



The Effectiveness of Labor Law Protection for Workers Victims of Work Accidents: Between Normative Certainty and Implementation Problems

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Article Info	Abstract
Article History Received : 2024-04-18 Revised: 2024-04-20 Published: 2024-05-30 Keywords: <i>Employment Law; Legal Protection; Work Accidents; Occupational Safety and Health; Social Security.</i>	Protection of workers who have had work accidents is one of the important aspects in the implementation of fair industrial relations. Although Indonesia's labor law has provided various protection instruments through occupational safety and health regulations and employment social security, in practice there are still various problems such as low company compliance with occupational safety standards, non-fulfillment of the obligation to register workers in the social security program, and weak implementation of legal protection for workers who are victims of work accidents. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of labor law protection for workers who have experienced work accidents and examine the relationship between the certainty of legal norms and the problems of their application in industrial relations practices. The research method used is normative legal research with a statutory approach and a conceptual approach through the study of laws and regulations, legal doctrines, and relevant literature. The results of the study show that normatively the labor law has provided a guarantee of protection through the obligation to implement occupational safety and health, the provision of the right to social security, and the responsibility of employers for workers who have a work accident. However, the effectiveness of these protections still faces obstacles in the implementation aspect, especially related to employer compliance, labor supervision, and the fulfillment of workers' rights. The conclusion of this study shows that labor law already has adequate protection instruments, but it is necessary to strengthen implementation and supervision so that legal protection for workers victims of work accidents can be realized in real terms.

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's national development is essentially a development process that is not only oriented towards economic growth, but also directed to create social welfare, justice, and protection of the basic rights of every citizen as mandated in Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. One of the fundamental sectors that has a direct relationship with the success of national development is the employment sector. The existence of labor is not only seen as a factor of production in economic activity, but also as a subject of law who has the right to receive fair, humane treatment, and legal protection in carrying out their work (Suhardi & Panjaitan, 2025).

In the context of modern economic development, industrial relations between workers and employers are basically unbalanced. Workers are in a relatively weaker position because of their dependence on work as a source

of livelihood, while employers have economic power and authority in determining work policies. This imbalance in the relationship has the potential to cause various forms of violations of workers' rights, especially related to occupational safety and health (Sari, 2025). Therefore, labor law is present not only as an instrument to regulate labor relations, but also as a protection mechanism to ensure the fulfillment of workers' rights.

Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower defines that labor is every person who is able to do work to produce goods and/or services, both to meet their own needs and the community. Meanwhile, workers/laborers as stipulated in Article 1 number 3 of the Manpower Law are any person who works by receiving wages or rewards in other forms. The position of workers as the subject of the law shows that work activities do not only have an economic dimension, but also contain a human rights dimension that must be

protected by the state (Harahap & Harahap, 2024).

One of the important aspects of employment law protection is protection against the risk of work accidents. The work environment in various industrial sectors has the potential for danger that can result in workers being injured, disabled, and even lost their lives. Work accidents not only have an impact on the physical and psychological condition of workers, but also have implications for the economic sustainability of workers and their families. Therefore, the protection of workers who have experienced work accidents is a fundamental part of the principle of the rule of law that guarantees citizens' rights to decent work and humane treatment (Hasibuan & Harahap, 2022).

Normatively, Indonesia already has various regulations that regulate the protection of workers who are victims of work accidents. Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower regulates the employer's obligation to provide protection for occupational safety and health, while the employment social security system through Law Number 24 of 2011 concerning the Social Security Administration Agency provides a protection mechanism through the Work Accident Insurance (JKK) program. The presence of these regulations shows that the state has built a legal system that normatively aims to provide certainty of protection for workers who experience risks in employment relationships (Effendy, 2021).

However, the existence of these regulations has not been fully able to ensure the fulfillment of the rights of workers who are victims of work accidents in practice. There are still various implementation problems, such as companies that do not register their workers in the employment social security program, delays in providing compensation, waiving medical expenses for workers who have had work accidents, and employers' efforts to avoid legal liability for various administrative reasons. This condition shows that there is a gap between normative legal protection and the reality of legal protection received by workers.

