EAWOP 2008

Personal Details

1. Title (Prof., Dr., Mr, Mrs, Ms, other): **Dr.**
2. Name: **Sílvia Costa Agostinho da Silva**
3. Job title : **Assistant Professor**
4. Qualifications **: PhD**
5. Affiliation: **CIS, ISCTE**
6. Mailing address (including postcode and country): **Edifício ISCTE, Avenida das Forças Armadas, 1649-026 Lisboa, Portugal**
7. email address: **silvia.silva@iscte.pt**
8. Co-authors:
   - Maria João Oliveira, Researcher; Master; CIS; Edifício ISCTE, Avenida das Forças Armadas, 1649-026 Lisboa, Portugal; maria.joao.oliveira@iscte.pt
   - Helena Carvalho; Assistant Professor; PhD; CIES, ISCTE; helena.carvalho@iscte.pt
   - Celeste Jacinto, Assistant Professor; PhD; CENTEC, FCT/UNL; mcj@fct.unl.pt
   - Tiago Fialho; Researcher; Pos- Graduation; CENTEC, IST; tfialho@mar.ist.utl.pt
   - Carlos Guedes Soares, Full Professor; PhD; CENTEC, IST; guedess@mar.ist.utl.pt

9. Contact telephone number of first author: **+00 351 91 4155951**

Title: OHSAS Certification and Learning with work accidents in the construction sector

Abstract

Safety and Health certifications constitute a key tool to help companies to improve the quality of work conditions and prevent occupational fatalities and diseases. Specifically, OHSAS 18001 (Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems) offer an integrative management system that is internationally recognized to help organizations to manage and control their OH&S (occupational health and safety) risks, and thus improve their OH&S performance.

The need to use accident information for prevention through learning has been acknowledged e.g., by Koornneef (2000) and Toft & Reynolds, (1997). Until now, as far as the authors' knowledge, the link between OHSAS certification and companies' practices has not been explored for learning with incidents and accidents.

This paper will present four case studies conducted in the construction sector that are aimed to characterize organizational practices for collecting and analysing accident information in order to improve safety learning and accidents prevention. All the companies have OHSAS certification and the authors will explore their similarities and differences in their learning practices.

This study is part of a research project (CAPTAR – Learn to prevent) that has the goal of establishing strategies and processes to learn efficiently with accidents and that will cover all the cycle phases.

The data was collected using long semi-structured interviews with key organizational stakeholders. The interview protocol covered information, such as: type of accident records; existence of a formal procedure for accident investigation; what accident forms are used; procedures used in the data collection; procedures used in accident analysis, and finally, how these organizations use the relevant information towards safety learning and improvement. Overall, the interviews length varies between two and five hours. In addition to the interview, relevant organizational documentation was also collected and analysed in this study.

Results will focus on the Company's learning practices, comparing between them and also comparing to OHSAS practices recommendations.
At the moment data is still being analysed but preliminary results reveal that all companies analyse and discuss accident information, recognize their own failures and analyse risks. Nevertheless differences have been found in procedures and activities, in information treatment, in responsibilities and also in the internal accident information dissemination. In this paper the OHSAS opportunities for learning and prevention of accidents will be discussed and implications for research and intervention will be addressed.