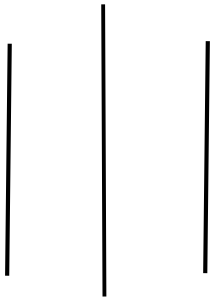
Report of the Occupational Health and Safety Audit Report

National Archives

Ramshah Path, Kathmandu, Nepal



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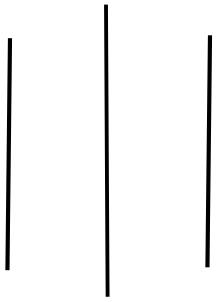

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Table of Contents

References:

1. Nepal Labour Act 2074
2. Labour Regulation 2075
3. Nepal national building code (107:1994) Provisional Recommendation on fire Safety
4. Nepal national building code (206:2015) Architectural Design Requirements
5. ISO 45001 Occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS)
6. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
7. Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO OSH 2001)

Attachment

1. OHS Inspection Checklist

Abbreviations

OSHC:	Occupational Safety and Health Centre
DoLOS:	Department of Labour and Occupational Safety
OHS:	Occupational Health and Safety
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
OHSMS:	Occupational Health and Safety Management System
ISO:	International Organization for Standardization
IDLH:	Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health
LOTO:	Lock Out Tag Out
PPE:	Personal Protective Equipment
HIRA:	Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
JHA:	Job Hazard Analysis
COSHH:	Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
OSHA:	Occupational Safety and Health Administration
IOSH:	Institute of Occupational Safety and Health
PEL:	Permissible Exposure Limit
SDS:	Safety Data Sheets
MSDS:	Materials Safety Data Sheets
SOP:	Standard Operating Procedure
PTW:	Permit To Work
STEL:	Short Term Exposure Limit
LTEL:	Long Term Exposure Limit
TWA:	Time-weighted Average
TLV:	Threshold Limit Value

1. Executive Summary

The Occupational Health and Safety Center, located in Bhaisepati, Lalitpur, has engaged an external Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) consultant to carry out a comprehensive OHS audit of the National Archives. The OHS audit was carried out on 10th Baishakh, 2082 to evaluate the institution's compliance with both national and international health and safety regulations, including Nepal's Labour Act, Nepal national building code and ISO 45001. Given the archive's role in preserving Nepal's documentary heritage, the audit assessed conditions across departments such as the chemical conservation Laboratory section, microfilm & electronic records management section, and archival storage, identifying physical, chemical, and ergonomic risks. The methodology included workplace inspections, document reviews, and staff consultation, focusing on key safety areas like fire safety, chemical handling, and infrastructure integrity. The audit revealed widespread safety issues. Key problems included a complete lack of emergency preparedness including no evacuation maps, assembly points, or trained personnel and insufficient fire safety infrastructure, such as missing alarms and inaccessible extinguishers. Electrical hazards like damaged wiring, unsafe chemical storage practices with unlabeled and expired chemicals, deteriorating infrastructure, and unsanitary facilities were also documented. These issues were categorized into major non-conformities, minor ones, and areas needing attention to prevent future risk, with 20 major non-conformities requiring urgent action.

To address these challenges, the audit recommended a detailed corrective action plan. This includes immediate development of an emergency response strategy, fire alarm installations, infrastructure repairs, proper chemical inventory management. It also called for comprehensive staff training and improvements in ventilation, signage, and workspace design. If implemented fully and in compliance with regulations, these actions would markedly improve workplace safety and operational resilience at the National Archives.

2. Introduction of National Archives

The formal announcement of the establishment of the National Archives of Nepal was made in the year 1959, and after construction of the present building it officially opened its doors in 1967 under the then Department of Archaeology, Ministry of Education. Its predecessor had been set up with the objective of managing and preserving the manuscripts and historical documents of Bir Library, (a collection dating from 1900 belonging to the royal family) and furthering research and publication endeavours. Thus, the former Bir Library was renamed as the National Archives in 1967. The National Archives is open to researchers and scholars who wish to consult or study archival documents in its custody. For scheduled rates it provides microfilm copies of microfilmed material, while also offering photocopies of documents which have not been microfilmed. The main functions of national archives are to collect and preserve the nation's wealth of archives for present and future generations; to receive documents of record, or official copies of such, from government bodies and government-related agencies; to provide access facilities to researchers so that they may consult archival documents and to make available, upon request, duplicate copies of such material; to advise government bodies and government-related agencies on the

safe-keeping of their records, and to function as a public records management office for the Government of Nepal. The National Archives of Nepal is prominently located within the premises of Singh Durbar (the central secretariat of the Government of Nepal) on Ramshah Path in Kathmandu.

3. Purpose of the Audit

This audit's main goals are to comprehensively analyse the overall OHS condition of the national archives, identify OHS risks and hazards, and pinpoint areas for improvement. In particular, the goals are as follows:

- To Verify adherence to national OHS laws, codes, and building safety standards.
- To assess the overall OHS status of national archives building to minimize hazards and risks such as slips, trips, falls, electrical hazards, fire incidents, chemical incident etc.
- To evaluate the existing safety procedures for emergencies, such as evacuation plans, fire drills, and first aid preparedness.
- To ensure that the physical infrastructure (building safety, ventilation, lighting, and sanitation) meets health and safety requirements.
- To encourage staff to adopt safe practices by identifying areas where additional training or awareness is needed.
- Provide actionable recommendations to improve safety management systems, ensuring that the national archives office remains safe over time.

4. Scope of the Audit

The scope of the OHS audit defines the boundaries and extent of the audit, covering key areas, processes, and documentation. This audit specifically focuses on:

4.1 Facilities: The audit provides a comprehensive and systematic evaluation of all significant facilities within the property, ensuring a careful assessment of both the building's overall infrastructure and its individual functional components. This involves a detailed review of critical sections such as the chemical conservation area, the microfilm and electronic records management unit, the administrative offices, archive storage rooms, library facilities, and essential amenities like restrooms and parking areas. Each of these elements plays a vital role in the daily functioning of the institution and contributes directly to the comfort, safety, and productivity of its occupants.

In addition to these operational units, the audit also pays close attention to structural and safety components, including stairways, corridors, and designated storage spaces. These areas are evaluated to determine whether they meet established safety standards and are sufficient in terms of design and accessibility.

Moreover, special consideration is given to the state and operational efficiency of both the parking and laboratory areas. These are inspected to ensure they are not only functional and adequately maintained but also compliant with health, safety, and accessibility regulations. By conducting this thorough analysis, the audit aims to identify strengths, uncover potential risks or deficiencies, and provide recommendations for improvements to uphold the institution's commitment to excellence in facility management and operational effectiveness.

