



Lee (right) in a light moment with UMS students and staff.

These buildings must undergo yearly audit

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KOTA KINABALU: Higher learning institutions (IPTs) and their residential colleges, especially those whose buildings are 10 years or more, must conduct annual compulsory safety audits and implement an efficient occupational safety and health (OSH) management system to help prevent accidents, among others.

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (Niosh) Chairman, Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye, said scheduled safety audit and good maintenance culture is very important to help maintain safety at all times.

"We do not know the level of safety at residential colleges throughout the country as no comprehensive study has been made.

"It may be necessary to carry out safety audits at all these residential colleges in order to assess the level of safety so that all the weaknesses can be improved," he said when delivering a keynote address at an OSH seminar for Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Residential Colleges, here, Tuesday.

Also present were UMS Deputy Vice-

Chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni), Prof Dr Ismail Ali and UMS OSH Centre Director, Prof Dr Khamisah Awang Lukman.

According to Lee, several studies conducted at IPT residential colleges showed various weaknesses including the lack or absence of Emergency Response Plan (ERP), fire resistance door, fire extinguisher, assembly area and exit signboard.

"There are also residential colleges that do not conduct fire drills while OSH awareness is still low among their students," he said.

He said a study published in the Community Health Journal 2011 showed the importance of conducting OSH audit to ensure that residential college management had implemented all relevant rules and standards.

"It is important for IPTs and their residential colleges to implement good OSH management system to ensure that the safety and health aspect at their premises is of high standard.

"Since the Occupational Safety and Health Act (Osha) 1994 makes its compulsory to maintain good OSH, Niosh wants the culture to be inculcated from school

to university level," he said.

He said focus should be given to the IPTs and their residential colleges since students will be in their vicinity for 24 hours a day.

Niosh supports UMS' effort to obtain the ISO45001: 2018 certification, which is currently being processed, and hopes that the proactive measure would be emulated by other IPTs including those which already had the OHSAS 18001 certification.

He also reminded organisations with OHSAS 18001 certification that they were given until March 12, 2021 to migrate to ISO 45001. ISO 45001 is a global standard for OSH management system which was developed by experts from more than 70 countries.

It was developed based on other generic management systems such as ISO 14001 and ISO 9001, using risk-based approaches to ensure continued effectiveness and improvement.

Lee also congratulated UMS for the launching of its E-Book on OSH Manual, which can be accessed online at its website, to provide guidance on OSH for all students and staff.