



CICA Health and Safety Working Group Position Paper

**“Occupational Safety and Health in the
Construction Industry”**

Date: November 2025



1. Executive Summary

The construction industry is cornerstone of global economic and social development. Yet, it remains one of the sectors with the highest occupational risks. Ensuring the safety, health and wellbeing of all workers is a non-negotiable principle and a shared responsibility among all stakeholders.

CICA reaffirms its commitment to a **“Vision Zero” approach** – striving for zero fatalities, injuries and work-related illness – by promoting a **strong preventive culture, robust enforcement of laws and adoption of international best practices.**

CICA advocates going beyond legal compliance by **embedding health, safety, and wellbeing as integral parts of project planning, execution, and management.** A safe and healthy workforce is essential to achieving productivity, quality, sustainability, and social responsibility across the global construction value chain.

2. Context and Relevance

The construction industry employs almost **8% of the worldwide workforce** (roughly 250 million people)¹ and contributes significantly to economic growth. However, it also records one of the highest rates of occupational accidents and diseases globally.

The world is changing rapidly—through **technological innovation, climate change, social transformation,** and **new forms of work.** These shifts demand that the sector continuously adapts its safety, health and wellbeing standards.

Protecting the **physical and mental wellbeing** of workers is not only a moral obligation but also a decisive factor in enhancing **productivity, reputation, and long-term resilience** of the construction industry.

3. CICA’s Position

CICA maintains that :

1. **Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is a fundamental right**, aligned with the International Labour Organization (ILO)² and World Health Organization (WHO)³ principles.
2. **Responsibility is shared:** contractors, clients, designers, and governments must jointly ensure safe and healthy working environments.
3. **Prevention takes precedence over reaction:** proactive investment in training, safe design, equipment, and culture is more effective than responding to incidents.

¹ [ILO Monitor: Covid-19 and the world of the work, 2020.](#)

² International Labor Organization: [Safety and Health in Construction, 2022.](#)

³ World Health Organization: [Occupational Health Aspects of Construction Works, 1983.](#)



4. **Digitalization and innovation** - including BIM, IoT, AI, and sensor technologies - are powerful enablers of improved safety outcomes on construction sites.
5. **Mental health and wellbeing** are inseparable from occupational safety and require equal attention.
6. **Adaptation to climate change** and emerging risks (e.g., extreme weather, new materials, and work patterns) must be integrated into OSH strategies.

4. CICA's Recommendations

To Governments, International Organizations, and Clients

- Enforce and strengthen OSH regulations, ensuring clarity, practicality, and international harmonization.
- Integrate **health, safety, and wellbeing criteria** as core elements in **public procurement and project evaluation**.
- Promote “**prevention through design**” principles in project planning and engineering.
- Support **continuous OSH training** at all levels of the value chain, including leadership, site management, and workforce.
- Encourage the **use of digital tools** for real-time monitoring, data analysis, and predictive risk management.
- Provide clear guidance and **training on climate-related risks**, including extreme weather events and emerging occupational hazards.
- Include **mental health** in all occupational safety policies.
- Promote **data transparency and harmonization**, developing comparable indicators across countries and companies (e.g., lost workdays, exposure rates).

To CICA Members, Contractors, and Industry Associations

- Establish and maintain **certified safety management systems** (e.g., ISO 45001).
- Ensure that **subcontractors and small enterprises** are fully integrated into the contractor's safety management framework.
- Develop **mandatory and continuous training programs** for all personnel, from workers to executives.
- Strengthen **worker participation** through active safety and wellbeing committees.
- Exchange **best practices and lessons learned** across CICA members and national associations.
- Promote a **culture of prevention** where safety leadership is visible, accountable, and measured.



5. Conclusion

CICA reiterates that **no construction project justifies endangering the life, health, or wellbeing of any worker**. A safer construction industry is not only a moral imperative - it is also a driver of productivity, sustainability, and competitiveness.

CICA is committed to collaborating with **international organizations, governments, and industry partners** to advance a **global culture of safety, health, and wellbeing** in construction—ensuring that every worker returns home safely at the end of each day.



The Confederation of International Contractors' Associations (CICA) is a non-profit organization founded in Tokyo in 1974 with headquarters in Paris, France. Its mission is to serve, promote and highlight the image of the construction industry around the world. It seeks to reduce the infrastructure gap in the world, improving the people's quality of life. CICA gathers associations of contractors of any sizes from all around the globe. CICA is liaising with the development finance institutions and main providers of contracts such as FIDIC or NEC.



Annex – Vision Zero from ISSA

Extract from presentation by Prof. Karl-Heinz Noetel at Vision Zero seminar in Zambia September 2023:

Safety at work is crucial for several reasons:

- 1) Protection of employees: Safety measures ensure the physical well-being of employees, preventing accidents, injuries, and illnesses. This helps in maintaining a healthy workforce and reducing absenteeism.
- 2) Legal compliance: Governments and regulatory bodies have established laws and regulations to ensure workplace safety. Employers are legally obligated to provide a safe working environment and can face severe penalties if they fail to comply.
- 3) Productivity and efficiency: When employees feel safe and secure at work, they are more likely to be focused, motivated, and productive. Safety measures such as proper training, safe equipment, and protocols can help prevent interruptions, accidents, and downtime, leading to increased efficiency.
- 4) Reputation and employee retention: A workplace that prioritizes safety creates a positive reputation among employees, customers, and the public. This can attract and retain talented individuals who value their well-being and seek employment in organizations that prioritize safety.
- 5) Cost savings: Workplace accidents and injuries can result in significant financial losses for both employees and employers. Medical expenses, workers' compensation claims, legal fees, and potential lawsuits can be avoided or minimized by implementing effective safety measures.
- 6) Compliance with industry standards: Many industries have specific safety standards and certifications that organizations must adhere to. Meeting these standards not only ensures compliance but also demonstrates a commitment to safety.
- 7) Moral responsibility: Employers have a moral obligation to provide a safe working environment for their employees. Every individual has the right to work without fear of harm or injury, and it is the responsibility of employers to fulfill this obligation.



ISSA Estimate: Every year, Worldwide, there are 337 million accidents at work, 160 million occupational diseases.

Based on estimates from the [International Labor Organization \(ILO\)](#), at least 60,000 fatal accidents occur each year on construction sites worldwide. The construction sector accounts for approximately one in every six fatal accidents at work annually.

CICA