4.2 Documentation: During the audit, a range of documents was reviewed to assess the organization's occupational health and safety (OHS) performance and compliance with relevant standards and regulations. While some materials pertaining to OHS were available such as the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for operating the fumigation chamber and a list of chemicals used these were limited in scope and did not represent a comprehensive OHS documentation framework. Critically, several key documents that are fundamental to establishing and maintaining an effective OHS management system were found to be missing. Notably, the organization lacks a formal OHS policy, which is essential for setting the strategic direction and demonstrating management's commitment to health and safety. Additionally, there were no documented emergency response protocols, which are vital for guiding employee actions during incidents such as fires, chemical spills, or medical emergencies. The absence of "Dos and Don'ts" guidelines or other awareness materials related to OHS compliance further indicates a gap in proactive risk communication and employee education.

This lack of foundational OHS documentation not only hinders the organization's ability to ensure a safe working environment but may also lead to non-compliance with national regulations or international OHS standards, such as ISO 45001. Strengthening the documentation framework by developing and implementing core OHS policies, procedures, and training materials is strongly recommended to enhance overall workplace safety and regulatory compliance

4.3 Personnel: The audit process requires comprehensive interviews and consultations with a diverse group of personnel, ensuring that insights are gathered from all relevant departments and roles within the organization. This includes office staff, whose administrative functions and compliance with procedures are critical to operations; workers involved in chemical conservation section and microfilm & electronic record management section and others. By engaging with employees from various departments and functions, the audit process seeks to develop a holistic understanding of organizational practices. This inclusive methodology not only enhances the credibility of the audit findings but also fosters a culture of transparency and continuous improvement. Ultimately, ensuring that all key contributors are involved in the evaluation process helps to identify strengths, address weaknesses, and drive informed decision-making for organizational advancement.

The audit covered key aspects of occupational health and safety, including:

- Fire safety and emergency preparedness
- Electrical safety

- Chemical safety
- Illumination and ventilation
- Slips, trips and fall hazards
- Laboratory safety
- Hazardous materials management
- Building infrastructure
- First aid and medical response
- Others

5. Benefits of OHS audit: Occupational health and safety (OHS) audits are essential for promoting a risk management culture and ensuring employees' safety. Among the primary benefits of conducting OHS audits is the identification and removal of possible workplace risks. In a structured analysis, audits identify hazardous practices, faulty equipment, and other risks that might lead to accidents or injuries. Addressing these issues promptly helps organizations to create a safer working place, reduce work-related accidents, and decrease the expense of injury and compensation payouts.

Another key advantage of OHS audits is legal and regulatory compliance. Organizations are governed by laws that mandate them to meet specific safety standards, and failure to comply can result in penalties, legal fines, or even business closure. OHS audits on a regular basis ensure compliance because they identify loopholes in safety practices and recommend the appropriate corrective actions.

6. Audit Methodology: The audit methodology employed a combination of techniques to ensure a thorough and objective assessment of the organization’s OHS performance, building infrastructure. The key components of the methodology are as follows:

Literature Review: During the audit process, following national international OHS law, regulation and guidelines reviewed.

6.1 Nepal national building code (107:1994) Provisional Recommendation on fire Safety: The "Provisional Recommendation on Fire Safety" lists crucial fire safety precautions for Nepali residential buildings. It highlights the very minimum needed to provide safety in an emergency, including adequate access, fire escape routes, and evacuation provisions. After the 1988 earthquake brought attention to the need for strong safety regulations, the code was created. It provides definitions for relevant terminology, makes a distinction between ordinary and important structures, and specifies requirements for structural components such as fire extinguishers, chimneys, and fire escapes, including setback spaces, exit doors, and stair width.

Additionally, it covers fire safety zoning and lightning arrester installation to reduce the likelihood of lightning-caused fires. By citing other regulations, when necessary, the rule encourages architects and builders to take into account higher safety standards. Although it is limited in scope, its goal is to increase fire resilience in residential and urban environments while ensuring

safer designs that comply with regulations. The government of Nepal, foreign consultants, and several engineering and architectural organizations worked together to develop this tentative recommendation.

6.2 Nepal national building code (206:2015) Architectural Design Requirements: In Nepal, the planning, design, and construction of buildings are governed by the Nepal National Building Code (NNBC) 206: 2015 Architectural Design Requirements specifications. New building technology and safety issues, especially with regard to earthquake readiness, prompted revisions. Significant changes were made as a result of the update process, which was started by the Building Construction Management and Improvement Committee (BCMIC) and examined by experts. These changes included updated requirements for lighting, ventilation, and lift installation, better methods for calculating exit capacities, and criteria for classifying buildings. In order to promote safe and sustainable construction methods, it was formally approved in 2015 and published in 2016.Buildings are categorized by the code according to their height (low-rise, medium-rise, high-rise, and skyscrapers) and occupation (residential, educational, hospital, etc.).

To ensure a safe evacuation in the event of an emergency, it establishes minimum requirements for a number of elements, including exit systems, room sizes, stairways, and hallways. High-rise structures are subject to special regulations, which include the need for pressurized staircases, lifts, and refuge shelters. Parking, basements, and accessibility for those with disabilities are also included, guaranteeing inclusivity in public areas and structures with special rules for those in wheelchairs. Accessibility for disabled persons is a critical section of the code, dividing buildings into three categories: minimally accessible, partially accessible, and fully accessible. Depending on the category, requirements include ramps, wide doorways, disabled-friendly lifts, and sanitary facilities. Furthermore, essential safety measures such as fire-resistant staircases, mechanical ventilation in basements, and proper drainage systems are emphasized. This comprehensive approach ensures that buildings in Nepal meet modern safety, functionality, and inclusivity standards, aligning with international best practices.

6.3 Nepal labour act 2074: This is the main piece of legislation in Nepal that deals with OHS. It describes thorough occupational health and safety procedure to safeguard employees and sustain a safe work environment. Employers are required to adopt a safety policy, maintain a safe workplace, offer training, and supply PPE at no cost. They are also in charge of guarding against environmental risks and ensuring the security of any visitors who may access the working place. Material manufacturers and suppliers are required to ensure product safety and supply the required safety data sheets and manuals. Employees are expected to wear the appropriate protective gear and adhere to safety regulations.

The act mandates forming a safety and health committee in workplaces with 20 or more employees to oversee and advise on safety practices. It grants workers the right to stop work in case of immediate danger and provides guidelines for resolving disputes related to workplace safety risks. The act also includes provisions to control infectious diseases, offer special accommodations for pregnant workers, and manage occupational disease treatments, potentially

supplemented by the social security fund. Regular inspections ensure compliance, and any failures can prompt the authorities to order immediate corrective actions.

