table 1 Reliability and Validity

Scale	Cronbach Alpha	Items
Occupational Health & safety (OHS) Training and employee performance	0.762	6
Employee Performance Indicators	0.782	4
Average (All Scale)	0.772	10

The average Cronbach Alpha value, 0.772 indicated that the tool was informative sufficient in collecting the required information. This was greater than the minimum 0.6, an indication that the questionnaire items were reliable (Kothari, 2014).

➤ *Data Collection Methods and Procedures*

Quantitative primary data was collected using questionnaires that were filled by managers or supervisors, cooks and housekeeping employees whereas secondary data was obtained from journals and internet. The researcher employed drop and pick technique where the self-administered questionnaires were dropped to relevant departments. The researcher instructed the respondents on how to complete the survey questionnaire and the deadline for filling them. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a consent letter.

➤ *Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures*

Data analysis for this study was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, Version 27. A combination of descriptive and inferential statistical (Chi square) techniques was applied to ensure a comprehensive interpretation of the collected data. Descriptive statistics were employed analyze the influence of occupational health and safety performance, of the employees. Inferential statistical method (Chi-Square test) was employed to determine the associations between induction training and reduced cases of accidents as well as association between refresher courses and accident reduction in work place.

➤ *Ethical Considerations*

- **Ethical approval:** research was reviewed and approved by the Ethics review commission before data collection began.
- **Informed consent:** participants voluntarily participated in the study. They received clear information about the purpose of the study, the right to withdraw and any potential risks and benefits of participation.
- **Confidentiality and anonymity:** The privacy of respondents was protected since the information they gave was not disclosed to any members of staff or to outsiders. The researcher guaranteed anonymity of respondents by advising them not to write their names on the questionnaires to protect their identity and by signing nondisclosure statement.

IV. RESULTS

➤ *Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) Training and Employee Performance*

To understand how occupational health and safety influenced employees' performance, various indicator variables were selected. Among the OHS used for analysis included; induction training of employees to OHS measures and provision of safety refresher training. To discern the corresponding influence of these OHS indicators on performance, employee performance indicators used included reduced cases of accidents and productivity increase.

