
News from the Agency

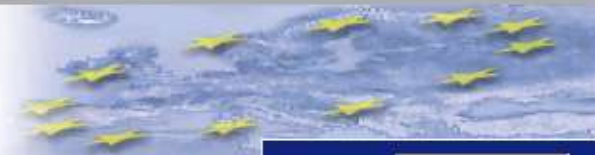
CIS Centres meeting

22/23 May 2003

Finn Sheye

International Relations Manager

**European Agency for Safety
and Health at Work**

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Newsletter 14: EU committed to meeting safety and health challenges of enlargement

23/04/2003: 2003 heralds many challenges for the Agency. And the key challenge is undoubtedly preparing for enlargement. Since its inception in 1996 the Agency has taken many important steps in promoting health and safety but none more so than working with the candidate countries to bring them to the same level as their EU counterparts. The recent enlargement seminar confirmed the willingness of all parties to work towards a safer and healthier new Europe.

[More details](#)**Preventing psychosocial risks at work: European perspectives**

11/04/2003: The closing event in Bilbao on 25 November 2002 was jointly organised by the Agency and the Danish Presidency of the European Union. The day was structured around three morning workshops dealing with stress, bullying and violence, and a round table discussion in the afternoon. This Forum publication is based on the speeches made during the three workshops and the round table discussion that followed them.

[More details](#)**Communicating information about dangerous substances**

08/04/2003: The Agency is producing a series of factsheets on occupational safety and health information about dangerous substances for the European Week for Safety and Health at Work 2003. Effective communication about the risks to workers' health and their management in the workplace is a common challenge for employers, workers, and their representatives. This factsheet presents points to consider for successful communication.

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Good Practice

Fisheries Sector

- [Introduction](#)
- [List of topics](#)-Information presented by key hazards and issues.
- [A-Z Index](#)
- [List of providers](#)- Organisations providing information about occupational safety and health and the fisheries sector.
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The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations estimate that 28.5 million people around the world work in fishing and fish farming, and according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), fishing is among the most dangerous of all professions with as many as 24,000 fishermen around the world killed each year.

On these pages you will find information on safety and health at work in the fisheries sector. We have tried to cover as many aspects of Seafishing and Aquaculture as possible, from prevention of falls overboard at sea to safety management on fish farms.

As well as a [list of providers](#) of good practice information (case studies, guidance, and similar information) organised by Country, there is material organised by [topic](#) and an [alphabetical index](#).

In the topics section you may find information on a topic by looking in the more general headings (e.g. Seafishing) as well as under a specific topic.



Safety and health good practice online for the healthcare sector

Approximately 10 % of workers in the European Union are employed in the health and welfare sector, with a significant proportion employed in hospitals. This makes healthcare one of the biggest employment sectors in Europe, covering a vast range of different jobs. Women represent around 77 % of the workforce. According to European data the work-related accident rate in the healthcare sector is 34 % higher than the EU average. In addition the sector has the second highest incidence rate of work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSD), after construction (1). This fact sheet provides a basic introduction to occupational safety and health in the healthcare sector and how to find information for the sector on the Agency's web site.

The main risk factors and related health problems in the healthcare sector are well documented (2). These include the following:

- Musculoskeletal loads — poor working postures, heavy loads.
- Biological agents — micro-organisms, viruses, e.g. HIV and hepatitis B, contaminated blood.
- Chemical substances — including disinfectants, anaesthetic gases and antibiotics. They may be harmful to the skin, or the respiratory system; they may be carcinogenic.
- Radiological hazards.
- Changing shifts, work rhythms and night work.
- Violence from members of the public.
- Other factors contributing to stress — traumatic situations, and factors in the organisation of work and relations with colleagues.
- Accidents at work — falls, cuts, needle punctures, electric shocks, etc.

The 'Topics' section of the web feature contains links on all these issues.

Risk assessment and effective health and safety management are the key to preventing and reducing healthcare-worker exposure to work hazards.

This includes: having in place a health and safety management system; a preventive policy and risk assessment; training; worker consultation; properly-resourced preventive services; and the integration of OSH into other management processes such as purchasing and contract tendering. In particular:

- risks are assessed by looking at all the hazards present and identifying who could be harmed and how, and taking adequate action to prevent the risks, aiming first for prevention at source;
- consulting the workforce and actively involving worker representatives, for example through safety committees, is an important part of successful management.