6.4 Labour Regulation 2075: These regulations offer comprehensive guidelines and requirements for carrying out the 2074 Labour Act's provisions. It places forth precise rules for employment practices, including duties for companies and rights and protections for workers. Important clauses include regulated working hours (8 hours a day and 48 hours a week), necessary employment contracts, and overtime compensation equal to 1.5 times the usual income. Along with enforcing prompt wage payments, it also outlines leave entitlements, such as annual, sick, and maternity/paternity absences. The rule requires businesses to provide sanitary facilities and safety equipment, particularly for workers in hazardous tasks, in order to ensure a safe and healthy workplace.

Additionally, the rule sets guidelines for fair termination practices, outlining severance pay based on years of service and protecting against unfair dismissals. Employers and employees contribute to social security funds, providing benefits like pensions and health coverage. It also prohibits child labour and discrimination based on gender, caste, or ethnicity. With these provisions, the Nepal Labour Rule 2074 aims to ensure fair treatment, equitable wages, and safe working conditions for Nepalese workers, contributing to a more organized and ethical employment sector.

6.5 ISO 45001 Occupational health and safety management system (OHSMS): A global standard for occupational health and safety management systems is ISO 45001. It gives businesses a foundation for proactively enhancing worker well-being, lowering risks, and improving workplace safety. OHSAS 18001 was superseded by ISO 45001, which was published by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) in 2018. In order to reduce workplace dangers and guarantee adherence to relevant legal and regulatory standards, it places a strong emphasis on a methodical and integrative approach that involves leadership, employee participation, and continuous development. Because it adheres to the High-Level Structure (HLS), the standard can be used with other ISO management systems, including ISO 14001 for environmental management and ISO 9001 for quality management.

ISO 45001's emphasis on risk-based thinking and employee involvement is one of its main characteristics. According to the standard, companies must recognize occupational health and safety hazards as well as opportunities and take the necessary steps to mitigate them through suitable controls and procedures. In order to ensure that upper management actively contributes to the development of a culture of safety, it also highlights the need of leadership commitment. In order to establish workable solutions to workplace dangers and to foster a shared responsibility for safety, worker involvement is encouraged. Organizations can improve employee satisfaction, productivity, and brand reputation in addition to lowering workplace accidents and injuries by implementing ISO 45001. It is a useful tool for businesses looking to show that they are dedicated to creating a safe and healthy workplace.

7. Consultations: A comprehensive understanding of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) compliance and implementation was gained through consultations with staff members. The audit process involved a diverse range of stakeholders, including the information officer, chemist, lab assistant, librarian and other employees, each offering valuable perspectives. These contributions collectively provided a well-rounded view of the program's implementation, benefits, and areas for improvement. Technical staff shared insights into operations within the chemical conservation lab, as well as the microfilm and electronic record management systems, highlighting the relevance of OHS measures in their daily tasks. Meanwhile, employees expressed concerns about the lack of training related to chemical handling, lack of ventilation, congested workspace creating ergonomic hazards, emergency protocols, and overall safety procedures.

8. Inspection of National Archives: An inspection was conducted on 10th Baishakh 2082 as a critical part of the audit process. The two-story building was originally constructed to serve various operational and instructional functions. However, due to prolonged neglect and inadequate maintenance, the building has significantly deteriorated. Numerous cracks are visible on the walls, and the ceiling shows considerable damage. Despite these conditions, several sections including Chemical Conservation laboratory section, Administration, Library, Archives Storage, and Microfilm and Electronic Records Management section continue to operate from the same premises on a daily basis. Each facility's detailed inspection is as follows:

8.1 Chemical Conservation Laboratory Section: This section is dedicated to critical preservation tasks such as fumigation, repair, and manual binding of manuscripts and other documents. On average, 15 to 20 workers are engaged daily to perform these specialized activities. The section comprises various functional units, including a chemical store room, administration office, document flattening and binding room, fumigation chamber room, and an iron room. However, the entire setup suffers from space constraints, resulting in a congested working environment. The lack of adequate space poses operational challenges and may also impact the efficiency and safety of the workers.

Despite the spatial limitations, some safety measures have been implemented to protect the workforce and ensure procedural compliance. Workers are provided with basic personal protective equipment such as aprons and masks, and chemical safety signs are visibly displayed throughout the area. A list of chemicals used within the premises is maintained for reference, and a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for operating the fumigation chamber is prominently posted to guide safe usage. Additionally, access to the chemical store room is controlled, indicating an awareness of the risks involved. However, given the hazardous nature of the materials and the cramped conditions, further improvements in infrastructure, ventilation, and comprehensive safety protocols would significantly enhance the overall safety and functionality of this section.

The audit and inspection revealed several critical Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) non-compliances that pose significant risks to workers and the workplace environment. A major concern is the lack of worker awareness and emergency preparedness, as employees have not

been oriented about the hazards present in their work area nor trained in essential safety practices like first aid and fire safety. Furthermore, the absence of basic safety equipment such as first aid kits, eye wash stations, and emergency showers significantly compromises workers' ability to respond to injuries or hazardous exposures. Poor ventilation and the unavailability of designated evacuation routes further exacerbate the risks, especially in the event of fire or chemical spills. The situation is worsened by the lack of a spill prevention plan and a functional fire alarm system, both of which are vital for emergency response and risk mitigation.

In addition, the workplace exhibits severe lapses in chemical safety and equipment handling. The storage and usage of expired chemicals without proper containment, alongside the absence of fume hoods in most rooms, raise major health concerns due to the potential for toxic exposure. The removed safety guard from the binding machine and the presence of damaged electrical cables represent clear mechanical and electrical hazards, increasing the likelihood of accidents. Moreover, the failure to implement a disposal plan for hazardous materials and the improper storage of combustible items contribute to a heightened fire risk. The cumulative effect of these deficiencies reflects a systemic lack of adherence to standard OHS protocols, underscoring the urgent need for corrective actions and the implementation of a robust health and safety management system

8.2 Administrative Office and Study Hall: The overall safety status of the administrative office was found to be satisfactory, with proper provisions in place for ventilation, lighting, and seating arrangements, ensuring a conducive and safe working environment for staff. The presence of a functional fire alarm system further enhances the office's preparedness for emergency situations. However, significant concerns were observed in the adjoining study hall, which was cluttered with damaged and unwanted materials. This not only obstructs movement and reduces usable space but also poses serious fire hazards and safety risks due to the accumulation of combustibles and obstructive items. Immediate action is required to clear and properly maintain the study hall to mitigate these potential dangers and ensure compliance with safety standards.

