

# CASH - An innovative approach to sustainable OSH improvement at workplace

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## KEY WORDS

Developing economies; health and safety; workplace

## SUMMARY

*Occupational health department of a large private enterprise located in India launched Project CASH - Change Agents for Safety and Health, at manufacturing units of the enterprise to bring about a positive change in work environment and improvement in work practices to reduce occupational health risk. Multidisciplinary teams of change agents were constituted and were given intensive training inputs. Reduction in exposure to noise, dust and heat stress were identified as specific objectives after a baseline survey of the work environment. Occupational safety and health knowledge and training was imparted to all field personnel to improve their work practices and attitudes. The focus of the actions was on engineering control measures and process engineering changes necessary for workplace improvement. Noise levels were reduced by an average of more than 9dBA in most of the top ten high noise locations. Out of two locations identified for dust exposure, one was fully eliminated and dust levels at other location were significantly reduced. Heat stress was reduced in all three identified locations with an average reduction of more than 3°C in WBGT levels. Thus, final evaluation of workplace environments revealed significant reduction in exposure to all identified agents, viz noise, dust and heat fulfilling the project objectives. Educating and empowering the team led to reduction of occupational health risks in the work environment. There was positive attitudinal and behavioural change in safety and occupational health awareness & practices among employees. The monetary savings resulting from improvements far outweighed the investments. Success of this pilot project was followed up with further similar projects and their number has grown in geometric proportion for the last three years indicating the sustainability of the project.*