

The Legal Framework Governing Occupational Health Prevention and Safety in the Workplace Environment in Algeria

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Abstract

Occupational health prevention and workplace safety constitute some of the most important safeguards established by law to protect workers from the various hazards they may encounter while performing their duties. Although work is a means of production and of achieving social and economic stability, it may simultaneously constitute a source of occupational risks affecting workers' health as well as their physical and psychological well-being, particularly in light of the development of production methods and the increasing diversity of machinery and materials used within institutions.

The Algerian legislator has attached particular importance to the field of occupational health prevention, workplace safety, and occupational medicine through the enactment of Law No. 88-07 concerning Occupational Health Prevention, Safety, and Occupational Medicine, in addition to complementary regulatory texts, most notably Executive Decree No. 91-05 concerning the general protection rules applicable to health preservation and safety in the workplace, and Executive Decree No. 93-120 concerning the organization of occupational medicine. These legal texts establish a set of obligations incumbent upon the employer, including the provision of occupational health and safety conditions in the workplace, the submission of workers to medical supervision, and compliance with inspections conducted by the Labour Inspectorate.

Keywords: occupational health prevention, workplace safety, healthcare institutions, occupational safety, operations management.

Introduction

Healthcare institutions are among the organizations that require the most precise organizational systems due to the nature of their activities, which integrate medical, administrative, technical, and logistical aspects. They involve multiple stakeholders, including management, physicians, nurses, laboratory technicians, safety officers, human resources personnel, cleaning teams, and logistics staff. This multiplicity of actors makes the management process more complex, particularly when it relies on paper-based documentation, manual records, or unstructured communication.

Healthcare institutions are also closely associated with the field of occupational health prevention, workplace safety, and occupational medicine, as they constitute work environments

in which workers and employees may be exposed to various occupational hazards, whether health-related, technical, or organizational. Therefore, protecting workers' health and ensuring their safety within the workplace is not an optional matter but rather a legal obligation imposed upon the employer, who is required to provide a safe working environment, comply with preventive regulations, organize medical examinations, and adopt the necessary measures to prevent occupational accidents and diseases.

The Algerian legislator has paid particular attention to occupational health prevention, workplace safety, and occupational medicine through a set of legal and regulatory provisions aimed at protecting workers from occupational hazards and requiring employers to implement the necessary measures to ensure safety in the workplace. However, the effectiveness of these provisions depends not only on the existence of the legal framework but also on the ability of institutions to implement them in practice and to organize their application in a manner that enables effective monitoring, supervision, and timely intervention.

In practice, many institutions, particularly healthcare institutions, encounter several challenges in safety and operations management. These include weak coordination among departments, difficulties in monitoring accidents and risks, irregular inspection of safety equipment, the absence of accurate performance indicators, delays in handling incident reports, and difficulties in managing inventory and resources. These challenges become more pronounced when institutions rely on traditional methods that do not provide real-time information or clear reports to support managerial decision-making.

The significance of this study lies in its integration of a legal dimension concerning the employer's obligations in the field of occupational health prevention, workplace safety, and occupational medicine, with a practical digital dimension relating to the potential use of an intelligent platform to modernize safety and operations management within healthcare institutions. Accordingly, the study does not merely present the applicable legal provisions but also seeks to link them to a practical digital solution that may assist healthcare institutions in improving compliance, organizing workflows, and strengthening preventive measures.

Accordingly, the study is structured around the following research problem:

How has the Algerian legislator addressed the issue of occupational health prevention, workplace safety, and the improvement of operations management within Algerian healthcare institutions?

To answer this research problem, the study is divided into two main sections. The first examines the content of occupational health prevention and workplace safety, while the second addresses medical and legal oversight of compliance with occupational health prevention and workplace safety regulations, as follows

Section One: The Content of Occupational Health Prevention and Workplace Safety

Occupational health prevention and workplace safety are based on a set of obligations aimed at preventing hazards before they occur or, at the very least, minimizing their consequences when they do occur. This is achieved by providing appropriate health conditions within the workplace and ensuring safety and security against risks arising from machinery, materials, movement within the institution, falls, fires, and other occupational hazards.