8.3 Exhibition Hall and Electrical Panel Room: Access to the exhibition hall and the electrical panel room was restricted and managed by designated staff, ensuring controlled entry. While the exhibition hall was cleaned and maintained, a critical shortcoming was observed in the absence of a fire alarm system, which is essential for early detection and response in case of fire. Additionally, batteries were found stored in close proximity to the electrical panel, which, although no immediate electrical hazards or safety violations were noted, still raises concerns regarding potential risks. The area lacked appropriate electrical hazard warning signs, which are important for informing and protecting personnel. Fire extinguishers were available providing a basic level of fire preparedness. However, as a proactive safety measure, it is strongly recommended to relocate the electrical panel outside the main office area to reduce potential risks and enhance overall fire safety compliance.

8.4 Archival Storage Section: The main storage area for archival documents is a highly secure facility, strictly regulated through controlled security access to ensure the protection of sensitive

materials. This section is equipped with essential safety systems, including a fire alarm and fire extinguishers, to mitigate the risk of fire-related incidents. Additionally, a temperature monitoring system is in place to maintain stable environmental conditions, crucial for the preservation of archival materials. Dehumidifiers are used to control moisture levels and prevent the growth of mold and mildew. To safeguard the documents from pests, rodent-repellent medicines have also been strategically placed within the storage area.

Despite these preventive measures, several maintenance issues were observed in the storage facility. The installed exhaust and cooling hood system, intended to regulate airflow and temperature, was found to be non-functional. Furthermore, the ceiling panels showed visible signs of damage, indicating structural concerns. The area also lacks adequate ventilation, which may contribute to fluctuating humidity and temperature levels, potentially endangering the permanency of stored documents. Addressing these shortcomings is essential to ensuring a stable and safe archival environment.

8.5 Microfilming & Electronic Record Management Section: The Microfilm and Electronic Record Management Section is responsible for microfilming and digitizing the archival documents, storing microfilm reels, digital images and providing access to researchers. It is equipped with specialized facilities including a microfilm scanning room, dark room, negative room, document scanning room, positive room, microfilm reader room, and a digitization room, each designed to handle specific stages of document processing and preservation. These facilities support the systematic conversion of physical records into secure microfilm reels and digital formats, ensuring long-term storage and ease of access for researchers. To safeguard valuable archival materials and equipment, the section is equipped with a comprehensive fire safety system, including fire alarms and extinguishers, highlighting its commitment to both preservation and safety.

The current working environment presents several significant safety concerns that need urgent attention. Firstly, the lack of proper ventilation and the presence of strong chemical fumes suggest inadequate air circulation, which can lead to serious health hazards for workers, such as respiratory issues or long-term exposure effects. The use of expired chemicals and improper storage further compounds the risk, increasing the chances of chemical reactions, leaks, or even fires. The absence of essential emergency response equipment like showers, eye washers, and first aid kits indicates that workers are ill-prepared to respond to accidents or chemical exposure. Furthermore, there is no standard operating procedures (SOPs) for specific activities, such as microfilming, use of chemicals and its disposal.

In addition to equipment and procedural shortcomings, the overall preparedness of the workforce is also lacking. Workers have not been trained in basic first aid or fire safety, leaving them vulnerable in the event of an emergency. The absence of such critical training can lead to delayed or inappropriate responses during accidents, potentially worsening outcomes. Poor housekeeping practices contribute to clutter and hazards in the workspace, increasing the risk of trips, slips, or chemical spills. Together, these issues paint a picture of a workplace that is not only non-compliant with safety regulations but also places its workers at considerable risk. Immediate

steps must be taken to address these deficiencies through improved infrastructure, comprehensive training, and the implementation of clear and enforced safety protocols.

8.6 Toilets: The overall condition of the toilets is highly unsatisfactory, reflecting a serious lack of maintenance and hygiene practices. Many toilets were found to be unclean, with visible dirt and stains on the floors, indicating that regular cleaning schedules are either not followed or are ineffective. Furthermore, essential hygiene supplies such as soap and a consistent water supply were missing in several facilities, compromising the users' ability to maintain proper sanitation. The absence of these basic necessities not only poses health risks but also highlights systemic neglect in the management and upkeep of the toilet infrastructure.

8.7 Library: The National Archives library house an impressive collection of approximately 20,000 accords, encompassing a broad range of subjects in Nepali, English, Hindi, and Sanskrit. These accords include around 20,000 printed books, providing a valuable resource for researchers, scholars, and the general public. The library appears well-maintained in terms of cleanliness, and basic fire safety measures such as fire extinguishers have been provided. This reflects a commitment to preserving the library's resources and ensuring a secure environment for users.

However, several issues compromise the overall safety and functionality of the library. The space is notably congested, limiting ease of movement and potentially posing evacuation challenges during emergencies. Cupboards installed directly in front of windows block natural lighting, making the reading environment less pleasant and energy inefficient. More concerning are the safety hazards: the absence of a fire alarm system, an open and exposed electrical panel, and a damaged exhaust fan collectively indicate lapses in proper infrastructure maintenance. These issues not only affect the user experience but also increase the risk of fire or electrical hazards, underscoring the urgent need for corrective action.

8.8 Corridors and stairs: The building is equipped with stairs and corridors to facilitate movement; however, while fire extinguishers are strategically installed along most of the corridors to enhance fire safety, the effectiveness of emergency evacuation is compromised due to the storage of materials in some of these passageways. These stored items create physical obstructions that can hinder quick and safe evacuation during emergencies, posing significant safety risks. The presence of such blockages not only violates standard safety protocols but also undermines the intended function of the corridors as clear evacuation routes, emphasizing the urgent need for improved housekeeping and enforcement of fire safety regulations.

8.9 Parking and other facilities: The National Archives building, while equipped with parking facilities for both cars and two-wheelers, lacks appropriate signage to guide visitors to designated parking areas. In the absence of clear directions, motorcycles and scooters were observed parked haphazardly in undesignated areas, including on pedestrian walkways. This improper use of space not only creates congestion but also poses a significant obstruction for pedestrians, particularly the elderly, children, and individuals with disabilities. The lack of organization in vehicle

placement reflects poor management of the available infrastructure and affects the overall accessibility and safety of the premises.

Additionally, the external drainage system around the building was found to be uncovered, presenting a serious safety hazard. Open drains pose risks of tripping and falling, especially in low-light conditions or during adverse weather when visibility is reduced. Such conditions compromise the safety of both visitors and staff and indicate a lapse in basic facility maintenance. Addressing these issues with proper signage, designated parking zones, and covered drainage would greatly improve the safety, accessibility, and overall functionality of the National Archives premises.

