



The strike in the Israeli economy was prevented: the Histadrut and the government reached agreements to increase the safety at work-6.11.18

Among the agreements: turning the European standard on scaffoldings into binding, the implementation of the obligation to use protective nets while working at high altitude, significant increase in the supervisors standards in the Labor Safety Administration, regularization of the crane field, fixing the legislation that will enable the Registrar of Contractors in the Housing Ministry to revoke contractor licenses due to safety violations, insertion of safety specifications into the Accountant General's tenders, the introduction of safety assistants in construction sites, and more.

Histadrut Chairman Avi Nissenkorn: "A historic move that will avoid many fatal accidents at work and prevent injury and death of dozens of workers every year."

Labor and Welfare Minister Haim Katz: "The joint commitment will create a significant change in safety field in the construction industry."

Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon: "The struggle for workers' safety is just and we are all recruited."

After intense negotiations between the parties, and in a final attempt to avoid a general strike, Finance Minister **Moshe Kahlon**, Labor and Welfare Minister **Haim Katz**, Construction and Housing Minister **Yoav Galant** and Histadrut Chairman **Avi Nissenkorn**, reached agreements on 6.11.18 which regulate the issue of safety in the workplaces and in the construction industry in particular.

Among the main points of the agreements:

Scaffoldings and high-altitude work:

- **Scaffoldings** – The European standard for scaffoldings will become binding on contractors at construction sites, while defining a timetable for completion of the implementation. Within six months, the European standard will be applied to all the scaffoldings at a height of 6 meters and above, and within 18 months the standard will be applied to the scaffoldings at a height of less than 6 meters. Scaffoldings at a height of 20 meters and above will require a planner's approval.



- **Protective nets for work at high altitude** – A professional team will be established led by the Safety Director of the Labor and Welfare Ministry and with the participation of the Histadrut and the Construction and Housing Ministry representatives. The team's recommendations regarding the installation of suitable protective nets at construction sites will be submitted within 3 months.

Increasing Enforcement:

- **Increasing the number of supervisors** – The number of supervisors standards in the Labor Safety Administration will be increased by hundreds of percent.
- **Increased enforcement of the working hours ceiling** – In order to reduce the accidents caused by workers' fatigue, the Labor Ministry will carry out an increased enforcement operation to ensure compliance with the working hours ceiling permitted by law in construction sites, including of crane operators.

Cranes:

- **Promotion of a bill** for the employment of crane operators by designated companies in order to contribute to the regulation of the market and prevent the use of forged licenses.
- **Crane operator license** – Printing licenses that are hard to forge and adding a photo to the database of license holders, in order to make it difficult to use a forged license.
- **Cranes** – The Labor and Welfare Ministry will work towards the regulation by law of the responsibility for all aspects of maintenance of the crane, its propriety, its ongoing maintenance and its safe placement on the site. In order to increase the safety in the field, within three months new criteria will be set for expanding the number of authorized crane inspectors in Israel.
- **Signalmen** – In response to signalmen with inadequate training in the construction sites, the supervision will be increased to ensure legally authorized signalmen.

Registrar of Contractors:

- The Construction and Housing Ministry will work to promote an amendment to the Registration of Contractors for Construction Engineering Works Law, 1969, in a way that the Registrar of Contractors will be authorized to disqualify, not renew, suspend and exercise his/her additional authorities that are in the law, on the basis of safety defects, in accordance with the recommendation of the Safety



Director in the Labor Ministry, and the authority of immediate suspension of a license in grave circumstances, all with the aim that the legislation will be completed by the end of the current Knesset session.

Safety Assistants:

- **Promotion of a bill** to introduce safety assistants in the construction sites, which states that in every condominium complex construction site, the contractor will appoint a safety assistant that will assist the foreman in enforcing the safety matters at the site.