First Requirement: The Obligation to Provide Occupational Health Conditions in the Workplace

Occupational health prevention in the workplace refers to the adoption of all measures that ensure a working environment conducive to workers' health, including cleanliness, ventilation, lighting, temperature control, protection against noise, and the provision of sanitary facilities. The Algerian legislator regulated these obligations under Law No. 88-07 and further detailed them through Executive Decree No. 91-05 by establishing the general rules applicable to health preservation and safety in the workplace.¹

First Branch: Workplace Cleanliness and Health Arrangements

Workplace cleanliness constitutes one of the primary aspects of occupational health prevention, as its absence may lead to the spread of diseases, the accumulation of waste, the emergence of harmful odors, or workers' exposure to substances that may adversely affect their health. Accordingly, the employer is required to ensure the cleanliness of the workplace, its annexes, and surrounding areas, as well as the regular cleaning of equipment, floors, walls, and ceilings, while taking disinfection measures whenever required by the nature of the activity.²

The obligation to maintain cleanliness is not limited to superficial cleaning; it also extends to the preparation and maintenance of areas where materials liable to spoilage, decay, corrosion, or combustion are stored or used, as such materials may constitute a direct source of danger to workers' health and safety. Accordingly, the floors and walls of these areas must be suitable for the nature of the materials handled, in order to facilitate cleaning and prevent leakage, contamination, or the spread of harmful effects to other parts of the workplace.³

The employer is also required to isolate areas that involve significant hazards resulting from toxic substances or contamination from the rest of the workplace and to prohibit workers from remaining in such areas except for the period strictly necessary for the performance of their duties. These areas must also be equipped with appropriate ventilation and protective systems. This demonstrates that the law does not regard cleanliness as a merely formal requirement but rather as a fundamental condition for the prevention of occupational hazards.

This issue is of particular importance in healthcare institutions, as they constitute professional environments in which workers handle materials, equipment, and waste that may be hazardous or sensitive in nature. Consequently, any negligence in cleaning or disinfection may adversely affect not only workers but also patients, service users, and the quality of the healthcare services provided.

¹ Law No. 88-07 of 26 January 1988 concerning Occupational Health Prevention, Workplace Safety, and Occupational Medicine, Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, No. 04, issued on 27 January 1988, Articles 3–6; Executive Decree No. 91-05 of 19 January 1991 concerning the General Protection Rules Applicable to Health Preservation and Safety in the Workplace, Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, No. 04, issued on 23 January 1991.

² Executive Decree No. 91-05 of 19 January 1991 concerning the General Protection Rules Applicable to Health Preservation and Safety in the Workplace, Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, No. 04, issued on 23 January 1991, Articles 3 and 5.

³ Executive Decree No. 91-05, op. cit., Articles 4, 11, and 12.

Second Branch: Ventilation, Lighting, and Temperature

Ventilation is considered one of the essential elements for ensuring a healthy working environment, as it allows for the renewal of air and prevents the accumulation of gases, vapors, dust, or odors that may be harmful to workers' health. Accordingly, the employer is required to ensure adequate and continuous ventilation of the workplace, whether through natural, mechanical, or mixed ventilation systems, while ensuring that the air supplied to the workplace is clean and free from sources of contamination.¹

The importance of ventilation is even greater in enclosed or underground workplaces, or in environments where chemical or biological substances or products that may affect health are used. Inadequate ventilation may lead to occupational diseases, fatigue, or reduced concentration, making it an essential element of both occupational health prevention and productivity.

Lighting is also an essential condition for performing work under comfortable and safe conditions, as inadequate lighting may lead to visual fatigue, occupational errors, or workplace accidents. Accordingly, workplaces, passageways, and loading and unloading areas must be provided with adequate lighting, preferably natural lighting whenever possible. Where natural lighting cannot be relied upon, artificial lighting may be used, provided that it is appropriate to the nature of the work and does not adversely affect workers' health.²

The employer must also maintain an appropriate temperature within the workplace, as excessively high or low temperatures may affect workers' health and their ability to perform their duties. Where the nature of the work requires activities to be carried out under particular thermal conditions, the necessary precautions must be taken, and suitable protective measures must be provided for the workers.³

This demonstrates that ventilation, lighting, and temperature are not merely physical features of the workplace but constitute legal and health requirements that contribute to providing a safe and healthy working environment. In healthcare institutions, these requirements assume even greater importance given the sensitive nature of healthcare activities and their close connection with hygiene, prevention, and the quality of services provided.