9. Hazard identification and Risk assessment: Hazard identification and risk assessment are critical processes in ensuring workplace safety, as every workplace, office, or training center inherently presents unique hazards and risks. During the audit, an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) checklist was utilized to systematically identify potential hazards in national archives building. The checklist covered various aspects, including physical, electrical, chemical, ergonomic, fire safety ensuring a comprehensive evaluation. Key findings highlighted as follows:

9.1 General Safety of National Archives building: The safety audit highlighted several areas where the building meets general safety requirements, such as having visible address identification, working lighting, emergency equipment access, and proper stair and handrail conditions. The security of the building is also robust, with round-the-clock police presence and CCTV coverage. These positive aspects indicate that the building has implemented many foundational safety and security measures effectively, contributing to a generally secure environment for occupants and visitors.

However, the audit also identifies critical safety concerns needing attention. Several issues including cracked windows, uncovered external drains, obstructed evacuation routes, and inadequate parking arrangements. For instance, some windows and ceiling panels are damaged, drains are not secured, materials block corridors, and parking lacks proper signage and designated spaces. These lapses present potential hazards during emergencies and compromise the overall safety of the premises. Prompt corrective action is necessary to address these shortcomings and ensure full compliance with safety standards. Following questions were included in general safety of checklist.

1	General Safety	√	×	Observations
1.1	Is the building address or identification clearly visible?	√		Office identification is clearly visible.
1.2	Is information officer contact details displayed?	√		Information officer contact detail is displayed.
1.3	Are exterior and interior lights in working order?	√		Lights were in working conditions.
1.4	Are the exits onto public streets free from visibility obstructions?	√		
1.5	Does building has accessible to emergency equipment and vehicle?	√		Building has accessible to emergency equipment and vehicle.
1.6	Are windows free from cracks or broken panes?		×	Some of windows and ceiling panels found damaged.

1.7	Are stairs, landings and handrails in good repair and fastened securely?	√		
1.8	Are all external sewers, drains lines covered or secured?		×	External drains were not covered and secured.
1.9	Do entrance doors close slowly to avoid hazards to fingers?	√		
1.10	Are floors non slippery and cleaned?	√		
1.11	Are corridors and exits free and clear of all obstructions?		×	Materials were stored in some of corridors obstructing evacuation routes.
1.12	Are parking facilities provided?		×	Parking facilities are provided however there is no parking signages, bike and scooters were parked in undesignated area.
1.13	Security of building?	√		National archives building is secured by Nepal police 24/7 and CCTV cameras are installed around the building internally and externally.

9.2 Emergency Preparedness: The overall emergency preparedness of the building is alarmingly inadequate, presenting a significant risk to the safety and well-being of its occupants. The absence of a formal emergency plan, lack of displayed emergency contact protocols, unmarked exit signs, and missing emergency escape route maps are clear indicators of critical gaps in emergency readiness. These elements are essential for guiding occupants during emergencies such as fires, earthquakes, or other disasters. Without them, confusion and panic can ensue, potentially resulting in preventable injuries or fatalities. The failure to implement these basic measures reflects a serious oversight in the management's approach to safety and regulatory compliance.

Further compounding the issue is the facility's lack of emergency resources and staff preparedness. The unavailability of first aid kits and absence of trained personnel in first aid severely limit the capacity to provide immediate assistance during a medical emergency. Additionally, the building does not have a designated assembly point for evacuees, and evacuation drills have never been conducted, leaving occupants unprepared for orderly evacuation. The fact that not all floors have accessible emergency exits further increases the risk, especially for individuals with limited mobility. This level of negligence not only endangers lives but also breaches standard occupational health and safety regulations. Immediate corrective actions such as developing an emergency response plan, conducting staff training, and upgrading physical safety infrastructure are urgently required to bring the building to a minimum acceptable safety standard. See the below checklist.

3	Emergency Preparedness	√	×	Observations
3.1	Is emergency plan in place?		×	There is no emergency plan.
3.2	Are emergency protocols/contact details displayed?		×	Emergency protocols/ contact details are not displayed.
3.3	Are exits signs identified and marked?		×	Emergency exit signs are not marked and identified.
3.4	Are emergency escape routes posted?		×	There are no emergency escape route.

3.5	Are first aid kits available?		×	First aid kits are not in the building.
3.6	Trained first aider available?		×	Staffs are not trained for first aid.
3.7	Is assembly point available?		×	Assembly point is not established.
3.8	Evacuation drill conducted?		×	Evacuation drills are not conducted.
3.9	Is there emergency exit to each floor?		×	There are not emergency exit to each floor.

9.3 Fire Safety: The fire safety assessment reveals partial compliance with essential safety measures. Fire extinguishers are deemed suitable, sufficient, and regularly inspected, though some are obstructed and not easily accessible. The fire alarm system is functional but limited to the archival storage room, administration rooms and microfilm & electronic record management section, highlighting the need for expansion to critical areas like laboratories and exhibition halls. Significant gaps include the absence of trained fire wardens and a lack of evidence for routine fire alarm testing, both of which pose serious risks in emergency preparedness and response. Immediate actions are recommended to train staff as fire wardens and implement a regular fire alarm testing protocol. See the below fire safety checklist used during the audit.

4	**Fire Safety**	√	×	**Observations**
4.1	Are fire extinguishers suitable and sufficient?	√		Fire extinguishers provided to each room.
4.2	Are all fire extinguishers inspected, charged, and accessible?	√		Fire extinguishers are inspected. However, some of fire extinguishers are blocked and not easily accessible.
4.3	Is fire alarm system, including smoke and/or heat detectors, operable and able to be heard throughout the building	√		Fire alarm system is installed to archival storage room. It needs to install to other room such as chemical conservation laboratory, exhibition hall, library and others.
4.4	Are trained fire wardens available?		×	Staffs are not trained as fire wardens.
4.6	Testing of fire alarm system		×	There is no evidence of regular testing of fire alarm system.

9.4 Electrical Safety: The electrical safety inspection highlights several critical deficiencies that pose potential hazards in the building, indicating non-compliance with basic safety standards. Specifically, electrical panels were found unsecured, circuits lacked proper identification, some switches and receptacles were damaged, and electrical cords showed signs of wear and poor condition, such as fraying and trailing. Additionally, there were no safety signs posted on the electrical panels, further compounding the risks for workers and maintenance personnel.

On a positive note, the inspection did confirm that electrical tools and equipment are in good condition and have been properly inspected. Moreover, the Residual Current Device (RCD/ELCB) was installed and functioning correctly offering some level of protection against electrical faults.

Despite these few positives, the numerous deficiencies identified call for immediate corrective action to ensure compliance with safety regulations and prevent potential electrical accidents or injuries. See the checklist below.