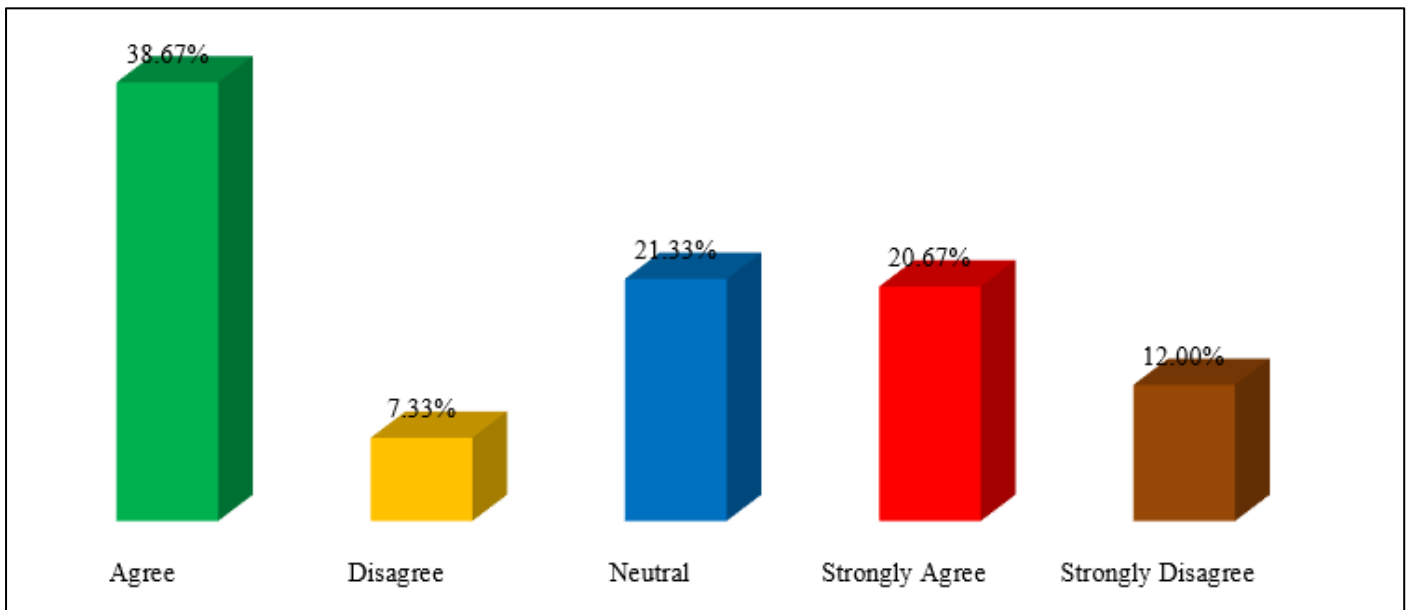


Fig 2 Provision of OHS induction Training in various Hotels

The above figure indicates that most respondents (38.67%) agreed that they underwent induction on OHS in their various hotels.

Table 2 Association between Provision of OHS Induction Training and Reduced cases of Accidents

Chi-Square test			
	Value	Df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.125 ^a	16	.664
Likelihood Ratio	14.260	16	.579
N of Valid Cases	150		

Since the p-value is 0.664, greater than alpha value 0.05, implying that the association between the OHS induction programs and occurrences of accidents within the hotel

settings are independent i.e. induction does not necessarily reduce accidents.