Safety Supervisors:

- Contractors in the C5 classification (the highest rank in the financial scope classification that is allowed for the contractor to perform in the sector in which they are registered) will be required to appoint a full-time safety supervisor.

Public Tenders:

- **Insertion of safety specifications into the Accountant General's tenders** – The Accountant General in the Finance Ministry will publish an order in the coming month that will obligate the government ministries and the authority units to include safety specifications in the government's construction and infrastructure tenders, including the obligation to install protective nets for high-altitude work. The duty of safety will be applied within 30 days to each new construction and infrastructure tender of the government.
- **"Recognized Contractor" status** – the Accountant General in consultation with the Safety Director in the Labor Ministry will formulate conditions for recognition of a recognized contractor for construction work for the government based on previous violations by the contractor. Contractors with a problematic safety history will not be able to access the Accountant General's tenders.

Increasing the public awareness of safety:

- **Public campaign** – Subject to the instructions of the Attorney General of Israel, a campaign will be launched to raise public awareness regarding the importance of safety rules. In the advertising process, which will be jointly funded by the Labor Ministry and the Histadrut, special emphasis will be placed on rules of high-altitude work, and on the use of harnesses and protective equipment.



- **Establishing a hotline** – The Labor Ministry will establish a telephone and internet hotline in the Safety Administration in order to enable reporting of violations of safety rules at construction sites. The line will be established by June 2019.

Responsibility of the work orderer:

- The Labor Minister will promote an amendment of the building safety regulations to change the current situation in which the foreman is solely responsible for the safety problems in construction sites. The change will be made by establishing a hierarchy of responsibility that includes, inter alia, the orderer of the construction work.

Basic training in safety

- The Safety Administration in the Labor and Welfare Ministry will formulate and enforce obligatory safety training for each worker in the construction sites. The training will be funded by the employers and under their responsibility, while defining the bodies authorized to carry out the training.

Histadrut Chairman Avi Nissenkorn said: "This is the right and moral thing that should have been done long ago. I welcome the fact that in the end the State recognized its obligation and responsibility to regulate the matter. Thanks to the struggle, we succeeded in finding real solutions to improve safety in work and in the construction industry in particular, without one day of strike in the Israeli economy.

The agreements are only the beginning of the process on the way to changing the reality, but it is now clear to everyone that the historic move will avoid many fatal accidents at work and prevent the injury and death of dozens of workers every year. It should be emphasized that the great responsibility that accompanies safety in the construction industry is also shared by contractors and workers who play a central role in adhering to the required safety standard.

As the standard-bearer of the struggle, the Histadrut is committed to continue to accompany the parties until the full implementation of the agreements is completed. I would like to thank Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon and Labor and Welfare Minister Haim Katz for acceding to the Histadrut's call and bridging the gaps in order to formulate a broad agreements package that will help eradicate the carnage.



Special thanks to the Construction and Housing Minister, Yoav Galant, who showed leadership and contributed greatly to negotiations and the formulation of the agreements. I would like to thank other partners who played an important role in advancing the negotiations, including the Construction and Wood Workers Union Chairman Yitzhak Moyal and Director General of the Finance Ministry Shai Babad."

Labor and Welfare Minister, Haim Katz, said: "I welcome the mobilization of my partners in the struggle against work accidents. Our goal is that the workers will come to work, earn a living and return home safely. When I received the authority for the field of safety two years ago, I found many years of negligence and with the tools that I had at my disposal I started to work to create a deterrence through legislation and upgrading the meager manpower strength in the Ministry. I believe that the joint commitment will create a significant change in safety in the construction industry."

Finance Minister, Moshe Kahlon, said: "I am happy that we reached agreements that prevented a strike that would have harmed millions of Israelis who want to go to work and send the children to kindergartens and schools. The struggle for workers' safety is just and we are all recruited. I thank the Labor Minister Haim Katz and Histadrut Chairman Avi Nissenkorn for the great efforts to reach understandings for the benefit of everyone."