This problem becomes increasingly complex because the position of workers is often in a difficult condition to fight for their rights when they have a work accident. Economic dependence on companies, limited legal understanding, and weak supervision of the implementation of labor norms cause some workers to not receive the protection guaranteed by laws and regulations.

Thus, the main problem is not only about the existence of the rule of law, but also about the effectiveness of the law in providing real protection for workers.

Based on these conditions, a more in-depth study is needed on how effective labor law is in providing protection for workers who are victims of work accidents, especially in looking at the relationship between the legal norms that have been formed and the practice of their implementation. This study is important to understand the extent to which labor law is able to carry out its protection function, as well as identify various obstacles that cause the rights of workers who are victims of work accidents to be fully fulfilled.

Based on this description, this study examines "The Effectiveness of Labor Law Protection for Workers Victims of Work Accidents: Between Normative Certainty and Implementation Problems" as an effort to analyze the position of labor law in providing protection guarantees and evaluate various implementation issues that still occur in industrial relations practices in Indonesia.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is the normative legal research method, which is legal research conducted through the study of applicable legal norms by placing law as a system of norms that includes legal principles, laws and regulations, legal principles, and the doctrine of legal experts. Normative legal research is carried out by examining primary legal materials, secondary legal materials, and tertiary legal materials that have relevance to the problem of legal protection for workers who are victims of work accidents (Cape & Calvin, 2026).

This study uses the statute approach as the main approach, which is an approach carried out by analyzing various legal provisions that regulate labor protection, occupational safety and health, and social security for workers who have experienced work accidents. The laws and regulations that are the object of study include Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower, Law Number 24 of 2011 concerning the Social Security Administration, as well as various regulations related to occupational safety and health.

In addition to the legislative approach, this study also uses a conceptual approach to analyze the concept of legal protection, employer

responsibility, workers' rights, and the effectiveness of the application of labor norms in providing protection to workers who are victims of work accidents. Through this approach, this study not only examines the normative aspects of the existence of the rule of law, but also analyzes the extent to which these legal provisions are able to provide certainty and legal protection for workers in industrial relations practices.

The analysis of legal materials is carried out qualitatively using a descriptive-analytical method, which is to describe the applicable legal provisions and then relate them to the legal problems studied to obtain conclusions about the effectiveness of labor law protection for workers who are victims of work accidents.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Position of Employment Law in Building Protection for Workers

Labor law is basically understood not only as a set of norms that govern the relationship between workers and employers, but also as a legal instrument that has the function of protecting parties who are in a weaker position in industrial relations. The employment relationship formed between workers and employers essentially has different characteristics compared to other civil law relationships, because there are elements of economic dependence, employer authority, and bargaining positions that are not always balanced between the parties. Therefore, the existence of labor law is necessary to create a balance of rights and obligations so that industrial relations can take place in a fair and equitable manner (Rahimy, 2025).

Conceptually, labor law is a whole set of legal rules that govern the relationship between workers, employers, workers' organizations, employers' organizations, and the government as a regulator in the field of employment. According to Effendy, labor law is a set of regulations that regulate legal relations between workers, employers, workers' organizations, employers' organizations, and the government. This understanding shows that labor law has a broad scope, not only limited to contractual relationships between workers and employers, but also includes aspects of protection, supervision, dispute resolution, and fulfillment of workers' basic rights (Sinambela et al., 2024).

This view is in line with the thinking of Mr. G. Lavenbach who explained that labor law is a law related to labor relations, namely work that is carried out under the leadership of another party and is directly related to the living conditions of workers. This thinking affirms that employment relations cannot be separated from the social dimension, because work for a person is not only an economic activity, but also a means to meet the needs of life and maintain the sustainability of his life (Huda & Mulyanto, 2026). Thus, legal protection for workers is an inherent need in the labor system.

