

The Experience of Occupational Risk and the Handling of Incapacity Due to Ill Health and Injury

Jacqueline Swanepoel and J.C. Visagie*

*School of Human Resource Sciences, North-West University, Private Bag X6001,
Potchefstroom, South Africa 2520*

**E-mail: jan.visagie@nwu.ac.za*

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ABSTRACT This paper is concerned with the assessment of risks in the manufacturing industry and the effects thereof on employee wellbeing, performance ability and consequently on the labour relationship between employee and employer. The centre of this paper relies on the interaction between the person and the machine and the design of the interface between the two. This can be described as the heart of Ergonomics, and it further includes the nature of the task, workload, the working environment, the design of displays and controls, and the role of procedures. Characteristics of strains on the human body, in terms of unsafe conditions and work-related stressors, are identified and discussed in order to explain human capabilities and limitations within his/her work environment. The frequency of occupational incidents and accidents, as a result from a high risk environment, is examined and discussed. Occupational hygiene surveys, medical reports, real incident statistics and annual reports, based on the empirically researched organisation, were collected and used to sustain the research objectives. The data was analysed and is summarised in this paper to support the conclusion of the effect of a high risk work environment in correlation with employee wellbeing, and subsequently on labour relations. The results indicate comparisons between unsafe conditions and employee incapacity due to injury or ill health and how it should be addressed out of a labour relations point of view.