

Safety at Work Charter 2000 in Italy

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The Italian Ministry of Labour unveiled its proposed **Safety at Work Charter 2000** at a national conference held last December¹. The Charter's contents and aims were worked out jointly with official occupational safety and health agencies, trade unions and employers' organizations. In the past three years, the two sides of industry have set up area joint industrial bodies for health and safety under inter-branch agreements to coordinate awareness-building campaigns, training and dispute mediation activities.

The "Charter" sets out to promote the practical application of legislation through three-cornered consultations to identify the best and most efficient ways of preventing work-related accidents and diseases with the highest safety standards for workers.

The government and social partners settled on a joint approach and "wish list" at the Conference, and will be sitting down together after 100 days to transform them into firm undertakings. The "Charter 2000" measures cut across a range of areas.

1. Completing existing legislation and bringing it into line with Community directives and the salient features of the Italian productive apparatus (a large SME base).
2. Completion of the national health plan 1998-2000 under which a package of health and safety at work information, training, assistance and monitoring measures will be rolled out through area preventive health departments. Nationally, tighter coordination is planned between all relevant government agencies (the Labour Ministry, the Health Ministry, the ISPESL - National Institute for Preventive Occupational Safety, etc.) and an overhaul of all public responsibilities.
3. A raft of incentives for business (cuts in compulsory employment accident and occupational disease insurance premiums, streamlined safety procedures) and training measures for young people and workers. Specific occupational health and safety modules will form a part of all compulsory education and training courses up to the age of 18. There will also be specific measures for those in vocational training, continuing training, apprenticeships, and agency workers, as well as for certain categories of workers in specific or high-risk jobs (building sites, ports, chemical works, etc.). The Charter sets training certification requirements and gives a key role to the area joint industrial bodies (set up by the unions and employers) in all these measures.
4. There will be more workers' OSH reps (*RLSs*) with a wider role in all workplaces. They can call on "effective control instruments" and have disputes mediated by the area joint industrial bodies, sue in

court, and, with trade unions, sue for civil damages in prosecutions for health and safety offences. The Charter also provides that small firms will be covered by district workers' OSH reps (*RLSTs*).

5. Finally, public supervisory and enforcement activities will take a more preventive approach, with more checks on whether safety standards are being really applied, and more available information being circulated. The INAIL (the national employment accident and occupational disease insurance institute) has pledged to provide the public authorities and social partners with weekly statistical reports on work-related health claims broken down by sector and region. ■

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¹ 3 to 5 December 1999, in Genoa, supported and participated in by the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

The full **Safety at Work Charter 2000** is on the Italian Ministry of Labour website: (www.minlavoro.it) and the CISL's health and safety at work site (www.626.cisl.it, on the page: *informazioni/dossier documenti a cura del Punto Incontro CISL / Carta 2000*).