5	Electrical Safety	√	×	Observations
5.1	Are all electrical panels secured?		×	Some of electrical panels left opened and exposed.
5.2	Have all electrical circuits been identified?		×	There are no identification on circuits.
5.3	Are all electrical switches and receptacles in good condition?		×	Some of switches found damaged.
5.4	All electrical cords and extension cords are in good shape with no fraying, swelling, splicing or patches?		×	Damaged and trailing electrical cords observed.
5.5	Electrical safety signs posted on panel?		×	No safety and hazards signs on electrical panel
5.6	Are electricals tools and equipment in good condition and inspected?	√		
5.7	Have RCDS (ELCB) installed and functioning?	√		ELCB was installed and functioning.

9.4 Chemical Store Safety: During the audit**,** the chemical storage area reveals several critical safety compliance issues. These include the lack of a chemical inventory, first aid kit, spill cleanup and a safety shower/eye wash station, all of which are fundamental for ensuring immediate response to chemical accidents. Additionally, hazardous chemical containers were not properly labeled, and chemicals were not segregated appropriately, which significantly increases the risk of hazardous reactions or misidentification. The absence of a proper chemical waste disposal plan further compounds the risks of environmental contamination and health hazards.

Despite these shortcomings, the inspection also highlights some areas of compliance. SDS documents are available in the office, basic personal protective equipment (PPE) is accessible, and appropriate warning signs are posted at the entrance. Furthermore, good laboratory practices are observed with prohibitions on eating, drinking, and smoking in the room, and the store is kept secure when not in use. However, the presence of expired chemicals remains a concern. Overall, while some foundational safety measures are in place, the chemical storage area requires immediate attention to address significant safety hazards and regulatory non-compliance. See the checklist below.

8	Chemical Storage Area	√	×	Observations
8.1	Up-to-date inventory maintained for all hazardous materials?		×	No chemical inventory observed.
8.2	Chemical Safety Data Sheets (SDS) maintained and readily available?	√		SDS are available at office.
8.3	First aid materials readily available?		×	There is no first aid in chemical storage area.
8.4	Spill cleanup materials available?		×	Spill cleanup materials were not found.
8.5	Safety shower and eye wash available?		×	There is no safety shower and eye wash facility.

8.6	Appropriate PPE available?	√		Basic PPE (gloves, glass) are available.
8.7	Appropriate labels are found on all hazardous chemical containers?		×	Some of chemical bottles were not labeled.
8.8	Chemicals are segregated?		×	Chemicals segregation was not observed
8.9	Appropriate warning signs posted in chemical storage area entrance?	√		
8.10	Expired chemicals removed?		×	Some expired chemicals stored.
8.11	Smoking, eating, and drinking prohibited in lab?	√		Noone allowed to eat, smoke and drink in lab.
8.12	Lab is maintained secure; door is locked when no one is in lab?	√		Lab is locked and secured.
8.13	Chemical wastes disposed properly?		×	There is no chemical waste disposable plan.

10. Key Audit Findings: The findings from audit are documented, typically categorizing major non-conformance, minor non-conformance, observation and opportunity for improvement. This helps prioritize corrective actions and ensures continual improvement. The evaluation of the audit findings is based on the following definitions.

Major Nonconformities **(MaNC):** Indicates a situation that could lead to serious injury or illness to employees due to inadequate safety practices or procedures.

Minor Nonconformities (**MiNC**): A deviation that does not significantly impact the system's effectiveness or compliance. It typically involves minor issues.

Observations **(OBS):** Any issues which are likely to become a NC if not treated until the next audit are marked as observations **(OBS)**. No response is required.

Opportunities for Improvement **(OFI)**: If certain aspects which generally comply with the requirements of the standard should be improved, then they are marked as opportunities for improvement. See the details of key audit findings in tabular form.

Summary of Audit Findings Log

S.N.	Category	Findings (including area and facility)	Remarks
1	OFI	Chemical safety related more signages need to display to alert employees.	
2	OBS	The document flattening and binding room needs to be rearranged to facilitate easier evacuation in case of an emergency.	
3	MiNC	Some of the windows and ceiling panels were found to be damaged.	
4	MiNC	Some rooms lack adequate illumination, and there are no records of illumination measurements.	
5	MiNC	Parking facilities are provided however there is no parking signages, bike and scooters were parked in undesignated area.	

6	MaNC	External drainage system around the building was found to be uncovered, presenting a serious safety hazard.	
7	MaNC	Materials were stored in some of corridors obstructing evacuation routes.	
8	MaNC	There is no emergency plan in place to deal incase of emergency.	
9	MaNC	Emergency contact details, protocols, evacuation routes are not marked and identified.	
10	MaNC	First aid and fire safety training are not conducted to staff.	
11	MaNC	First aid kits are not provided.	
12	MaNC	Evacuation drills have not been conducted, and an assembly point has not been designated.	
13	MaNC	Staff are not trained for fire safety and use of fire extinguisher.	
14	MaNC	Fire alarm system is not regularly tested.	
15	MaNC	Some of electrical panels left opened and exposed.	
16	MaNC	Electrical safety and hazards signs are not displayed on panel.	
17	MaNC	Damaged electrical cables and switches observed.	
18	MaNC	Trailing electrical cables creating tripping hazards.	
19	MaNC	Lack of proper ventilation systems in various room.	
20	MaNC	Exhaust hoods are not installed in chemical conservation section.	
21	MiNC	Toilets are dirty and without soap and water supply.	
22	MaNC	Chemical inventory is not available at chemical store room.	
23	MaNC	Expired chemicals observed, improper storage for chemicals.	
24	MaNC	First aid kit, eye wash station and emergency shower system are not provided in chemical conservation section.	
25	MaNC	Some of chemicals stored in water bottle without labeled.	
26	MaNC	Chemical spill cleanup and disposal procedures are not in place.	

11. Recommendations: Several non-compliances were identified during the audit, with certain critical risks necessitating immediate corrective action to mitigate potential adverse impacts. These critical issues demand prompt attention to ensure compliance and avoid incidents/accidents. Following recommendation are made based on the key findings of audit.

