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18 SAFETY GALA

The Int'l ESG Conference

**Visionary Leadership & Governance for
Safety at
Workplaces and Beyond**

White Paper

**Prudent (ΕΧΕΦΡΩΝ) use of Technology and AI Leading
Changes, Safety Leadership and Culture**

Workshop Information

Workshop Title: Prudent (ΕΧΕΦΡΩΝ) use of Technology and AI Leading Changes, Safety Leadership and Culture

Facilitator: Mr. Asterios LIALIOS

Co- Facilitator : Mrs. Christina PANOPOULOU

Participants: Representatives of businesses, organizations, and Health & Safety professionals.

Purpose of this White Paper

- This paper aims to capture and consolidate the key discussions, insights and practical recommendations that emerged during the workshop titled “Prudent (ΕΧΕΦΡΩΝ) use of Technology and AI Leading Changes, Safety Leadership and Culture”.
- It serves as a reference document for professionals, organizations and stakeholders interested in understanding the main challenges, perspectives and proposed approaches discussed by participants. By summarizing the collective experience and viewpoints shared during the workshop, the paper provides readers with practical considerations, common themes and potential areas for further discussion, development and collaboration.

Executive Summary

- This paper explores the growing role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced technologies in workplace health and safety, operational management, and organizational decision-making. It examines both the opportunities and the challenges associated with the integration of AI into safety-critical environments and highlights the importance of balancing technological capability with human judgment and accountability.
- The paper discusses key topics including legal and ethical considerations, workforce transformation, overdependence on technology, safety leadership, organizational culture, and practical applications of AI across industries. Particular attention is given to the evolving relationship between human expertise and automated systems, as well as the importance of maintaining trust, transparency, competence, and human oversight in AI-supported operations.
- Several key findings emerged throughout the discussion. AI technologies can significantly improve monitoring, risk detection, operational efficiency, and hazard prevention, often providing faster and more consistent responses than human operators in specific situations. At the same time, participants recognized that AI systems remain susceptible to errors, biases, and limitations, while lacking ethical reasoning, emotional intelligence, empathy, and contextual understanding. As a result, effective implementation requires maintaining strong human involvement and accountability, particularly in safety-critical sectors, through appropriate human-in-the-loop or human-on-the-loop approaches.
- The paper also outlines several core recommendations for organizations and institutions. These include the development of governance frameworks and risk assessment methodologies for AI implementation, the establishment of clear accountability structures, investment in workforce training and competency development, and the promotion of transparent and ethical AI-supported decision-making processes. The importance of combining technological innovation with strong leadership, communication, and human-centered safety culture is emphasized throughout.
- Overall, the paper concludes that AI should be viewed as a tool that enhances human performance rather than replaces human responsibility. Organizations that successfully integrate advanced technologies while preserving critical thinking, ethical leadership, and workforce engagement are likely to achieve safer, more resilient, and more sustainable operational outcomes.

Introduction

- Advanced technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) are evolving at an unprecedented pace, transforming industries and redefining how organizations approach operational efficiency, safety, and decision-making. They possess extraordinary computing capacity and can process large volumes of information faster than humans in many situations. They also have the ability to monitor conditions continuously, identify patterns, and generate rapid responses.
- Despite these capabilities, machines still make mistakes. They can misinterpret data, inherit biases, fail in unexpected conditions, or generate inaccurate outputs. Human beings are also susceptible to fatigue, distraction, emotional reactions, inconsistency, and error. Therefore, the fair comparison is not “AI versus perfection,” but rather “AI versus human performance.”
- Beyond performance metrics, AI does not possess consciousness, emotional understanding, empathy or moral responsibility. While it can simulate reasoning and support decision-making, it does not genuinely understand ethics, compassion, psychological impact, or social consequences. For this reason, the prudent use of AI requires a balanced approach that combines technological capability with human judgment.

Challenges

- **Legal:** As AI systems become more integrated into operational environments, organizations must determine who is accountable when systems fail or produce harmful outcomes. Questions regarding legal responsibility, governance, and oversight will become increasingly important.
- **Ethical:** Human decision-making is imperfect, but humans still provide emotional intelligence, empathy, contextual understanding, and moral judgment. A machine may detect unsafe behavior or operational anomalies, but it cannot fully comprehend fear, stress, trauma, or human relationships.
- **Workforce transformation:** Historically, technological revolutions have transformed labor markets rather than eliminating work entirely. AI will also contribute to job relocation and workforce transformation. While certain repetitive or hazardous tasks may become automated, new roles will emerge that require digital literacy, system supervision, and technological oversight.
- **Overdependence on technology:** Easier access to information does not necessarily lead to deeper understanding. Overdependence on AI-generated recommendations may encourage individuals to accept outputs without verification or analytical reflection. Excessive dependence on automated systems, might lead human operators to gradually lose situational awareness or practical expertise. It can also create challenges with regards to knowledge management, especially where “sound engineering judgement” rather than data is required. Maintaining human competence remains essential in safety-critical environments.