Go to 'List of Topics' on the web feature and click on the 'management' section for links to more information.

All occupational groups in the sector may face hazards — not only nursing staff but also service support staff and trade workers, and a whole range of professionals including laboratory workers and anaesthetists. Click on the 'occupations' section of 'topics' for occupation specific links.

The web feature contains links to a whole range of information. There are quality-evaluated links from Member States and beyond. Major OSH authorities, trade union and employer associations and non-governmental organisations are included.

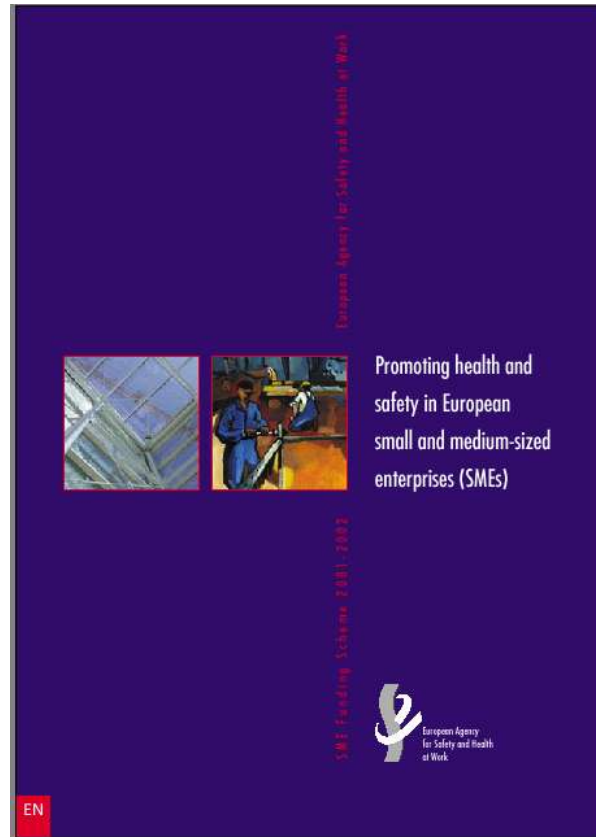
http://europe.osha.eu.int/good_practice/healthcare/



(1) See Eurostat Statistics in Focus, Theme 3, 16/2006 and 17/2011, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.
(2) For example see 'Working Conditions in Hospitals in the European Union', European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 1995/27 EN, ISBN 92-327-5776-5.



Safe and Healthy Work in SMEs





Accident prevention in the construction sector

In the European Union construction is the sector most at risk of accidents (1), with more than 1 300 people being killed in construction accidents every year. Worldwide, construction workers are three times more likely to be killed and twice as likely to be injured as workers in other occupations. The costs of these accidents are immense to the **individual**, to the **employer** and to **society**. They can amount to an appreciable proportion of the contract price.

Over 99% of construction firms in Europe are **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**. SMEs are therefore most affected by construction accidents. The advice in this factsheet is relevant to enterprises of all sizes.

Labour inspectorates join forces to build a safer Europe

Labour inspectorates across the European Union have launched a **pan-European campaign** to cut the number of accidents in the construction industry involving falls from heights. Using a mix of promotional activities and worksite inspections, the campaign will start in 2003 and continue into 2004.

Promotional activities will target everybody working in construction, from clients and architects to employers, trade unions, workers and subcontractors.

The **inspection campaign** will focus on safety and health in construction sites, access to workplaces and emergency routes. Inspections will be carried out to ensure that the appropriate preventive measures and provisions are in place. The campaign will also investigate the obligations for prevention and coordination on construction sites.

