

made this fairly easy. But workers' compensation fees levied by the *Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (IMSS)*, Mexican Institute for Social Security, are tied to industry average accident rates. This has prompted some industry associations to run safety promotion and training programs. Many individual companies are following suit because they must demonstrate that they fit within the norms of their industry or else face additional levies.

Collective bargaining proposals for new health and safety equipment and work procedures are usually an employer demand. Inclusion in the collective agreement gives management the right to dismiss employees who are found not using the required equipment. For the most part, unions are more interested in obtaining premium wages for dangerous work than in reducing the hazards.

In addition to personal protective equipment and clothing, there is growing demand for safety signs and warning devices as well as first-aid kits. As the restructuring of the Mexican economy proceeds, more and more companies can be expected to deal with safety hazards at their source. Occupational health is recognized in terms of basic industrial hygiene, and there is a demand for monitoring equipment and other systems for workplace assessment. But health problems resulting from exposure to workplace hazards are not necessarily recognized as occupational. In 1994, for example, there were only 6,000 authorized absences from work due to occupational illness, in an insured workforce of almost 10 million.

According to estimates by the United States Department of Commerce, Mexican suppliers, including subsidiaries of multinational corporations, claim about 80 percent of the market for safety and industrial hygiene equipment. The market for related consulting and training services is not well defined, but observers believe that foreign companies dominate the market, at least for the more sophisticated solutions.

By law, Mexican companies must belong to at least one specialized industry association. A key association is the *Asociación Nacional de Fabricantes y Distribuidores de Equipo de Seguridad Industrial (Anfadesi)*, National Association of Manufacturers and Distributors of Industrial Security Equipment. This organization conducts regular safety seminars designed to introduce health and safety technologies. The *Asociación Mexicana de Higiene y Seguridad Industrial (Amhsac)*, Mexican Association of Hygiene and Safety, which has some 3,000 member companies, also sponsors training programs as well as a variety of other events.