Third Branch: Protection against Noise and the Provision of Sanitary Facilities

Noise is considered one of the occupational hazards that may adversely affect workers' health, particularly when it exceeds acceptable limits or persists for prolonged periods. It may cause hearing disorders, fatigue, stress, and reduced concentration, thereby increasing the likelihood of occupational accidents. Accordingly, the employer is required to adopt measures aimed at reducing noise at its source, isolating work areas that generate excessive noise, or using appropriate technical means to minimize its effects.⁴

Where it is not possible to eliminate noise at its source, the employer must provide workers with appropriate personal protective equipment and ensure that such equipment remains in good condition and is used correctly. Protection against noise is not achieved merely by providing

¹ Law No. 88-07, op. cit., Article 4; Executive Decree No. 91-05, op. cit., Articles 6, 7, and 8.

² Raafat Desouki, Explanation of the New Labour Law, Vol. I, Mansha'at Al-Ma'arif, Alexandria, 2004, p. 325.

³ Executive Decree No. 91-05, op. cit., Articles 14 and 17.

⁴ Executive Decree No. 91-05, op. cit., Articles 15 and 16.

protective equipment; it also requires effective supervision and the training of workers on its proper use and its importance.

On the other hand, the employer is required to provide workers with adequate sanitary facilities that are located near, but separate from, the workplace and that comply with hygiene and ventilation requirements. These facilities include changing rooms, toilets, washrooms, dining areas where necessary, and access to potable drinking water.¹

Sanitary facilities constitute an integral part of workers' dignity within the institution, as they ensure humane working conditions. They also contribute to the prevention of disease and contamination, particularly in institutions where workers may be exposed to dirt, hazardous substances, or biological agents. Therefore, the provision of such facilities is not merely an organizational requirement but also a legal and health obligation directly linked to the protection of workers.

Second Requirement: The Obligation to Ensure Workplace Safety and Security

In addition to occupational health prevention, the employer is required to ensure safety and security within the workplace by adopting measures to prevent occupational accidents resulting from machinery, equipment, movement within the institution, falls, hazardous substances, and fires. This obligation is based on the fundamental principle of eliminating hazards at their source whenever possible or, where this is not feasible, minimizing them through the use of appropriate preventive measures.

First Branch: Loading, Unloading, and Traffic Safety Measures

Workers may be exposed to various hazards during loading, unloading, and the transportation of equipment and heavy objects, particularly where such operations are carried out without appropriate equipment or in inadequately designed passageways. Accordingly, the employer is required to make suitable lifting and transport equipment available to workers and to organize loading and unloading operations in a manner that minimizes the risk of injuries and occupational accidents.²

The employer must also organize passageways, exits, and areas designated for the movement of workers, machinery, and vehicles so that they are clearly identified, safe, and free from obstructions. Collisions, slips, or falling objects during transportation may result in serious harm. Accordingly, the law requires the employer to comply with the standards governing movement within the institution.

In healthcare work environments, this obligation is particularly important during the transportation of medical equipment, consumable supplies, healthcare waste, or safety equipment, as poor traffic organization or the absence of clearly designated routes may create occupational or operational hazards affecting both workers and users of the institution.

Second Branch: Protection against falls and Machinery Hazards

Fall hazards are among the most common occupational risks, particularly when work is performed at elevated locations, on ladders or platforms, or near openings or excavations.

¹ Executive Decree No. 91-05, op. cit., Articles 18–24.

² Executive Decree No. 91-05, op. cit., Articles 26, 27, 29, and 30.

Accordingly, the employer must provide workers with appropriate means of protection against falls, including guardrails, safe ladders, personal protective equipment, and warning signs.¹ Merely providing these protective measures as a matter of form is not sufficient; they must be suitable for use, appropriate to the nature of the hazard, and workers must receive adequate training in their proper use. Effective prevention therefore requires the combination of technical measures, proper organization, and worker awareness.

With regard to machinery and equipment, they may constitute a direct source of danger if they do not comply with the required standards, are operated without adequate training, or are not regularly maintained. Accordingly, the employer is required to install, position, and operate machinery in a manner that allows for its safe operation and maintenance without exposing workers to danger. The employer is also required to prohibit the use of machinery or equipment that does not comply with the applicable national or international occupational health and safety standards.²

This obligation also requires preventing unauthorized or unqualified persons from approaching hazardous machinery, providing emergency stop devices where necessary, and requiring workers to wear appropriate work clothing that does not increase the risk of accidents. Thus, machinery does not constitute a source of danger solely because of its nature, but also because of the manner in which it is operated, maintained, or supervised.