Furthermore, according to Mr. Mok, labor law is a law that regulates work done under the leadership of another person with a livelihood that directly depends on the work. This definition shows the existence of an element of subordination in the employment relationship, where workers are in a position to carry out work based on the orders and authority of the employer. This condition causes workers to have the potential to face various risks, both in the form of injustice in employment relationships and safety and health risks due to the implementation of work (Hernawan, 2013).

From the perspective of the state of law, labor law has a strategic function to limit the dominance of economic interests so as not to ignore the fundamental rights of workers. Protection for workers is not only given because workers are parties who need work, but because workers are legal subjects who have a constitutional right to get decent work and humane treatment. This is as reflected in Article 27 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia which states that every citizen has the right to work and a decent livelihood for humanity (Arifuddin Muda Harahap, Rahmad Efendi, 2023).

In the context of protecting workers who have experienced work accidents, the position of employment law is increasingly important because work always contains potential risks that can threaten the safety, health, and survival of workers. Therefore, labor law not only serves to regulate the mechanism of employment relations, but also provides guarantees that workers who experience risks due to their work continue to receive protection in the form of the right to work safety, treatment, compensation, and social security. Thus, understanding the position of labor law is an important basis for analyzing the extent to which the law is able to carry out its

protection function for workers who are victims of work accidents.

B. The Concept of Legal Protection in the Fulfillment of Basic Rights of Workers

Legal protection of workers is one of the fundamental aspects in the labor law system because employment relations basically do not only contain economic aspects, but also related to the fulfillment of human rights. Workers as parties who provide energy, time, and abilities to employers have a position that must be respected and protected by law. The presence of labor law is a form of state intervention to create a balance in industrial relations, considering that in practice the position of workers is often in a weaker condition compared to employers who have economic power and authority in determining work policies.

Legal protection in employment relations aims to prevent arbitrary actions from those who have greater power and ensure that workers obtain their rights in accordance with the provisions of applicable law. Legal protection for workers has the main purpose of ensuring the fulfillment of workers' rights in employment relations. Thus, legal protection is not only repressive when violations occur, but also preventive through the establishment of regulations that regulate the obligations of employers and ensure the standard of proper treatment of workers (Nida & Rayhan, 2021).

From the perspective of labor law, workers' rights are part of the basic rights inherent in every human being. These rights are not only related to the aspect of obtaining a job, but also include the right to receive fair treatment while carrying out work. Article 27 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia emphasizes that every citizen has the right to work and a decent livelihood for humanity. This provision shows that work is not just an economic activity, but an instrument for a person to obtain a dignified life (Taosen & Nurisman, 2022).

One of the main rights of workers is the right to get decent work. This right means that the state has an obligation to create conditions that allow people to obtain employment opportunities while ensuring that the available jobs meet the standards of feasibility and humanity. In industrial relations, the right to employment does not stop at the opportunity to work, but also

includes the guarantee that workers receive fair treatment during the course of the employment relationship.

In addition to the right to work, workers also have the right to a fair wage as a form of appreciation for the labor and contributions given to the company. Wages are the rights of workers who receive money in return from the employer for the work that has been done (Kusuma, 2025). Therefore, the wage system is not only concerned with the economic value of a job, but also reflects the principle of justice in industrial relations. The provision of decent wages is one of the indicators that the employment relationship has run in accordance with the principle of legal protection for workers.

Workers also have the right to assemble and organize as part of the basic freedom to fight for their interests. The existence of trade unions has an important role in creating a balance of industrial relations because individual workers often have limitations in fighting for their rights against employers. Through workers' organizations, the interests of workers can be conveyed collectively so that a more democratic industrial relations mechanism is created.