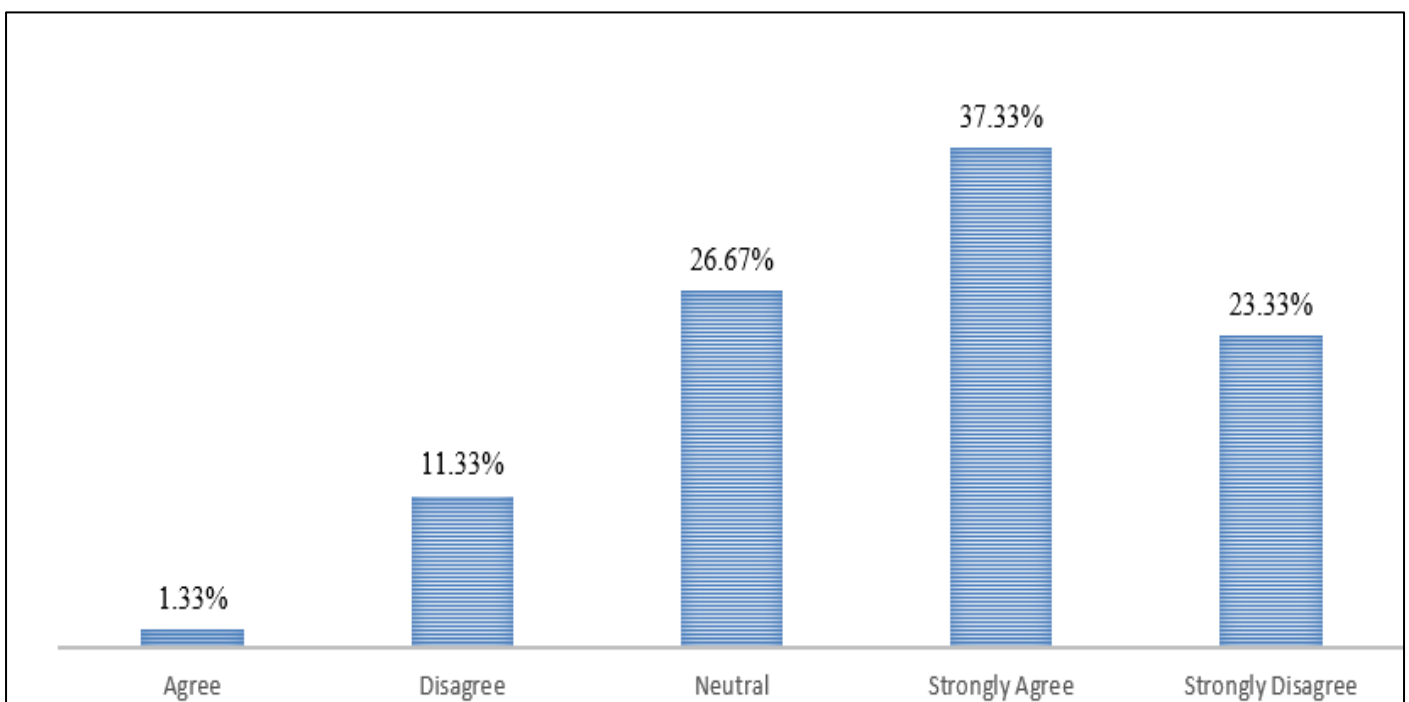


Fig 3 Association between Provision of Refresher Courses and increased Productivity

From the above figure, 37.33% of the respondents strongly agreed that those who underwent refresher training increased productivity since they are updated on their skills which enhance performance.

V. DISCUSSIONS

Among the OHS used for analysis included; induction of employees to OHS measures, and provision of safety refresher courses. To understand the corresponding influence of these OHS indicators on performance, employee performance indicators used included reduced accidents and productivity increase. Descriptive statistic test were used to investigate whether provision of OHS induction training reduced cases of accidents while a chi square test of independence was used to investigate if the corresponding associations between provision of OHS refresher training and employees' increased productivity. The study findings (Table 2) showed a p-value was $0.664 > \alpha$ value 0.05, implying that the association between the OHS induction training and occurrences of accidents within the hotel settings are independent an implication that induction training does not necessarily reduce accidents in work place. This finding is supported by the study of Katsuro et.al (2018) who found out that induction training did not eliminate potential hazards in work place.

The study (Figure 3) also revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that refresher training increased productivity which enhanced performance. The findings are in line with Thobora and Thuita (2015), who highlighted the importance of employee training and awareness in ensuring workplace safety. Their study stressed the need for employees to be well-informed about occupational safety practices, including proper task execution, correct handling of equipment and materials, and compliance with health and safety guidelines. Additionally, they emphasized the necessity of training employees on the appropriate selection, use, and maintenance of personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as accident reporting and emergency response procedures. Promoting worker awareness of their responsibilities in identifying and reporting potential hazards plays a key role in minimizing workplace risks.

By incorporating these safety elements into workplace training programs, organizations can reduce accident rates, enhance employee morale, and improve overall productivity. A strong safety culture fosters employee confidence and commitment, leading to better job performance and lower turnover rates. Furthermore, investing in occupational safety and health training not only protects employees but also drives organizational success by reducing costs associated with workplace accidents, compensation claims, and lost working hours. Ultimately, prioritizing workplace safety benefits both employees and employers, creating a more efficient and productive work environment.

VI. CONCLUSION

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) training was also examined, revealing that majority of the respondents (38.6%)

agreed and refresher courses significantly increased productivity. However, a p-value > 0.05 indicated that despite improving safety, induction training sessions did not show impact on overall reduction of cases of accidents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ *To Determine the impact of Occupational Health & Safety Training on Employee Performance in Selected Hotels:*

- Hotel management must conduct a training needs assessment so as to identify specific safety risks in each department. The training contents should be tailored to anticipated workplace hazards for each section.
- During induction training, new employees should be oriented on company's OHS policies and procedures.
- There should be regular refresher training courses and continuous learning. This should be done quarterly or annually to update on new risks, tools or regulations

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