Third Branch: Prevention of Fire Hazards and Hazardous Substances

Fire prevention is one of the most important elements of workplace safety, as fires may result in significant human and material losses within a short period. Accordingly, the employer is required to isolate areas where highly flammable materials are used from the rest of the workplace, ensure that such materials are stored safely, and prevent the presence of heat sources or sparks in their vicinity.³

The workplace must also be arranged in a manner that enables a rapid response in the event of danger by providing an adequate number of firefighting and emergency rescue facilities, ensuring that they are easy to use, and distributing them appropriately throughout the institution. In addition, regular training exercises must be organized so that workers are familiar with the proper use of firefighting equipment and the provision of first aid.

Hazardous substances are no less significant than fire hazards, as they may cause poisoning, contamination, explosions, or occupational injuries. Accordingly, the employer must designate the areas in which such substances are used and stored, provide appropriate protective measures, and inform workers of the risks associated with them. These obligations are of particular importance in healthcare institutions, where chemical substances, medical gases, disinfectants, or special types of waste may be used.

¹ Executive Decree No. 91-05, op. cit., Articles 46, 56, 57, and 58; Law No. 88-07, op. cit., Article 32.

² Law No. 88-07, op. cit., Article 17; Law No. 90-11 of 21 April 1990 concerning Labour Relations, Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, No. 17, issued on 25 April 1990.

³ Law No. 88-07, op. cit., Article 17; Executive Decree No. 93-120 of 15 May 1993 concerning the Organization of Occupational Medicine, Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, No. 33, issued on 19 May 1993, Article 13.

From the foregoing, it is evident that ensuring workplace safety and security cannot be achieved through a single measure, but rather through an integrated system that combines proper organization, technical measures, training, supervision, and rapid intervention whenever hazards arise.

Section Two: Medical and Legal Oversight of Compliance with Occupational Health Prevention and Workplace Safety Regulations

The effectiveness of occupational health prevention and workplace safety regulations depends not only on their incorporation into legislation but also on the existence of medical and legal oversight to ensure their practical implementation. Medical oversight enables the monitoring of workers' health and the early detection of occupational diseases or work-related health effects, while legal oversight ensures that employers comply with their obligations and that appropriate measures are taken whenever violations or hazards are identified.

First Requirement: Medical Oversight in the Workplace

Medical oversight in the workplace constitutes one of the most important preventive mechanisms, as it makes it possible to relate a worker's health condition to the nature of the position occupied and the surrounding occupational conditions. Through medical examinations, it is possible to assess the worker's fitness for the position, monitor the worker's health throughout the course of employment, and intervene when health indicators associated with occupational activities emerge.

First Branch: The Importance of Medical Examination of Workers

Medical examination is an essential means of protecting workers' health, as it enables the assessment of their physical and psychological capacities and determines their suitability for the position they occupy or are expected to occupy. It also assists the employer in avoiding the assignment of duties that may be incompatible with the worker's health condition, which could otherwise lead to the deterioration of the worker's health or the occurrence of occupational accidents.¹

The importance of medical examination can be viewed from two perspectives. From the worker's perspective, it enables the individual to become aware of his or her health condition and to benefit from appropriate occupational health monitoring. From the employer's perspective, it facilitates the organization of work in a manner that takes workers' health capacities into account and reduces the employer's liability in the event of harm. Accordingly, medical examination should not be regarded merely as an administrative procedure but rather as both a preventive and a legal measure.

Medical examination also forms part of the philosophy of occupational medicine, which is fundamentally based on prevention rather than treatment. Its objective is not merely to detect disease after it has occurred but also to prevent its occurrence or mitigate its effects through continuous monitoring of workers and, where necessary, the adaptation of their workstations or job assignments.

Second Branch: Types of Occupational Medical Examinations

Occupational medical examinations vary according to the stage of employment, the nature of the worker's position, and the worker's health condition. The principal types include the pre-

¹ Executive Decree No. 93-120, op. cit., Article 14.

employment medical examination, the job transfer medical examination, the return-to-work medical examination, the periodic medical examination, and spontaneous or supplementary medical examinations.

