

Standing Committee Report Summary

Safety Management and Practices in Steel PSUs

- The Standing Committee on Coal and Steel (Chair: Mr. Rakesh Singh) submitted its report on the subject “Safety Management and Practices in Steel PSUs”, on August 6, 2021. The Committee reviewed the adherence of steel public sector units (PSUs) to standard safety management practices. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
 - **Accidents in steel PSUs:** The Committee noted that between 2015 and 2020, the most accidents in steel PSUs were related to moving machines, and fall from height. Further, the Committee observed that many fatal accidents in steel PSUs occurred due to several lapses such as deviation from the standard operating procedure, design defects, and lack of focus on training and awareness. It recommended that such lapses in hazardous activities should be identified. There should be regular monitoring to avoid such lapses.
 - **Safety guidelines for steel sector:** The Committee noted a working group of experts under the Ministry of Steel, formulated certain guidelines for iron and steel sector to ensure minimum safety standards. However, the adoption of these guidelines by the steel sector is voluntary as there is no regulations for mandatory implementation of safety guidelines in the sector. The Committee recommend that such guidelines should be strictly implemented to prevent accidents. Further, it recommended the Ministry of Steel to coordinate with the Ministry of Labour and Employment for ensuring implementation of these safety guidelines under the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020.
 - **Mechanism for monitoring and inspection:** The Committee noted that the steel PSUs conduct periodic checks and routine inspections to monitor and review safety status and compliance to various guidelines. It recommended that there should be a thorough follow up mechanism to ensure resolution of concerns identified during the periodic monitoring process. The recommendations or suggestions received during the monitoring process should be implemented without fail. In addition, there should be a forum for feedback from the workers on safety matters in the steel PSUs.
- **Training and awareness:** The Committee noted that safety induction training and awareness programmes are being conducted at various steel PSUs for new workers. The duration of these programmes is three days for regular employees and two days for contract workers. It recommended that the duration of training programmes should be suitably increased. In addition, refresher safety training programmes should be organised frequently. The training curriculum should be revised as per the updated risk assessment and hazard identification.
- Further, the Committee observed that behaviour based safety training programmes are conducted at certain steel PSUs (such as Steel Authority of India Limited). It recommended that such programmes should be extended to workers in all steel PSUs and should be conducted frequently.
- **Compensation policy:** The Committee noted that the employees in the steel PSUs are covered under compensation policies. These policies provide for compassionate employment to one of the eligible dependents in case of death or total disablement. The Committee observed that such policies lose their purpose if compensation under such policies is not provided to the aggrieved family members on time. It recommended that the central government should avoid any delay in matters related to sanctioning of compensation packages. A nodal officer should be deputed to help the family in completing necessary paperwork. The compensation packages should be reviewed periodically.
- **Empowering safety officers:** The Committee noted that departmental safety officers (DSO) and zonal safety officers at a steel plant play a crucial role in promoting safety awareness among the employees. It recommended that such safety officers should be given free hand in discharge of their duties because they have better knowledge of facts on the ground.

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