Responsibilities

Clients, project supervisors, employers, individual contractors and self-employed persons all have responsibilities to ensure safety. Relevant requirements set in European directives (2) include:

- considering occupational safety and health from the planning stage onwards in all **construction** work. Work has to be coordinated between all parties involved in planning and doing the work;
- ensuring safe **work equipment** (covers suitability, selection, safety features, safe use, training and information, inspection and maintenance);
- providing **safety and/or health signs** where hazards cannot be avoided or adequately reduced by preventive measures;
- providing **personal protective equipment** (hard hats, safety harnesses, eye and respiratory protection, safety footwear etc.) appropriate for the risks involved and where they can not be prevented by other means;
- ensuring a safe working environment and welfare facilities for **construction** workers, e.g. access, safe traffic routes;
- following a general **framework** to manage health and safety including: assessment and prevention of risks; giving priority to collective measures to eliminate risks; consulting employees, providing information and training; and coordination on safety with contractors.

The minimum requirements set by directives have been implemented in **national legislation** that may include additional requirements.

Employees have duties to cooperate actively with employers' preventive measures, following instructions in accordance with training given.

Consulting the workforce is a requirement. Using their knowledge helps to ensure hazards are correctly spotted and workable solutions implemented.

Preventing accidents — assessing the risks

There are many hazards in construction work. However there is much 'good practice' that can be easily applied to prevent accidents. The first step is to carry out a **suitable and sufficient risk assessment**.

To ensure a real reduction in the exposure of workers and others (including site visitors, passing members of the public) to harm, the risk assessment should consider all the risks, hazards and ensure reduction of one risk does not increase another.

All the hazards should be identified, including those arising from work activities and from other factors, e.g. site layout. This is followed by evaluating the extent of risks involved, taking account of existing precautions. Have enough precautions been taken or does more need to be done? The risk assessment results will help in selecting the most appropriate good practice measures to use (3).

Practical prevention

The main hazards include working at height, excavation work and moving loads. **Priority must be given to measures that eliminate or reduce the hazard at source and provide collective protection**. Individual protection, such as protective equipment, is used where risks can't be further reduced by other means.

Ongoing **monitoring and regular inspections** are needed in addition to overall risk assessment.



8011 — Photo CCL/CCO/CCO

(1) The State of Occupational Safety and Health in the European Union — Not study, 2000. European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, ISBN 92-826-9172-7.

(2) <http://europa.eu.int/legislation/policies> provides links to EU legislation, details of Commission guidance for SMEs and on risk assessment and construction and to Member State

sites whose national legislation to implement the directives and guidelines may be found. See in particular the temporary or mobile construction sites directive.

(3) Agency website provides construction information at http://europa.eu.int/agood_practice/sectors/construction/



EU committed to meeting safety and health challenges of enlargement



From left to right: Bertil Ramæus, Krystyna Tokarska Biernacka, Ioanna Panopoulou, Hans-Horst Konkolewsky, Gerassimos Zorbas, José Ramón Blosca de Sagastuy

Representatives of EU and candidate countries' government and social partners met in Bilbao (18 February 2003) to discuss health and safety in an enlarged Europe. The seminar, organised jointly by the Agency, the European Commission and the Greek Presidency of the EU, was the first tripartite meeting where candidate countries met with their EU counterparts to debate the implications of enlargement for the new Community strategy on health and safety at work and for the activities of the European Agency.

The purpose of the strategy, adopted by the Commission in 2002, is to modernise EU health and safety policy and means to reflect the impact of the changing world of work. The seminar gave key stakeholders the possibility to discuss whether the strategy sets out the right priorities and instruments regarding the situation and needs in the candidate countries. According to recent research candidate countries suffer from higher levels of traditional safety and health risks at work compared to the EU-15. In all 40% of workers in candidate countries consider their safety and health at risk because of their work, compared to 27% in the EU Member States.

Commenting on the seminar, Anna Diamantopoulou said: 'Enlargement brings a host of new challenges for workplace health and safety - particularly reducing the existing gap in occupational safety and health levels between

current and the new Member States. All the candidate countries have made enormous efforts to ensure that their administrations and legislation meet European standards. If we continue our joint efforts, I am convinced that enlargement will help to improve the quality of working life in the new Member States and that we will succeed to make Europe a safe and healthy place to work - for all.'

The Director of the European Agency, Hans-Horst Konkolewsky said: 'The seminar stressed the need for a continuous commitment of Member States and European institutions to meet the challenges of enlargement. The Agency has a special obligation, as it is well placed to ensure an efficient integration of the new Member States and to devise practical safety and health solutions, geared to their special situation. We have already taken a number of preparatory initiatives together with the candidate countries and look forward to an even stronger contribution in a future, enlarged Europe.'