The pre-employment medical examination is the first medical examination to which a worker is subjected before commencing work. Its purpose is to determine the worker's medical fitness for the proposed position. Through this examination, the occupational physician assesses the worker's physical and psychological capacities and their compatibility with the nature of the position.¹

The job transfer medical examination is conducted when a worker is transferred to a new position or when the nature of the worker's duties changes. Its purpose is to ensure that the new position is compatible with the worker's health condition, particularly where the position involves different occupational hazards or requires specific physical or psychological capacities.²

The return-to-work medical examination is carried out after the worker has been absent due to an occupational disease, a work-related accident, a non-occupational illness or accident for a specified period, following maternity leave, or in cases of repeated absences. The purpose of this examination is to ensure that the worker is medically fit to resume the position without posing a risk to his or her health or safety.³

The periodic medical examination is conducted during the course of the employment relationship and is intended to monitor the worker's health condition and verify the worker's continued fitness for the position occupied. Such examinations are particularly important for workers exposed to occupational hazards or employed under conditions requiring regular medical supervision.⁴

A worker may also request a medical examination if he or she believes that his or her health has been adversely affected by working conditions or that the position is no longer suitable.

Likewise, the occupational physician may decide to conduct supplementary medical examinations or seek the opinion of a medical specialist where this is considered necessary to determine the worker's medical fitness or to diagnose an occupational disease or a disease of an occupational nature.⁵

Third Branch: The Role of Occupational Medicine in Protecting Workers' Health

Occupational medicine constitutes a legal and professional mechanism for protecting workers' health within the institution, as it combines medical supervision with the prevention of occupational hazards. The role of the occupational physician is not limited to conducting medical examinations; it also extends to providing advice and guidance to employers and workers, proposing appropriate preventive measures, and contributing to the improvement of working conditions.⁶

¹ Executive Decree No. 93-120, op. cit., Article 14.

² Executive Decree No. 93-120, op. cit., Article 17.

³ Executive Decree No. 93-120, op. cit., Articles 15 and 16.

⁴ Law No. 88-07, op. cit., Article 18; Executive Decree No. 93-120, op. cit., Articles 18 and 19.

⁵ Law No. 88-07, op. cit., Articles 12 and 13; Executive Decree No. 93-120, op. cit., Articles 13–19.

⁶ Law No. 88-07, op. cit., Article 31; Law No. 90-03 of 6 February 1990 concerning the Labour Inspectorate, Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, No. 06, issued on 7 February 1990, Article 2.

The occupational physician may also recommend the adaptation of a worker's position or the adoption of special protective measures where it is determined that the position adversely affects the worker's health. Accordingly, the opinion of the occupational physician plays an important role in achieving a balance between the operational requirements of the institution and the worker's health capabilities.

The importance of occupational medicine is even greater in healthcare institutions, where workers may be exposed to multiple hazards, including infectious diseases, chemical substances, occupational stress, workload pressures, shift work, and the handling of emergency cases. Consequently, the existence of organized medical supervision contributes to protecting healthcare personnel and improving the quality of work within the institution.

However, the effectiveness of occupational medicine depends on the availability of the necessary resources, respect for the occupational physician's professional independence and medical confidentiality, and the employer's cooperation in implementing the recommendations made by the occupational physician. If occupational medicine is reduced to a purely formal procedure, it may lose its genuine preventive function.

Second Requirement: Legal Oversight and Sanctions for Non-Compliance with Occupational Health Prevention and Workplace Safety Regulations

In addition to medical oversight, there is legal oversight intended to ensure that employers comply with their obligations relating to occupational health prevention and workplace safety. In this regard, the Labour Inspectorate plays a fundamental role by inspecting workplaces, identifying violations, issuing observations and formal notices, and preparing reports of violations where necessary. Failure to comply with these obligations may also give rise to the employer's legal liability.