However, in the context of research on occupational accidents, the most closely related rights are the right to occupational safety and health protection. The right to occupational safety and health is part of the right of workers to obtain protection against risks arising from the implementation of work. Every worker has the right to work in a safe and healthy environment, and to be protected if occupational risks cause work accidents or occupational diseases (Musrin et al., 2022).

Occupational safety and health protection has a different position from other workers' rights because it is directly related to the survival and physical condition of workers. Work accidents can have serious impacts in the form of injuries, disabilities, loss of ability to work, and even death (Taosen & Nurisman, 2022). Therefore, the obligation to protect against the risk of work accidents cannot only be seen as a moral responsibility of the employer, but is a legal obligation that must be fulfilled based on the Indonesian labor law system.

Indonesia through various labor regulations has established mechanisms to protect workers' rights, including through regulations on occupational safety and health and employment social security programs. The presence of these

regulations shows that the state is trying to make labor law an instrument to ensure the welfare of workers and reduce inequality in industrial relations. However, the success of such protection is not only determined by the existence of legal norms, but also depends on the effectiveness of the implementation and compliance of the parties in the employment relationship.

Thus, legal protection of workers' rights cannot be understood only as the existence of rules that provide normative guarantees, but must be seen from the ability of the law to provide real protection when workers face risks in the employment relationship, especially when they experience a work accident. This is then an important basis for analyzing the effectiveness of labor law in providing protection for workers who are victims of work accidents.

C. Work Accidents as a Risk in Industrial Relations and Their Causative Factors

Work accidents are a form of risk inherent in industrial relations, especially in work activities that involve the use of machinery, production equipment, hazardous materials, and certain working environmental conditions. The existence of these risks shows that the employment relationship not only gives birth to rights and obligations between workers and employers in economic aspects, but also gives rise to legal responsibilities related to the protection of workers' safety and health (Nurvianti & Fathurrahman, 2020). Therefore, work accidents cannot be viewed solely as individual incidents experienced by workers, but as employment issues that have legal consequences for the fulfillment of workers' rights.

In general, a work accident can be understood as an event that occurs in the work environment or is related to the implementation of work that results in injuries, health problems, work-related diseases, and even death. Work accidents are events that occur at work or are related to work that can cause occupational diseases (PAK), injuries, and death. The definition shows that the impact of work accidents is not only limited to physical losses, but can also affect the social and economic conditions of workers and their families (Hatane et al., 2021).

In Indonesia's positive legal perspective, work accidents have a wider scope. Based on Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 1992 concerning Labor Social Security, work accidents are accidents that occur in connection with

employment relationships, including diseases arising from employment relationships and accidents that occur on the worker's journey from home to work or return home through ordinary or normal roads. The arrangement shows that legal protection for workers is not only provided when the worker is directly at the work site, but also covers risks related to work activities (August, 2019).

Furthermore, the Regulation of the Minister of Manpower Number 5 of 2021 also provides the understanding that work accidents include accidents that occur in an employment relationship, including accidents during the journey to or from work, as well as diseases caused by the work environment (Alfarizi et al., 2021). The expansion of this meaning shows the development of a paradigm in labor law, where worker protection is no longer only oriented to handling after an accident, but also includes prevention efforts against various risk factors that can cause work accidents.

The occurrence of work accidents is basically not caused by a single factor, but is the result of interaction between human factors, work environment factors, and work safety management system factors. Therefore, legal protection efforts for workers who are victims of work accidents cannot only be focused on providing compensation after the accident occurs, but must also be directed at prevention through the implementation of adequate occupational safety and health standards.

One of the main factors causing work accidents is negligence on work safety procedures. In practice, some accidents occur because workers and companies do not carry out the safety standards that have been set. Neglect of the use of personal protective equipment, carrying out work without following standard operating procedures, and weak supervision of occupational safety compliance can increase the potential for accidents.

In addition to the factor of compliance with procedures, low occupational safety education and training are also factors that contribute to the increased risk of accidents. Workers who do not have an adequate understanding of potential hazards in their work will have difficulty identifying and avoiding occupational risks. Therefore, occupational safety training is not only a technical need for the company, but also part of the employer's legal obligation to provide protection to workers.