Key participants at the seminar included: **Krystyna Tokarska Biernacka**, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Poland; **Ioanna Panopoulou**, Secretary of State, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Greece; **Anne Jensen**, Danish Member of the European Parliament; **Andras Bekes**, Director General of the Hungarian Labour Inspectorate; **José Ramón Blosca de Sagastuy**, Head of Unit, DG Employment and Social Affairs, European Commission; **Gerassimos Zorbas**, Member of Cabinet of **Anna Diamantopoulou**, European Commission; **Dr Bertil Ramæus**, Chairman of the Administrative Board of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

Proceedings of the seminar are available online on the Agency website at: <http://agency.osha.eu.int/publications/conference20030218/en/index.htm>

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editorial

2003 heralds many challenges for the Agency. And the key challenge is undoubtedly preparing for enlargement. Since its inception in 1996 the Agency has taken many important steps in promoting health and safety but none more so than working with the candidate countries to bring them to the same level as their EU counterparts. The recent enlargement seminar confirmed the willingness of all parties to work towards a safer and healthier new Europe.

Turning to the Agency's work programme for 2003, we intend to focus on developing the Agency's information services in line with the priorities set out in the Community Strategy for Health and Safety at Work. The strategy emphasises the necessity of establishing a culture of risk prevention and the Agency will make preparatory steps to set up a risk observatory for new and emerging risks in the workplace.

We also plan to build on the success of last year's European Week campaign against occupational stress as we turn our attention in 2003 to tackling the risks of working with dangerous substances. Using the slogan of 'Dangerous substances - handle with care' we hope to make employers and employees more aware of the risks and ensure that dangerous substances are, whenever possible, substituted for safer alternatives - or if that's not possible always handled with care.

Our series of web features continues to grow, we have just launched an updated health care website and a new feature on OSH monitoring. Also, to reiterate our belief that the web is the communication channel for the Agency, we have redesigned our European site to make accessing the latest in OSH news even easier.

And finally, if you're in the business of OSH research please take a look at our new web feature, which guides you through the 6th EU research framework programme. Europe needs high quality research if it is to meet the safety and health challenges of a rapidly changing world of work and to strengthen its competitive position in a globalised economy. The new research framework programme offers real opportunities for OSH researchers to benefit from European support. So please go online and let us help you identify your possibilities for EU research funds that will make good safety and health good business.

Hans-Horst Konkolewsky
Director



European Agency
for Safety and Health
at Work



Preventing psychosocial risks at work: European perspectives

Closing event of the European Week for Safety and Health at Work 2002 Bilbao, Spain,
25 November 2002

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1. Introduction

The European Week for Safety and Health at Work in 2002 focused on the prevention of psychosocial risks. It was launched at the European Parliament on 2 July 2002 and spread out across Europe with Member State schemes. This initiative was the first pan-European campaign to address this issue, and it has been the most high profile and popular event run by the Agency to date.

The closing event of the European Week for Safety and Health at Work took place in Bilbao on 25 November 2002. It was jointly organised by the Agency and the Danish Presidency of the European Union. The day was structured around three morning workshops dealing with stress, bullying and violence, and a round table discussion in the afternoon. Six practitioners were also invited to present their case studies to illustrate how psychosocial risks can be successfully tackled in the workplace.

This Forum publication is based on the speeches made during the three workshops and the round table discussion that followed them.

Key facts

- Work-related stress is now the second most common occupational health problem, affecting 28 % of workers — more than 40 million people in the European Union (EU) (1).
- The number of people suffering from stress-related conditions caused or made worse by work has more than doubled since 1990.
- It has been estimated that this costs the EU more than Eur 20 billion in lost time and health costs (1).
- Four per cent of European workers report having been exposed to violence from outside the organisation, and 9 % claim to have been bullied at work, in the previous 12 months.
- In addition to the negative effects on the economy, we must not forget the human cost of work-related psychosocial risks: these issues are known to affect physical and psychological health in a variety of ways, from cardiovascular and gastrointestinal diseases to mental health problems.



