

New Perspectives on Occupational Health and Safety linked to Circular Economy.

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INTRODUCTION

In a Circular Economy, products are designed to be more durable, repairable, and recyclable. When products reach the end of their useful life, they are either reused, refurbished, or recycled to create new products. This reduces waste and conserves natural resources, while also creating new economic opportunities. The Circular Economy is often described using the "3Rs" framework: reduce, reuse, and recycle (Ekins et al., 2020). The aim is to reduce the use of virgin resources, extend the life of products, and recover and recycle materials at the end of their useful life.

The Circular Economy can also have positive impacts on workers' health and safety. By reducing waste and pollution, the Circular Economy can create safer and healthier work environments, particularly in industries such as waste management and manufacturing (Goodwin Brown et al., 2020). In addition, the transition to a Circular Economy may require workers to retrain or acquire new skills in order to work in the new industries and job opportunities that are created, including aspects of risk and safety management (Clube y Tennant, 2020).

METHODS

This work addresses, through the introductory scoping review of scientific and business literature, the question about new, emergent perspectives and approaches on OHS for companies that embrace circular business models or that directly been established within Circular Economy.

The authors analyze the regulatory implications of hybrid framework of OHS, as well as the possible impact on workplace safety management. This work addressed the gap between enhancement of Circular Economy and its impact on OHS by analyzing the regulatory and strategic dimensions of the impact of Circular Economy on risk and safety management by initial scoping literature review and proposal of conceptual framework. The conceptual framework proposal has been carried out on the basis of Research through Design (RtD) method.

CONCLUSIONS

The circularity (or re-using materials in production processes) introduces concerns about workers' safety and wellbeing when operating at intersection of potentially two or more safety regulatory fields. Implications for OHS' identifies several key factors to be considered from the multilateral perspectives: regulatory, strategic, operational and task related.

RESULTS

Hybrid OHS framework in Circular Economy organizations.

Identify the potential hazards and risks:	The company should conduct a comprehensive risk assessment to identify the potential hazards and risks associated with their operations, including the risks related to the circular economy model.
Involve employees:	The employees should be involved in the risk assessment process, as they are most familiar with the day-to-day operations and can provide valuable input on the potential hazards and risks.
Establish new clear OHS goals and objectives:	The OHS policy should establish clear goals and objectives for the company's OHS performance. These goals and objectives should be measurable, achievable, and consistent with the company's overall mission and values
Develop an action plan:	The company should develop an action plan to address the identified hazards and risks, including the development of specific OHS policies and procedures.
Implement the hybrid OHS policy:	The company should implement the hybrid OHS policy, ensuring that all employees are trained on the policies and procedures, and that they have the necessary resources to implement them.
Monitor and review off-the-paths contingencies:	The company should regularly monitor and review its OHS performance, making necessary changes and improvements to the policy and procedures based on the results of the monitoring and review.
Training and Education:	Provide training and education to all employees on the hybrid OHS policies and procedures. This should include information on how to identify potential hazards, how to handle materials safely, and how to use equipment correctly.
Continuously improve:	The company should continuously strive to improve its OHS performance, taking into account new hazards and risks that may arise as the company's operations evolve.
Compliance with Regulations:	Ensure that the hybrid OHS policies and procedures comply with all relevant regulations and standards on the most-exigent-first scope.

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