

In 2008, the employment rate of the disabled gradually increased to 1.72% in the private sector.

As of the end of 2008, the number of the disabled employees in the private sector* recorded 89,664 with the employment rate of 1.72%, which is an increase of 17.4% (13,260 workers) compared to the previous year. This shows that the employment for the disabled is gradually increasing despite the economic recession.

* The private sector includes private companies and **public** institutions.

<Mandatory Employment System for the disabled>

In pursuant to the Act on Employment Promotion and Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons, companies with more than 50 ordinary workers and the national agencies or local governments should hire more than 2% and 3% of the disabled workers, respectively. In addition, the public institutions and private companies with more than 100 ordinary workers should pay contribution when they fail to observe the Act.

- The national agencies and local governments show 1.76% of the disabled employment, and the overall employment rate including the government records 1.73%.

In 21,774 private companies which should employ the disabled according to the law, 83,765 of the handicapped workers are hired with the employment rate of 1.70%. This is an increase of 13,011 workers, i.e. 0.19%p compared to the previous year. It, however, turned out that the larger a company is, the less the company hires the disabled. In 253 public institutions, the number of the disabled workers is 5,899 with 2.05% of the employment rates, which is an increase of 0.09%p compared to the previous year. Other public institutions, however, shows 1.46% of the employment rate which is even lower than private companies.

* Other public institutions refer to public institutions except for public companies and quasi-government institutions in pursuant to Article 4 of the Act on the Management of the Public Institutions (153 institutions). In addition, the severely disabled represent 17.8% of the total disabled workers (15,933), which shows the trend that the mildly disabled are more preferred by companies. Particularly, in the public institutions, the severely disabled represent mere 11.1% out of total, which is lower than 18.2% of private companies.

* The severely disabled represent 17.9% in the private sector (18.5% in private companies, and 11.0% in public institutions)

Despite the economic recession, companies increasingly hire the disabled workers due to the ever-widespread awareness that more numbers of the disabled should be able to work, and various government systems* such as the mandatory employment system and related subsidies.

* Various government systems include the mandatory employment system (contribution or subsidy), customized training, the government loan or subsidiary-type standard workplace.

The Ministry of Labor plans to provide One-Care service in order to encourage the employment of the disabled. The Labor ministry will also disclose the name of companies * which do not show any improvement in the employment of the disabled on coming Sep. 10.

* One-care service refers to a customized service integrating various employment service provided by Korea Employment Promotion Agency for the Disabled.

* Target companies will include public institutions which show less than 1% of the employment rate for the disabled, and private companies with more than 300 workers which have no record of the disabled employment.

The Employment rate of the Disabled

The Labor Ministry also plans to extend customized trainings through the collaboration with companies for the purpose of nurturing competent disabled workers.

*The number of trainees completed customized training courses: 529 workers in 2008→ 697 workers in 2009 (target)

In addition, in order to enforce other public institutions to employ a certain number of the disabled, the Ministry of Labor will apply stricter criteria in selecting target companies in the list to include companies showing less than 1% of the employment rate, and actively collaborate with related government departments. The government will also provide a better incentive* for those companies hiring the severely handicapped, and widely apply the system of subsidiary-type standard workplace* for the disabled for the purpose of increasing the employment of the severely disabled.

*In case that a company establishes a subsidiary by investing more than 50% of aggregated contribution or issued stocks, disabled workers of a subsidiary are regarded as being employed by a mother company. (Introduced on Jan. 14 2008)

*If a company hires one severely handicapped person, the company is recognized as employing two mildly handicapped workers. In addition, more subsidy is provided to the employment of severely handicapped workers. (The revised law is pending at the National Assembly.)

“To increase the employment of the disabled, large companies should be actively involved in the efforts to provide more job opportunities to the disabled. Therefore, the government calls on large companies to take a sense of social responsibility in employing the handicapped,” said Huh, Won-yong, an official at the Equal Employment Policy bureau of the Ministry of Labor.

* On June 25 2009, President Lee emphasized the social responsibility of companies for the employment of the disabled at the Presidential Council on National Competitiveness and his remarks were aired to the public through 11 media including YTN.