(1) European Commission (2000). Guidance on work-related stress: 'spice of life or loss of death?'





Challenges of Enlargement:
the Community Strategy on Health and Safety at
Work and the Role of the European Agency



Tuesday 18th February 2003



Bilbao



Challenges of Enlargement

- Some conclusions of Agency seminar -

- *Candidate countries are not homogeneous and actions should be adapted to their specific needs in order of priority*
- *Need for better understanding of rights and obligations of EU legislation, such as the framework directive and social partner involvement and obligations on both workers and employers*
- *Need for technical assistance for employers and workers + transfer of know-how in EU health and safety social dialogue practices*

Dangerous Substances

Situation in the EU

- **16% of EU workers report handling dangerous substances, 22% being exposed to toxic vapours**
- **Skin diseases and asthma top occupational diseases in EU Member States**
- **Infectious diseases lead to long workplace absences**
- **16 Mio registered chemical substances
100000 marketed, 30000 commonly used**
- **for estimated about 20000 substances used in the workplace additional toxicological data are needed**

Dangerous substances

Agency activities

- **Website information online - good practice**
 - Occupational exposure limits
 - Frequently asked questions
 - Good practice examples
 - Links to Member state information
- **European Week 2003 activities and products**
- **Research activities - Criteria documents**



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Good practice

Dangerous Substances



This section of the European Agency's web site provides up-to-date information on Good Safety and Health Practice related to the substitution of dangerous substances at the workplace.

Many substances have hazardous effects to the health and safety of the worker. These substances are used in many industries, often on a daily basis. In many cases, however, there are safer alternatives available, or the process itself can be changed, so that the use of dangerous substance is no longer required. These pages promote the substitution of dangerous substances at the workplace by offering selected information to guide in the substitution process. The information is currently available for organic solvents and asbestos.

- [Publications](#)
- [Information Resources](#)
 - [Information on Occupational Exposure Limits](#)
 - [Case Studies](#)
 - [By Industry / Sector](#)
 - [By Process](#)
 - [By Substance](#)
 - [By Substance Group](#)
 - [Risk Assessment](#)
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What is European Week 2003 ?

- **Europe's largest annual OSH information campaign**
- **Campaign objectives:**
 - Increase awareness and understanding of risks in the workplace
 - Promote good practice solutions
- **Theme: Prevention of risks posed by dangerous substances**
- **Slogan: "Dangerous Substances - Handle with Care"**

EUROPEAN WEEK OCTOBER **2003**

DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES HANDLE WITH CARE



EUROPEAN WEEK FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH AT WORK
<http://osha.eu.int/ew2003/>



Why dangerous substances?

- **Potential risks affect all sectors**
- **The impact on workers includes:**
 - **Occupational and other work-related diseases**
 - **Accidents at work**
 - **Negative influence on the well-being of workers**
- **Business risks through reduced productivity and company liability**
- **DS risks can be prevented**

Key messages

- **Most workplaces are concerned**
- **Don't forget the substances produced during work (dusts, fumes, mists, microorganisms)!**
- **Substitution is possible**
- **Risk assessment is essential**
- **Information has to be brought to workplaces**
- **Information has to be translated for workers and employers into practical guidance**
- **Hints and links to guidance and practical solutions**

Campaign model

- **October 2003 - Decentralised European campaign**
- **Partnership approach - Agency, Focal Points, Social Partners, EU institutions, EU presidency**
- **EU, EFTA & Candidate Countries**
- **Agency Support**
- **European Good Practice Award**
- **Closing Event**

EW 2003 Campaign material (1)

- **Poster and EW leaflet**
- **Six Fact sheets**
 - **Introduction to DS in the workplace**
 - **Elimination and Substitution of DS**
 - **What users need to know**
 - **Respiratory sensitisers**
 - **Skin sensitisers**
 - **Biohazards**



An introduction to dangerous substances in the workplace



Introduction

Dangerous substances are found in many workplaces. A recent survey found that 16 % of workers in Europe reported handling hazardous products and 22 % being exposed to their vapours. If exposure to dangerous substances can occur anywhere at work, on farms, in hairdressers' shops, in motor-vehicle repair shops, at chemical plants...

