



ILO Policies, Conventions, Recommendations and Codes of Practice

Conventions are comparable to multilateral international treaties: they are open to ratification by member States and, once ratified, create specific, binding obligations. A State that has ratified a Convention is expected to apply its provisions by legislation or by other appropriate means as indicated in the text of the Convention. The Government is required to report regularly on the application of ratified Conventions; the extent of compliance is subject to examination and public comment by ILO machinery; complaints about alleged non-compliance may be made by the governments of other ratifying States or by employers' or workers' organizations and procedures exist for investigating and acting upon such complaints. Conventions that have not been ratified have the same value as Recommendations.

Recommendations are intended to offer guidelines for action by member States. Often, a particular Recommendation will elaborate upon the provisions of a Convention on the same subject. Member States have certain important procedural obligations in respect of Recommendations - namely, to submit the texts to their legislative bodies, to report on the action resulting and to report occasionally at the request of the Governing Body on the measures taken or envisaged to give effect to the provisions. But no specific substantive obligations are entailed.

It is fair to say that both Conventions and Recommendations have influenced laws and regulations of member States. Many texts have been modeled on the relevant provisions of ILO instruments; drafts of new legislation or amendments are often prepared with ILO standards in mind so as to ensure compliance with ratified Conventions or to permit the ratification of other Conventions; trade unions use ILO standards to support arguments in bargaining and in promoting legislation; governments frequently consult the ILO, both formally and informally, about the compatibility of proposed texts with international labour standards.

Guiding policies for action

- The (provisional) texts of the new Promotional Framework Convention on Occupational Safety and Health and its accompanying Recommendation adopted at the 95th annual Conference of the ILO in June 2006.
- The List of Occupational Diseases Recommendation, 2002 No. 194 a recommendation concerning the list of occupational diseases and the recording and notification of occupational accidents and diseases.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 No. 155 and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 164). These standards prescribe the progressive application of comprehensive preventive measures and the adoption of a coherent national policy on

occupational safety and health, while establishing the responsibility of employers for making work and equipment safe and without risk to health, as well as the duties and rights of workers. The Protocol 2002 to the Convention as adopted by the International Labour Conference on its 90th session.

- The Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No.161) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 171). These standards stress that occupational health services are entrusted essentially with preventive functions and responsible for advising employers, workers and their representatives on maintaining a safe and health working environment, as well as on the adaptation of work to the capabilities of workers. The emphasis of these instruments is on roles, best use of resources and cooperation rather than on administrative structures that are not always flexible.
- Working Environment Convention, 1977 (No.148) and its accompanying Recommendation, 1977 (No.156).

Specific areas of occupational activity

- The Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No.184) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 192)
- The Safety and Health in Construction Convention, 1988 (No.167) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 175) which lay down the basic principles and measures to promote safety and health of workers in construction.
- The Safety and Health in Mines Convention, 1995 (No. 176) and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 183) address the risks unique to mining and applies to all mining activities whether on the surface or underground, as well as to the preparation of extracted material.
- Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964 No.120
- Safety Provisions (Building) Convention, 1937 No.62 and Safety Provisions (Building) Recommendation, 1937 No.53.
- Marking of Weight (packages Transported by Vessels) Convention,1929 No.27.
- Protection against Accidents (Dockers) Convention,1929 No.28 and Protection against Accidents (Dockers) Convention (Revised),1932 No.32.
- Occupational Safety and Health (Dock Work) Convention,1979 No.152 and Occupational Safety and Health (Dock Work) Recommendation,1979 No.160.
- Plantations Convention, 1958 No.110.

Specific risks

- The Chemicals Convention, 1990 No.170 and its accompanying Recommendation (No.177) represent international efforts to upgrade the national measures and harmonize regulatory standards. They emphasise the need to establish a coherent national policy of chemical safety ranging from the classification and labelling of chemicals to the control in all aspects of the use of chemicals. Particular emphasis would thus be placed on roles and responsibility of the competent authority, suppliers and employers, as well as duties and rights of workers.
- The Prevention of Major Industrial Accidents Convention, 1993 (No. 174) and its accompanying Recommendation 1993 (No. 181) aims to protect workers, the public and the environment from major industrial accidents, in particular through the prevention of major accidents involving hazardous substances and the limitation of the consequences of such accidents. It applies to major hazard installations with the exception of nuclear installations and radioactive materials processing, military installations and transport outside the site of an installation other than pipeline.
- The Asbestos Convention, 1986 (No.162) and its accompanying Recommendation (No.172) advances organizational, technical and medical measures to protect workers against hazardous asbestos dust.
- Anthrax Prevention Recommendation, 1919 No.3.
- White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 No. 13.
- Radiation Protection Convention, 1960 No.115 and Radiation Protection Recommendation, 1960 No.114.
- Benzene Convention, 1971 No.136 and Benzene Recommendation, 1971 No.144.
- Occupational Cancer Convention, 1974 No.139 and Occupational Cancer Recommendation, 1974 No.147.
- Guarding of Machinery Convention, 1963 No.119 and Guarding of Machinery Recommendation, 1963 No.118.

Inspection requirements

- Labour Inspection (Health Services) Recommendation, 1919, No.5
- Labour Inspection Recommendation, 1923, No.20
- Labour Inspection (Seamen) Recommendation, 1926, No.28
- Labour Inspection Convention, 1947, No.81 and Protocol of 1995 to the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947, No.81 and

- Labour Inspection Recommendation, 1947, No.81
- Labour Inspection (Mining and Transport) Recommendation, 1947, No.82
- Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969, No.129 and Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Recommendation, 1969, No.133
- Labour Inspection (Seafarers) Convention, 1996, No.178 and Labour Inspection (Seafarers) Recommendation, 1996, No.185.

Individual protection

- Maximum Weight Convention, 1967 No.127 and Maximum Weight Recommendation, 1967 No.128.
- Maternity Protection Convention, 1919 No.3, Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952 No.103, Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 No.183, Maternity Protection Recommendation, 2000 No.191, Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948 No.89, Night Work (Women) Protocol, 1990, Underground Work (Women) Convention, 1935 No.45.
- Minimum Age Convention 1973 No.138, Night Work of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946 No.79, Night Work of Young Persons (Industry) Convention (Revised), 1948 No.90, Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946 No.77, Medical Examination of Young Persons (Non-Industrial Occupations) Convention, 1946 No.78, Medical Examination of Young Persons (Underground Work) Convention, 1965 No.124.
- Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 No.143.

Codes of Practice

The ILO has prepared and published a series of codes of practice relating to various sectors of economic activity and various types of dangerous equipment or agents. Presented in the form of detailed technical specifications, these publications are intended to assist governments, employers' and workers' organizations in drawing up national regulations and guidelines, work regulations and collective agreements. They also suggest practical solutions for the application of ILO international standards. The recommendations they contain are usually finalized and approved by tripartite panels of experts.

More than 35 codes of practice have been drawn up so far, covering either different sectors of activity (such as mines, agriculture, forestry, construction, iron and steel, etc.) or particular risks (ionizing radiations, noise and vibration, exposure to airborne substances, use of synthetic vitreous fibre insulation wools), as well as transfer of technology.

Codes of practice indicate "what should be done". They are prepared by tripartite meetings of experts and their publications are approved by the ILO Governing Body.

