

regarding the working environment as to lighting, noise, pollution, etc.

The Labor Law determines that each company has to create a Mixed Commission for security and Hygiene, which should include both workers and employers, in order to assess the existing risks, prevent accidents, inform and train workers and supervise the proper use of safety measures. Additionally, there has to be a department of work medicine to periodically evaluate and diagnose the worker's health and recommend any further action, and a department of security and hygiene to study the working environment in order to detect danger and install preventive measures.

In addition to these rules, the Ministry of Labor has published 45 Official Mexican Norms (NOM) defining the specifications of the above listed general items. Most of these have only been passed in the past five years, reflecting the country's interest in establishing and enforcing job security measures in order to reduce the present rate of accidents. The knowledge and application of these norms will translate into an increased demand for security and safety related products.

## 6. INDUSTRIAL SAFETY

The official bodies involved in industrial security are the Ministry of Labor (Secretaría del Trabajo), which regulates, supervises and sanctions all matters related to security on the job; the Ministry of Commerce (Secretaría de Comercio y Fomento Industrial), which has to inspect all security devices in order to certify that they cover the NOM specifications; and the health sector, namely the Ministry of Health (Secretaría de Salud), the Institute for Social Security (Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social - IMSS) and the Institute for Public Worker's Social Security (Instituto de Salud y Seguridad Social de los Trabajadores del Estado - ISSSTE), who actually take care of the workers having had a work related accident or illness.

The IMSS is the largest Mexican institution insuring workers against work related accidents and illnesses. All privately owned companies are bound by law to inscribe their workers in the IMSS. The premium to be paid amounts to 15% of each worker's salary, 10% to be paid by the employer and 5% by the worker. At present IMSS insures over ten million workers, and provides medical assistance to an additional 25 million family members of insured workers and two million retirees and their families. The ISSSTE covers an additional 2.1 million workers and six million family members and retirees. Other institutions, such as PEMEX, the Secretariats of Defense and Marine, state governments, banks and private institutions insure an additional two million. All in all, only half of Mexican workers are insured against work related accidents and illnesses.