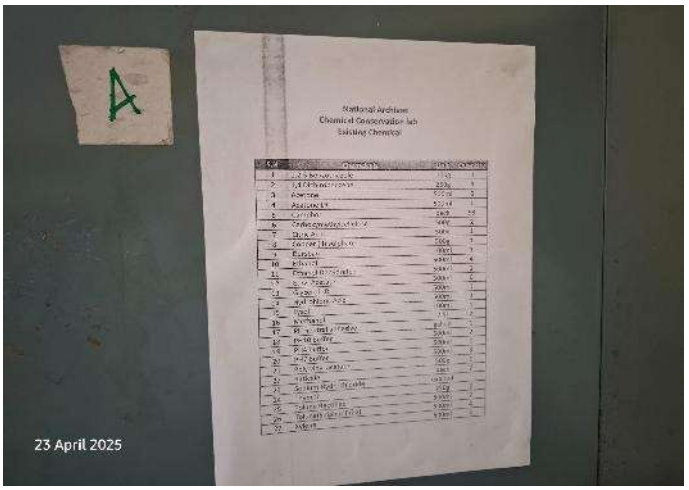
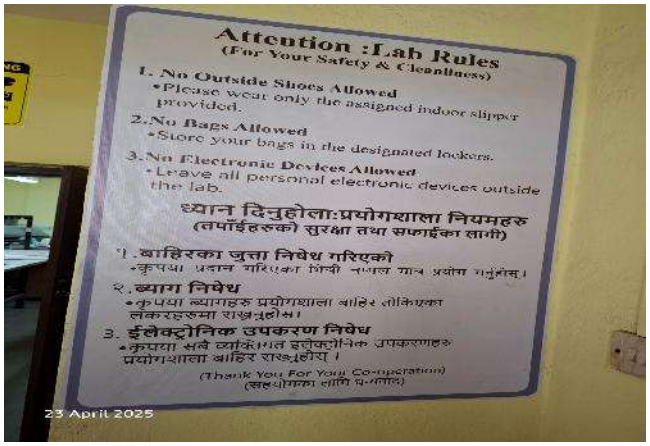
S.N.	Recommendations	Responsibility	Timeline
1	Damaged windows and ceiling panels need to repair and replace.	National Archives	30-03-2082
2	Adequate lighting is needed to prevent glare.	National Archives	30-02-2082
3	Parking areas should be clearly marked with signage, and vehicles must be parked only in designated zones.	National Archives	30-03-2082
4	All drains should be covered to avoid potential incidents.	National Archives	30-03-2082
5	All materials stored in corridors should be removed to prevent obstruction in case of an emergency.	National Archives	30-03-2082
6	Emergency preparedness plan must be prepared to deal with foreseeable incidents and accidents.	National Archives	30-03-2082
7	Emergency contact details and protocols should be prepared and displayed throughout the building for use in case of an emergency.	National Archives	30-03-2082
8	First aid and fire safety training must be provided to staff.	National Archives	30-03-2082
9	Suitable and sufficient first aid kits need to provide.	National Archives	30-03-2082
10	The fire alarm system needs to be evaluated and installed in additional facilities, such as the exhibition hall. Fire alarm system required regular testing.	National Archives	30-03-2082
11	All electrical connections and panels required to inspect and repair. Electrical panels need to closed and lock.	National Archives	30-03-2082
12	Damaged electrical cables and switches need to remove and replace.	National Archives	30-03-2082
13	All trailing cables need to manage properly to avoid tripping and electric shock.	National Archives	30-03-2082
14	Proper and adequate ventilation system must be installed in all rooms of the Chemical Conservation Section as well as the Microfilm and Electronic Record Management Sections.	National Archives	30-03-2082
15	The exhaust system and fume extractor hood require repair in archival storage room.	National Archives	30-03-2082
16	Toilets must be clean and regular water supply need to provide.	National Archives	30-03-2082
17	Toilets must be kept clean, and a regular water supply must be ensured.	National Archives	30-03-2082
18	Chemicals inventory needs to prepare in chemical storage room.	National Archives	30-02-2082

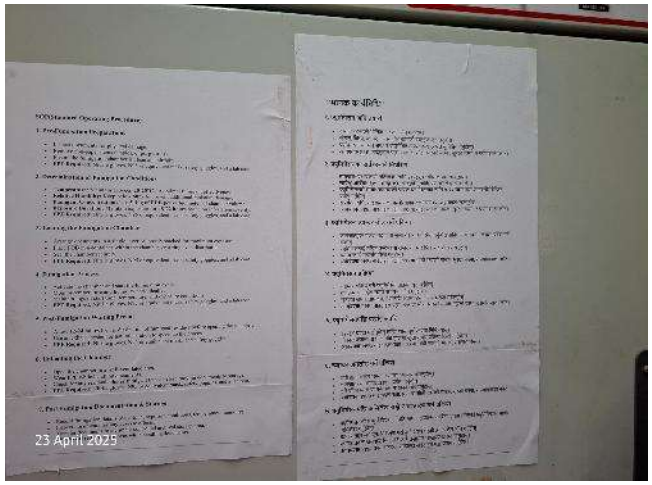
19	All expired chemicals must be removed from store.	National Archives	30-03-2082
20	Chemical spillage and disposable plan is required.	National Archives	30-03-2082
21	Chemicals must be stored in temperature-controlled facilities to ensure stability.	National Archives	30-03-2082
22	Chemicals shall not be store in water bottle. Proper container with label is required for all chemicals.	National Archives	30-03-2082

12. Conclusion: Based on the findings of the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) audit, it is evident that the National Archives faces several critical challenges that compromise the health and safety of its staff and the preservation of valuable archival materials. While certain sections like the administrative office and archival storage exhibit basic compliance with fire safety and security protocols, widespread deficiencies exist in areas such as chemical safety, emergency preparedness, electrical systems, and sanitation. The absence of vital safety infrastructure such as emergency plans, first aid kits, proper ventilation, and training poses serious risks to employees and reflects systemic gaps in safety management. Additionally, deteriorating building conditions and poor housekeeping practices further exacerbate potential hazards, especially in high-risk zones like the Chemical Conservation Laboratory and Microfilm Section.

To address these issues, the audit strongly recommends a proactive approach focused on comprehensive reforms in both infrastructure and institutional culture. Implementing a formal Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS) aligned with ISO 45001, developing clear safety protocols, training staff, and ensuring regular maintenance are all critical steps toward achieving a safe and compliant working environment. By prioritizing these measures, the National Archives can not only fulfill its legal obligations but also safeguard the health of its workforce and the integrity of the nation's historical assets. Prompt and sustained action will be key to transforming current risks into opportunities for long-term improvement and resilience.

13. Photos (Positive Observations)

<table>
<tr><td> 
</td><td> 
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Access to chemical store room controlled by signage and lock.</td><td>List of chemicals displayed in chemical store room.</td></tr>
<tr><td> 
</td><td> 
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Lab rules</td><td>Safety signages displayed.</td></tr>
<tr><td> 
</td><td> 
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fire detection panel system.</td><td>Fire extinguisher.</td></tr>
</table>

	
SOP for use of fumigation chamber.	Dehumidifiers provided in archival storage room.
	
Signages displayed in microfilm scanning room.	CCTV installed across the building and rooms.