Another factor is the use of work equipment that does not meet safety standards. Equipment that is damaged, not maintained regularly, or not in accordance with safety standards can be a direct cause of work accidents. In this context, employers have a legal responsibility to ensure that the facilities and work equipment used by workers are in safe and suitable conditions for use.

In addition to external factors, the physical condition of workers can also affect the risk of work accidents. Poor health conditions, fatigue due to excessive workload, and limited physical abilities can increase the likelihood of errors in the execution of work. Therefore, occupational safety protection must also pay attention to the health aspects of workers as part of the overall occupational safety and health system.

Based on this description, it can be understood that work accidents are a complex problem that is not only related to the technical aspects of work, but also has a legal dimension in industrial relations. When a work accident occurs, workers have the right to obtain protection, recovery, and social security in accordance with the provisions of applicable law. Thus, an understanding of the concept and factors that cause work accidents is an important basis in analyzing the extent to which labor law is able to provide effective protection for workers who have experienced work accidents.

D. Implementation of Legal Protection for Workers Victims of Work Accidents in the Indonesian Employment System

Protection for workers who have experienced work accidents is a concrete form of implementing the function of labor law in creating fair industrial relations. In employment relations, workers not only have the obligation to carry out work in accordance with the orders and responsibilities given by the employer, but also have the right to obtain protection against various risks arising from the performance of the work (Davin, 2024). Therefore, the responsibility to protect the safety and health of workers is not only a moral obligation, but a legal obligation that must be fulfilled by employers and guaranteed by the state.

Normatively, Indonesian labor law has provided a basis for protection for workers through Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower. This protection is realized through regulations regarding occupational safety and

health (K3) as part of the basic rights of workers in employment relations. This provision shows that the state places worker safety as an aspect that has an important position because it is directly related to the protection of the dignity, dignity, and survival of workers (Rosalina & Setyawanta, 2020).

Article 86 paragraph (1) of the Manpower Law emphasizes that every worker/laborer has the right to obtain protection for occupational safety and health, morals and morality, as well as treatment in accordance with human dignity and religious values. The provision shows that worker protection is not only related to the economic aspect in the form of wages, but also includes the protection of the physical, psychological, and social aspects of workers during the employment relationship (Hidayat, 2021).

Furthermore, Article 87 paragraph (1) of the Manpower Law provides an obligation for every company to implement an occupational safety and health management system (SMK3) that is integrated with the company's management system. This obligation shows a paradigm shift in worker protection, namely from an approach that is only curative after an accident to a preventive approach through efforts to prevent occupational risks.

The implementation of an occupational safety and health management system basically covers various aspects, such as the provision of safe production equipment, health facilities, emergency procedures, the provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), to supervision of worker compliance in implementing occupational safety standards. Through the implementation of this system, companies have an obligation to create a safe work environment so that the potential for work accidents can be minimized (Nugraha et al., 2023).

The company's obligations in implementing occupational safety and health are also strengthened by the existence of a sanction mechanism if these obligations are not implemented. Based on Article 190 paragraph (1) of the Labor Law, companies that violate the provisions of labor protection can be subject to administrative sanctions in the form of reprimands, written warnings, restrictions on business activities, freezing of business activities, cancellation of approval, cancellation of registration, temporary suspension of part or all of production equipment, and revocation of permits. The existence of these sanctions shows

that occupational safety protection is not only an encouragement, but a legal obligation that has consequences if violated.

In addition to protection through the occupational safety and health system, workers who have experienced work accidents also receive protection through the employment social security mechanism. Social security is a form of continued protection when work risks have occurred and caused workers to suffer losses in the form of injuries, loss of ability to work, or death. Article 99 paragraph (1) of the Manpower Law states that every worker/laborer and his family is entitled to labor social security.