Safety Leadership and Culture

- The integration of AI will influence not only safety systems but also the way safety leadership is practiced. Traditionally, safety leaders have relied on observation, experience, communication, and relationship-building to influence behavior and promote safe work practices. In the future, leaders will increasingly be required to interpret AI-generated insights while maintaining trust, engagement, and accountability across the workforce.
- A strong safety culture depends on trust. Employees must understand how AI systems are being used, what data are being collected, and how decisions are made. If implemented poorly, AI may be perceived as a surveillance tool, creating resistance and reducing engagement. Conversely, transparent implementation can strengthen trust by demonstrating that technology is being used to support employee wellbeing and risk reduction.
- Effective leaders will therefore need to balance technological oversight with human-centered management. Communication, ethical decision-making, change management, and workforce engagement will become increasingly important leadership competencies. Organizations that successfully combine technological capability with strong leadership practices are likely to develop more resilient and proactive safety cultures.
- Advanced technologies and AI offer major opportunities to improve workplace health and safety. Practical applications of AI and technology in safety management are already expanding rapidly across industries. Examples include:
 1. PPE detection systems
 2. Drone-based inspections
 3. Small robotic systems for safety walks and hazardous inspections
 4. Proximity alerting technologies
 5. ATEX spark-blocking systems
 6. Automated monitoring in dangerous environments
 7. Exoskeletons for ergonomic support
 8. AI-assisted forklift and lifting operations
 9. Wearable safety technologies
 10. Predictive analytics for incident prevention
 11. Digital permit-to-work systems (which can improve compliance and reduce procedural violations)
 12. Firefighting/ search and rescue operations

Safety Leadership and Culture II

- In many cases, AI systems can identify risks earlier than human operators and respond more consistently under pressure. However, prudent implementation requires maintaining appropriate human oversight in critical operations. In safety-critical sectors such as healthcare, aviation, energy, construction, manufacturing, and emergency response, a “human + AI” model is likely to remain the most effective approach.
- The ongoing discussion surrounding “human-in-the-loop” and “human-on-the-loop” systems highlights this challenge. Human-in-the-loop approaches integrate people directly into decision-making processes, while human-on-the-loop systems rely on human oversight to review and intervene when necessary. Both models emphasize that human accountability remains essential regardless of technological advancement.
- Technology can also strengthen organizational communication and operational management through:
 1. faster notifications and corrective actions,
 2. delegation and workflow tracking
 3. management visibility
 4. monitoring and reporting
 5. anonymous hazard reporting, and
 6. stronger engagement between leadership and frontline personnel.
- Additionally, AI-driven tools may increase interest and engagement among younger generations entering the workforce through digital training systems, simulations, and interactive learning applications.

Next Steps

- In the short term, organizations and institutions should focus on establishing governance frameworks and risk assessment methodologies for AI implementation (such as the new ISO 42001 Management System). International organizations, governments, and regulatory bodies such as the European Union and United Nations should continue developing guidelines, standards, and ethical frameworks for responsible AI use.
- Organizations should also:
 1. identify appropriate use cases,
 2. conduct risk assessments,
 3. establish clear accountability structures, and
 4. ensure transparency in AI-supported decision-making.
- Training will play a critical role in technological transformation. Personnel responsible for programming, using, and supervising AI systems in safety-critical environments should receive appropriate education, competency verification, and ongoing professional development. Future safety professionals will increasingly require hybrid competencies that combine operational expertise, risk management knowledge, and technological understanding.

Conclusions

- AI and advanced technologies have the potential to significantly improve workplace safety, operational efficiency, and risk management. Their ability to process information rapidly, monitor environments continuously, and reduce human exposure to hazardous activities can create safer and more resilient workplaces.
- However, AI should not be viewed as a replacement for human responsibility or leadership. Machines may provide faster responses and higher consistency in some situations, but they do not possess ethics, compassion, emotional intelligence, or genuine understanding of human consequences. Responsibility ultimately remains with human beings, organizations, and institutions.
- The prudent use of technology therefore requires balance. Excessive resistance to innovation may prevent important safety improvements, while blind dependence on automation may create new vulnerabilities and weaken human judgment.
- In critical industries, the most effective model will likely remain a partnership between human expertise and technological capability. AI should augment human performance, not replace human accountability.
- As organizations increasingly adopt AI-enabled systems, safety leadership and organizational culture will also evolve. The challenge is no longer whether AI should be used, but how it can be implemented responsibly to strengthen safety outcomes while preserving accountability, trust, and human-centered decision-making.
- Ultimately, AI is a powerful tool. The organizations that succeed in the future will be those that embrace innovation while preserving critical thinking, ethical leadership, and a strong human-centered safety culture.