First Branch: The Role of the Labour Inspectorate in Monitoring the Workplace

The Labour Inspectorate is one of the principal bodies responsible for monitoring the implementation of labour legislation, including the provisions relating to occupational health prevention, workplace safety, and occupational medicine. The law grants it broad powers, enabling it to enter workplaces, conduct investigations, examine documents and records, interview relevant persons, and take samples of materials or products whenever necessary.¹

Workplace inspections constitute one of the most important means of oversight, as they enable the labour inspector to observe the actual conditions under which workers perform their duties. Through these inspections, the inspector may verify compliance with requirements relating to cleanliness, ventilation, lighting, safety, protective equipment, medical examinations, and the maintenance of legally required records.

The labour inspector also has investigative powers, which enable the collection of the information necessary regarding working conditions from the employer, workers, their representatives, members of internal bodies, the occupational physician, or other relevant persons. The inspector may also examine the registers, records, and documents that the law

¹ Law No. 90-03, op. cit., Article 6; Executive Decree No. 96-98 of 6 March 1996 establishing the List and Content of the Special Registers and Records Required to Be Maintained by Employers, Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, No. 17, issued on 13 March 1996.

requires to be maintained, including those relating to occupational health, workplace safety, and occupational medicine.¹

The importance of this oversight lies in ensuring that legal rules do not remain merely written provisions but are effectively implemented and monitored in the actual working environment.

Second Branch: Measures Taken Upon the Detection of Violations

When a labour inspector identifies a violation relating to occupational health prevention or workplace safety, several measures may be taken depending on the nature and seriousness of the violation.

The inspector may begin by issuing written observations where the violation is minor or capable of being remedied, issue a formal notice requiring the employer to comply with the law within a specified period, or prepare a report of violation where the employer fails to comply or where the hazard is of a serious nature.²

Written observations serve as a means of notifying the employer of the existence of a deficiency or failure to comply and are generally used where the violation is not of a serious nature. A formal notice, on the other hand, constitutes a more stringent measure, as it requires the employer to remedy the violation within a specified period. The Algerian legislator has established specific time limits for violations relating to occupational health, workplace safety, and occupational medicine, depending on the nature of the hazard and the applicable regulatory provisions.³

A report of violation is drawn up when the employer continues to violate the law despite having received written observations or a formal notice, or where the violation involves a serious hazard threatening workers. Such reports possess legal evidentiary value, as they are issued by the labour inspector within the scope of the powers conferred by law and may serve as the basis for legal proceedings before the competent authorities.⁴

The labour inspector may also intervene where there is an imminent or serious danger by notifying the employer and the competent authorities so that the necessary measures may be taken to eliminate or reduce the hazard. This intervention reflects the preventive nature of the Labour Inspectorate's functions, as it does not wait for an accident to occur before taking action but intervenes as soon as a hazard becomes apparent.⁵

Third Branch: Employer's Liability for Failure to Fulfil Legal Obligations

Failure by the employer to comply with obligations relating to occupational health prevention and workplace safety gives rise to legal liability. Such liability may be criminal where mandatory legal provisions have been violated, and it may also be civil, giving rise to an obligation to compensate where the failure results in harm to a worker.

From a criminal law perspective, Law No. 88-07 provides for penalties against employers who violate obligations relating to occupational health prevention, workplace safety, and

¹ Law No. 90-03, op. cit., Articles 8, 9, and 10.

² Law No. 90-03, op. cit., Article 12; Executive Decree No. 91-05, op. cit., Article 67; Executive Decree No. 93-120, op. cit., Article 39.

³ Law No. 90-03, op. cit., Article 14.

⁴ Law No. 88-07, op. cit., Article 34; Law No. 90-03, op. cit., Articles 10 and 11.

⁵ Law No. 88-07, op. cit., Articles 37, 38, and 39.

occupational medicine, including the use of machinery, equipment, or materials that do not comply with the prescribed standards, failure to fulfil occupational health and safety obligations, or failure to inform workers of the risks associated with their positions.¹

The importance of criminal liability lies in the fact that it gives occupational health prevention and workplace safety regulations binding legal force, thereby requiring employers to implement preventive measures with due diligence. It also affirms that the protection of workers is not an optional matter but a legal obligation, the violation of which entails legal sanctions.

