

Tommy Lau is the Comprehensive & Coordination Division's Deputy Director of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of Guangzhou Municipality, China. In this interview, Lau provides an overview of safety, health and environmental (SH&E) standards development and enforcement in China.

***Please provide a brief description of your professional background and of your position as the Comprehensive & Coordination Division's Deputy Director for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of Guangzhou Municipality.***

As an undergraduate, I majored in safety engineering then as a graduate student, I majored in law, which acquaints me with both technology and management. As the Comprehensive & Coordination Division's Deputy Director of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of Guangzhou, I am mainly responsible for the city's work safety planning and organization and for coordination of major safety management affairs. In addition, I am leading the project of safety community construction.

***What are the greatest SH&E hazards facing workers in China today? How have these hazards changed in light of China's growing economy and industrial operations?***

Today, the greatest SH&E hazards that workers in China face are coal mine accidents, falls from elevations, mechanical injuries, electrocution, occupational poisoning diseases and other injuries.

***What are the primary causes of occupational injuries and fatalities in China, and how are SH&E standards used to mitigate them?***

The primary causes of occupational fatalities in China are workers' unsafe behaviors, such as operating machinery without following standard operating procedures and managers ignoring or paying too little attention to safety. To mitigate these damages, the government should implement responsibilities of work safety according to SH&E standards. Workers should be educated to about SH&E standards. Managers should also implement standards strictly to improve safety awareness and safety skills.

***What SH&E standards must workplaces in China follow? How is the use of such standards encouraged in the workplace?***

In China, SH&E standards promulgated by the state should be abided. If enforcement of these standards is not implemented, the relevant government departments can punish employers.

***Which agencies in China are responsible for developing and publishing SH&E standards? What new standards initiatives are these agencies currently pursuing?***

Primarily, Standardization Administrations and Administrations of Work Safety are responsible for developing and publishing SH&E standards. They strive to improve safety awareness among our people and physical conditions of the workplace so that injuries, occupational diseases and accidents will decrease.

***How does the standards development process in China differ from that of the U.S.?***

In China, standards mainly are first proposed by local governments or industries and then gradually developed into national standards.

***Which industries in China do you believe could further benefit from the use of workplace safety standards?***

High-risk industries, such as construction, mining and the hazardous chemicals industry, will benefit most from workplace safety standards. By implementing these standards to prevent accidents from occurring, they will make the most profit.

***How is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of Guangzhou Municipality working with other organizations, such as ASSE, to improve workplace safety?***

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration of Guangzhou Municipality actively participates in and promotes cooperation with other organizations. In addition, we give them much support, such as allocating funds to these organizations to propose and develop standards.

***What are the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of Guangzhou Municipality's goals and objectives for the remainder of the year?***

Adhering to the principle of "safety first, precaution crucial, treatment comprehensive," carrying out the safety responsibility system and strengthening the supervision and management of work safety to prevent accidents from recurring.

### **Biography**

Tommy Lau is the Comprehensive & Coordination Division's Deputy Director of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration of Guangzhou Municipality, China. He is mainly responsible for the city's work safety planning and organization, coordination of major safety management affairs and the project of safety community construction. He is a Certified Safety Engineer in China and a safety consultant of OSHAS 18000. He also holds lawyer certificate. He worked in Guangzhou Port for five years and in government for 13 years. Lau holds a B.S. in Safety Engineering from the North East University of China and a master's degree in law from Sun Yat-sen University.