Dangerous substances can cause many different types of harm. Some cause cancer, others can affect the ability to reproduce or cause birth defects. Other substances may cause tears, damage, harm to the nervous system, asthma, and skin problems. The harm done by dangerous substances can occur from a single short exposure or by the long-term accumulation of substances in the body.

The theme for the European Week for Safety and Health at Work 2002 is the prevention of risks from dangerous substances. The Agency is producing a series of fact sheets focusing on the communication of occupational safety and health-related information on dangerous substances, including biological agents. This fact sheet introduces the key issue in this topic.

Legislation

European legislation aims to minimise the health risks from dangerous substances in the workplace. European Union law places elimination and substitution at the top of the hierarchy of control measures for protecting workers from dangerous substances. The most important piece of European legislation in this field are regulations on the protection of workers (1) from the risks related to chemical agents, (2) carcinogens (3) (including asbestos in wood dust), and biological agents, (4) Nevertheless, regulations on classification and labelling (5) are equally important, because they determine important information (safety labels, symbols and safety data sheets) available to the user.

These regulations have to be transferred into national legislation. Member States are entitled to include some additional or more stringent provisions for the protection of workers, such as restrictions on use of some work processes or lower limit values, since the corresponding directives only lay down minimum requirements.

It is therefore strongly recommended that you seek clarification of specific national legislation that may apply relating to the use of dangerous substances in the workplace. It is important to be aware that these regulations on issues such as risk assessment, technical measures and exposure limits also apply to the dangerous substances generated by the work processes used, examples of which are wood dust or welding fumes.

Prevention and control of exposure to dangerous substances

To protect workers' health from dangerous substances, employers are required to:

- assess the risks,
- take action to remove or reduce the risks,
- monitor the effectiveness of the preventive measures and review the assessment.

Risk assessment

Risk assessment (a requirement under European legislation enacted in all Member States, *see also annex*) means identifying what may cause harm so that preventive measures can be taken. Proper risk assessment is the basis for successful risk management. Training workers on the basis of risk assessment for safe work practices is an important part of risk management. Trained workers can not only apply the rule but also work more efficiently and promote a healthy and safe working environment. The risk posed by a substance is determined by two factors, the substance's characteristics and the degree of exposure.

A simple approach to risk assessment

1. **Make an inventory** of the substances used in the processes in the workplace and those generated by the process such as welding fumes or wood dust.
2. **Collect information** about these substances, i.e. the harm they can do and how this can happen. Safety data sheets (SDS), which must be provided by the supplier of a chemical, are an important source of information.
3. **Assess exposure** to the identified dangerous substances, taking into the type, intensity, length, frequency and occurrence of exposure to workers, including combined effects of dangerous substances used together and the related risk.
4. **Rank the severity** of the established risk. This list can then be used to draw up an action plan to protect workers.

1. Regulation (EC) No 91/95 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 December 1990 on the protection of workers from the risks related to chemical agents, (2) Regulation (EC) No 2030/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 November 2003 on the protection of workers from the risks related to carcinogenic or mutagenic substances, (3) Regulation (EC) No 2038/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 November 2003 on the protection of workers from the risks related to biological agents, (4) Regulation (EC) No 2032/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 November 2003 on the protection of workers from the risks related to biological agents, (5) Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures.





Elimination and substitution of dangerous substances



Introduction

The theme for the European Week for Safety and Health at Work 2009 is the prevention of risks from dangerous substances. The Agency is producing a series of factheets focusing on the communication of OSH information on dangerous substances including biological agents. This factsheet introduces the process of eliminating or substituting dangerous substances.

Legislation

European Union law places elimination and substitution at the top of the hierarchy of control measures for protecting workers from the risks related to chemical agents, (1) carcinogens, (2) and biological agents, (3) for carcinogens and mutagens, substitution requirements are even more stringent and replacement has to be carried out wherever as it is technically possible. Provisions for substitution are laid down in national regulations related to the protection of workers and Member States are entitled to include some additional or more stringent provisions for the protection of workers such as the restriction on use of some work processes, or the corresponding directives only lay down minimum requirements.

Other regulations impose EU-wide restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations, (4) including for example, asbestos.