The obligation to provide social security was then strengthened through Law Number 24 of 2011 concerning the Social Security Organizing Agency. Based on Article 15 paragraph (1) of the BPJS Law, employers are gradually obliged to register themselves and their workers as participants in the social security administration in accordance with the social security program followed. This provision emphasizes that workers' participation in the social security program is not an option for employers, but rather a legal obligation that must be fulfilled (Anisah & Damayanti, 2024).

One of the protection programs that has a direct relationship with work accidents is the Work Accident Insurance (JKK). The JKK program provides protection in the form of health services, compensation, and rehabilitation to workers who have experienced work accidents, both accidents that occur at work and accidents that are related to work travel. This protection includes maintenance costs, compensation for temporary inability to work, disability compensation, and death compensation due to work accidents (Hanifah, 2020). Thus, the JKK program has an important function in maintaining the economic sustainability of workers and their families when work risks occur.

In its implementation, if the company has registered its workers in the employment social security program, then the employer's obligation is to ensure that the work accident reporting process runs so that workers can obtain the right to work accident insurance benefits. However, problems arise when there are still companies that do not fulfill their obligation to enroll workers in the social security program. This condition causes workers to be in a vulnerable position because they lose access to the protection mechanisms that have been provided by the state.

If the employer has not registered its workers in the employment social security program, then the responsibility for protecting workers who have a work accident remains with the employer. Employers are obliged to bear the cost of treatment and treatment of workers and fulfill workers' rights as long as the worker is not able to return to his job. This shows that the obligation to protect workers cannot be transferred entirely to the social security institution, because the primary responsibility remains with the party that employs the worker.

In addition to the obligation to provide maintenance costs, employers also have an obligation to continue to pay wages for workers who are sick due to work accidents in accordance with the provisions of Article 93 paragraph (3) of the Manpower Law. The provision stipulates that sick workers are entitled to wage payments of 100% for the first four months, 75% for the second four months, 50% for the third four months, and 25% for the following month until before the termination of employment. The arrangement provides a guarantee that workers do not lose their source of livelihood directly due to the work risks they experience.

Although normatively the Indonesian legal system has provided various forms of protection for workers who are victims of work accidents, the effectiveness of such protection still faces various challenges in its implementation. Problems such as the low compliance of some companies with the obligation to implement K3, workers who have not been registered in the social security program, weak labor supervision, and lack of workers' understanding of their rights are factors that cause legal protection to not be fully optimal.

Thus, it can be understood that Indonesian labor law has basically provided a fairly comprehensive protection instrument for workers who are victims of work accidents, both through occupational safety and health mechanisms and through employment social security. However, the success of this protection is highly dependent on the effectiveness of implementation, entrepreneur compliance, and the optimization of state supervision functions. Therefore, the existence of legal norms must be followed by consistent implementation so that the protection of workers does not only stop at the normative level, but really provides certainty and justice for workers who have experienced work accidents.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

Labor law has an important position as an instrument of legal protection for workers, especially for workers who have a work accident. Normatively, Indonesia already has various regulations that provide protection guarantees through occupational safety and health regulations as well as employment social security programs. Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower and Law Number 24 of 2011 concerning the Social Security Administration Agency have provided a legal basis regarding the obligations of employers in creating a safe work environment and guaranteeing workers' rights to the benefits of Work Accident Insurance. However, the existence of such a rule does not fully guarantee effective protection in practice. There are still problems in the form of low corporate compliance with the implementation of occupational safety and health, non-registration of workers in the social security program, and weak supervision of the implementation of labor norms. Therefore, the effectiveness of legal protection for workers who are victims of work accidents depends not only on the existence of regulations, but also on the implementation, compliance of employers, and optimization of state supervision.

B. Suggestions

It is necessary to strengthen labor supervision and increase company compliance with the obligation to implement occupational safety and health as well as the registration of workers in the social security program. In addition, the government needs to strengthen legal education for workers to understand their rights when they experience a work accident.

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