

Headline	Practices Code to prevent AIDS among the 3Ms		
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Practices Code to prevent AIDS among the 3Ms

Cheang Poh Hwa

LABUAN: The 3M (Mobile Men with Money) are more predisposed to HIV/AIDS as well as drug and alcohol abuse.

Department of Occupational Safety and Health (Dosh) Director-General, Datuk Dr Ir Johari Basri, said this when officiating at the Practices Code in the prevention and management of HIV/AIDS as well as drug and alcohol abuse at the premises of Schlumberger, an oil and gas service provider, here.

"Offshore workers often have to work far away from families and friends for long stretches. With lucrative pay, tiredness and loneliness, the Practices Code is to raise their awareness on the risk and to implement a holistic approach," he said.

Schlumberger was the first private entity taking part in the programme under the auspices of Dosh.

Company Director, Khaleel Ahmad Miandad, said the management took a serious view of any employee and contractor having an issue with substances abuse.

However, there were no instances of HIV/AIDS in its workforce so far, according to him.

Dr Johari said drug abuse could affect the safety of fellow workers.

"A small accident in an O&G facility could have serious repercussions or disaster in the surrounding vicinity," he said.

On this reason, Dr Johari hailed Schlumberger for the initiative to embrace

the Practices Code.

"Although offshore companies are covered by laws under the occupational safety and health, Dosh will set up a mechanism to monitor them closely and systematically," he said.

As to whether a HIV/AIDS victim could be sacked by the employer, he said the law has protection on the rights of the sufferer.

"The important thing is not to stigmatise the victim but to give social support, and prevention is still the best way."

According to Dosh records, 159,000 industrial accident injuries are reported each year. Active enforcement and investigation to prevent recurring incidences is the way to reduce the statistics.

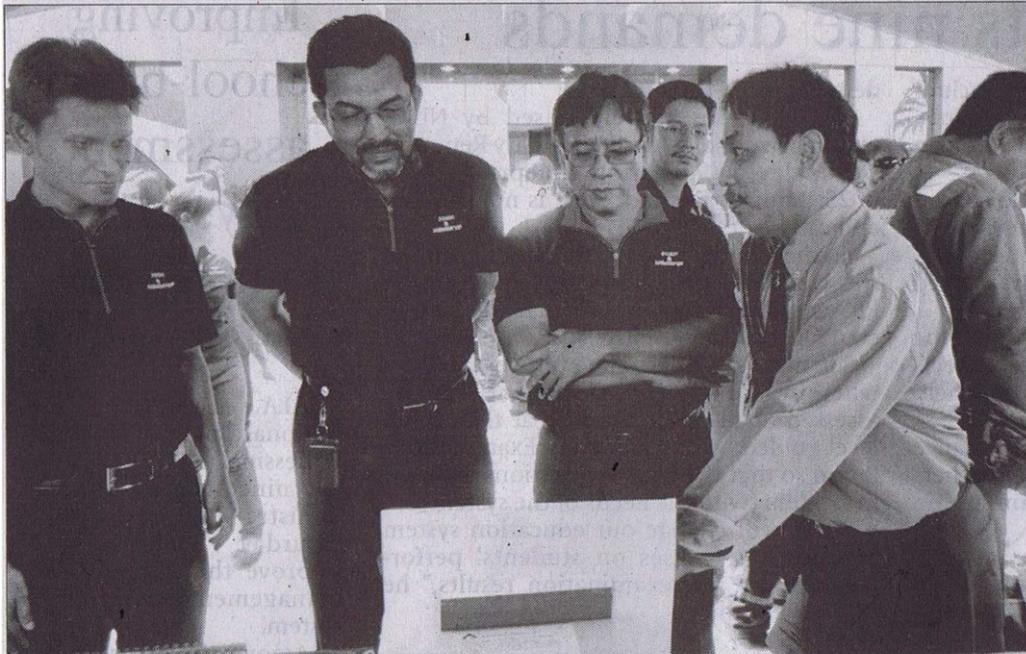
"Our role is not to find faults but solutions. The department conducts more than 150,000 random checks on machinery, plants and premises of workplaces a year," Dr Johari pointed out.

Dosh has collected RM700,000 in compound fines this year. Two hundred cases are still pending in court for various offences under occupational safety and health.

To another question on the Petronas oil tanker blast, he said the investigation was expected to be wrapped up in a month or two, adding that it involved very complicated technical aspects.

Dr Johari was accompanied by the department's Labuan Director, Kasman Nasir, and Dr Sri Puvaneswari Selvaraj during the event, witnessed by a large gathering of employees.

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Dr Johari (second from right) visiting an exhibition on AIDS/HIV set up by NGO Kasih. Beside him are Kha'leel and Kasman.