From a civil or compensatory perspective, the employer may be required to compensate an injured worker where the employer's failure to comply with occupational health and safety regulations results in a workplace accident, an occupational disease, or any other health-related injury. Workplace accidents and occupational diseases are governed by a special legal framework intended to provide compensation and protection for the affected worker or the worker's beneficiaries. This, however, does not preclude the employer from incurring liability in cases involving fault or a serious breach of legal obligations.²

Although liability serves the purposes of deterrence and compensation for harm, prevention remains the primary objective. The law does not merely await the occurrence of an accident; rather, it requires the employer to take preventive measures in advance in order to avoid it.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, it is evident that occupational health prevention and workplace safety constitute two of the most important legal and professional safeguards aimed at protecting workers from the various hazards they may encounter while performing their duties. The quality of the working environment is no longer measured solely by its ability to achieve productivity or deliver services, but also by the extent to which it complies with standards of safety, prevention, hygiene, organization, and the protection of workers' health.

This study has demonstrated that the Algerian legislator has attached particular importance to occupational health prevention and workplace safety by requiring employers to provide safe and healthy working conditions. These obligations include ensuring workplace cleanliness, adequate ventilation, proper lighting, appropriate temperature, protection against noise, the provision of sanitary facilities, and safeguards against hazards associated with loading and unloading operations, falls, machinery, hazardous substances, and fires. The study has also shown that these obligations are not merely organizational measures but legal obligations of a protective nature intended to prevent workplace accidents and occupational diseases before they occur.

The study further demonstrates that the protection of workers cannot be achieved solely through the improvement of physical working conditions but also requires effective medical and legal oversight. Medical oversight, through occupational medicine and occupational medical examinations, enables continuous monitoring of workers' health and ensures that job assignments are compatible with their physical and medical capacities. Legal oversight, particularly through the Labour Inspectorate, contributes to monitoring employers' compliance

¹ Law No. 83-13 of 2 July 1983 concerning Occupational Accidents and Occupational Diseases, Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, No. 28, issued on 5 July 1983.

² Executive Decree No. 93-120, op. cit., Articles 15 and 16.

with their legal obligations and enables the adoption of appropriate measures whenever violations or occupational hazards are identified.

However, practical experience, particularly within healthcare institutions, reveals that compliance with occupational health and safety regulations depends not only on the existence of legal provisions but also on the availability of modern organizational tools capable of supporting daily monitoring, incident recording, inventory management, protocol organization, and effective communication among the various departments. Healthcare institutions constitute some of the most sensitive work environments because of the diversity of stakeholders involved, the intensity of work, and the need for speed and precision in organization and decision-making.

The study reached the following principal findings:

First: Occupational health prevention and workplace safety constitute legal obligations imposed upon employers and cannot be regarded as optional or secondary measures.

Second: The Algerian legal framework provides an important basis for protecting workers in the workplace; however, its effectiveness remains dependent upon its practical implementation and enforcement.

Third: Healthcare institutions require a high level of organization and safety because of the sensitive nature of their activities, the multiplicity of stakeholders involved, and their direct connection with human health and service quality.

Fourth: Reliance on traditional methods for managing safety and operations within healthcare institutions may result in poor coordination, information loss, delays in incident management, and difficulties in making timely decisions.

Sixth: Artificial intelligence can assist healthcare institutions in shifting from reactive management, which intervenes after problems occur, to proactive management that seeks to identify risk indicators before they escalate.

Seventh: The success of any digital platform in the healthcare sector depends not only on its technical capabilities but also on compliance with legal requirements, the protection of data, the clear definition of user access privileges, and ease of use for different categories of users.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

First: Algerian healthcare institutions should be encouraged to gradually transition from paper-based management to digital management, particularly in the areas of safety, incident reporting, inventory management, and reporting systems.

Second: Artificial intelligence solutions should be integrated into the management of healthcare institutions while ensuring that they are used as decision-support tools rather than as complete substitutes for human oversight.

Third: Users within healthcare institutions should receive appropriate training in the use of digital platforms, as successful digital transformation depends not merely on the availability of technological systems but also on users' ability to operate them effectively.

Fourth: Sensitive data and information within healthcare institutions must be protected through the implementation of clear access authorization systems, appropriate technical security measures, and internal policies specifying who is authorized to access information.

Fifth: The role of both internal and external oversight should be strengthened in monitoring compliance with occupational health prevention and workplace safety requirements, with the possibility of using digital tools to facilitate documentation, reporting, and follow-up.

Sixth: Support should be provided for start-up projects offering digital solutions tailored to the healthcare sector, particularly those addressing practical challenges related to management, safety, quality, and day-to-day operations.

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