14. Photos (Area of Improvements)

<table>
<tr><td> 
</td><td> 
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Damaged electrical switches.</td><td>Several ceiling panels found damaged.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"> 

Materials were stored in corridors creating obstruction.</td></tr>
<tr><td> 
</td><td> 
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Electrical panel left uncovered.</td><td>Damaged exhaust fan.</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td> 
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</td></tr>
<tr><td>Expired chemical being used.</td><td>Chemical stored in water bottle without labelling.</td></tr>
<tr><td> 
</td><td> 
</td></tr>
<tr><td>Safety guard removed from machine.</td><td>Congested workplace.</td></tr>
<tr><td> 
</td><td> 
</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Drains are uncovered.</td></tr>
</table>

Motorcycles and scooters parked in undesignated area.

The toilets were not cleaned and had no water supply.

Unwanted materials stored across the building and rooms.

Trailing electrical cables across the building.

Improper chemicals storage.

Emergency alarm break glass manual call point blocked.

Batteries were stored near electrical panels.

Damaged electrical cables.

OHS Audit Checklist

Building: National Archives	**Location:** Ramshah Path, Kathmandu, Nepal
Name of /Auditor/Inspector: Kabiraj Pun	**Date:** 10th Baishakh 2082

1	General Safety	√	×	Observations
1.1	Is the building address or identification clearly visible?	√		Office identification is clearly visible.
1.2	Is information officer contact details displayed?	√		Information officer contact detail is displayed.
1.3	Are exterior and interior lights in working order?	√		Lights were in working conditions.
1.4	Are the exits onto public streets free from visibility obstructions?	√		
1.5	Does building has accessible to emergency equipment and vehicle?	√		Building has accessible to emergency equipment and vehicle.
1.6	Are windows free from cracks or broken panes?		×	Some of windows and ceiling panels found damaged.
1.7	Are stairs, landings and handrails in good repair and fastened securely?	√		
1.8	Are all external sewers, drains lines covered or secured?		×	External drains were not covered and secured.
1.9	Do entrance doors close slowly to avoid hazards to fingers?	√		
1.10	Are floors non slippery and cleaned?	√		
1.11	Are corridors and exits free and clear of all obstructions?		×	Materials were stored in some of corridors obstructing evacuation routes.
1.12	Are parking facilities provided?		×	Parking facilities are provided however there is no parking signages, bike and scooters were parked in undesignated area.
1.13	Security of building?	√		National archives building is secured by Nepal police 24/7 and CCTV cameras are installed around the building internally and externally.
3	**Emergency Preparedness**	**√**	**×**	**Observations**
3.1	Is emergency plan in place?		×	There is no emergency plan.
3.2	Are emergency protocols/contact details displayed?		×	Emergency protocols/ contact details are not displayed.
3.3	Are exits signs identified and marked?		×	Emergency exit signs are not marked and identified.
3.4	Are emergency escape routes posted?		×	There are no emergency escape route.
3.5	Are first aid kits available?		×	First aid kits are not in the building.
3.6	Trained first aider available?		×	Staffs are not trained for first aid.
3.7	Is assembly point available?		×	Assembly point is not established.

3.8	Evacuation drill conducted?		×	Evacuation drills are not conducted.
3.9	Is there emergency exit to each floor?		×	There are not emergency exit to each floor.
3.10	Others			
4	**Fire Safety**	**√**	**×**	**Observations**
4.1	Are fire extinguishers suitable and sufficient?	√		Fire extinguishers provided to each room.
4.2	Are all fire extinguishers inspected, charged, and accessible?	√		Fire extinguishers are inspected. However, some of fire extinguishers are blocked and not easily accessible.
4.3	Is fire alarm system, including smoke and/or heat detectors, operable and able to be heard throughout the building	√		Fire alarm system is installed to archival storage room. It needs to install to other room such as chemical conservation laboratory, exhibition hall, library and others.
4.4	Are trained fire wardens available?		×	Staffs are not trained as fire wardens.
4.6	Testing of fire alarm system		×	There is no evidence of regular testing of fire alarm system.
5	**Electrical Safety**	**√**	**×**	**Observations**
5.1	Are all electrical panels secured?		×	Some of electrical panels left opened and exposed.
5.2	Have all electrical circuits been identified?		×	There are no identification on circuits.
5.3	Are all electrical switches and receptacles in good condition?		×	Some of switches found damaged.
5.4	All electrical cords and extension cords are in good shape with no fraying, swelling, splicing or patches?		×	Damaged and trailing electrical cords observed.
5.5	Electrical safety signs posted on panel?		×	No safety and hazards signs on electrical panel
5.6	Are electricals tools and equipment in good condition and inspected?	√		
5.7	Have RCDS (ELCB) installed and functioning?	√		ELCB was installed and functioning.
5.8	Others			

6	General Work Environment & Indoor Air Quality	√	×	Observations
6.1	All rooms and work areas properly illuminated. Glare and reflections avoided.		×	Some of rooms have lack of illumination. There is no illumination measuring record.
6.2	All rooms clean, sanitary, and orderly. (garbage disposed properly, etc.)	√		Administrative rooms were found cleaned.
6.3	All rooms are ventilated, temperature is in acceptable level.		×	Most of rooms were lack of proper ventilation system.
6.4	Others			
7	**Restroom**	**√**	**×**	**Observations**
7.1	Sufficient number of restrooms?	√		Restrooms are available in each floor.
7.2	Male and female restroom provided.	√		
7.3	Soaps, towel, water supply provided.		×	There is no soap and water supply in toilets.
7.4	Toilets and urinals clean and sanitized.		×	Toilets were dirty.
7.5	Floor is clean and sanitized.		×	Toilets floor were not cleaned.
7.6	Others			
8	**Chemical Storage Area**	**√**	**×**	**Observations**
8.1	Up-to-date inventory maintained for all hazardous materials?		×	No chemical inventory observed.
8.2	Chemical Safety Data Sheets (SDS) maintained and readily available?	√		SDS are available at office.
8.3	First aid materials readily available?		×	There is no first aid in chemical storage area.
8.4	Spill cleanup materials available?		×	Spill cleanup materials were not found.
8.5	Safety shower and eye wash available?		×	There is no safety shower and eye wash facility.
8.6	Appropriate PPE available?	√		Basic PPE (gloves, glass) are available.
8.7	Appropriate labels are found on all hazardous chemical containers?		×	Some of chemical bottles were not labeled.
8.8	Chemicals are segregated?		×	Chemicals segregation was not observed
8.9	Appropriate warning signs posted in chemical storage area entrance?	√		
8.10	Expired chemicals removed?		×	Some expired chemicals stored.
8.11	Smoking, eating, and drinking prohibited in lab?	√		Noone allowed to eat, smoke and drink in lab.
8.12	Lab is maintained secure; door is locked when no one is in lab?	√		Lab is locked and secured.
8.13	Chemical wastes disposed properly?		×	There is no chemical waste disposable plan.