Under the new EU system for chemical management (REACH) that is currently being developed by the Commission, it is intended to introduce specific restrictions for some substances.

It is therefore strongly recommended that you seek clarification of specific national legislation that may apply relating to restrictions in use and the substitution of dangerous substances in the workplace.

Elimination and substitution in the European control hierarchy

European legislation provides a hierarchy of measures to prevent or reduce the exposure of workers to dangerous substances.

Elimination — the best way to reduce the risks connected with dangerous substances is to remove the need to use those substances by changing the process or product in which the substance is used.

Substitution — if elimination is not possible, then the substitution, or replacement, of the hazardous substance or the process with one less dangerous under its condition of use is the next best option.

Control — if a substance or process cannot be eliminated or substituted, then exposure may be prevented or reduced by:

- enclosure of the emitting process;
- control of the emission by better management of the processes;
- technical solutions to reduce the concentration in the exposure zone;
- organisational measures such as minimising the number of exposed workers and the duration and intensiveness of the exposure;
- use of personal protective equipment.

Elimination and substitution in practice

Changing from one substance to another is a three-stage process:

1. **Identify the alternatives:** find out all the options available to you. Look for alternative process methods (to remove the need to use a substance entirely) and potential replacement substances (if elimination is not possible). If the substance you wish to replace is used in a widely applied process such as spray-painting or degreasing, then the number of options available is likely to be large.
2. **Compare the alternatives:** carry out a risk assessment of all the alternatives, including the substance or process used, and compare your findings. Check relevant national legislation on occupational safety and health, as well as environmental and product safety legislation to ensure that the options are legal and compatible, and ascertain the minimum standards that you have to achieve.
3. **Make the decision:** take the decision based on the regulatory needs, technological possibilities, potential implications for the quality of the products, costs, including the required investment, and training for use of the new product.

Where to start

Any avoidable exposure to dangerous substances should be eliminated.

Take steps to where to start:

Regarding hazards caused by the process:

- open processes, e.g. painting big surfaces, mixing compounds in open containers/basins;
- processes generating dusts, vapours or fumes or dispersing liquids, e.g. welding, spray-painting.

Related to the substance:

- If you cannot change the work process, try to eliminate or avoid the exposure for substances that:
 - increase the acid exposure risk;
 - lead to high exposure of workers;
 - results in exposure to many workers.

EN





Communicating information about dangerous substances



Introduction

The Agency is producing a series of factbooks on occupational safety and health information about dangerous substances for the European Week for Safety and Health at Work 2000. Effective communication about the risks to workers' health and their management in the workplace is a constant challenge for employers, accident, and their representatives. This factbook presents points to consider for harmonised communication.

Legislation

EU legislation on classification and labelling (1) set the frame for obligations of producers of chemical substances. They determine important information (2) to be provided in a standardised way in safety labels, risk symbols and safety data sheets available to the user.

The directive related to chemical agents (3) specifies that employers shall obtain additional information (4) that is needed for risk assessment. The employer also has to ensure that the workers and their representatives are informed and trained on:

- the hazardous properties of the chemical agents handled;
- the level, type and duration of exposure and the circumstances of work involving such agents;
- appropriate precautions to safeguard themselves and other workers at the workplace;
- the effect of risk management procedures taken or to be taken;
- relevant occupational exposure limit values or biological limit values;

- and where available, the conditions to be drawn from any health surveillance and exposure assessment already undertaken.

Additionally, the employer shall also ensure that the workers are aware of the changes in these circumstances.

For workers likely to be exposed to carcinogens and mutagens (5) or certain biological agents (6), employers have to keep records including information about exposure and health surveillance. Workers have to be provided with access to their personal data.

These regulations have to be transferred into national legislation. Member States are entitled to include some additional or more stringent provisions for the protection of workers, as the corresponding directives only lay down minimum requirements.

The future EU system of registration, evaluation and restriction of chemicals REACH aims to increase the availability of relevant information about properties of chemicals, their environmental and health effects, intended use and risk reduction measures.

It is therefore strongly recommended that you seek clarification of specific national legislation that may apply relating to the use of dangerous substances in the workplace.

Labelling of chemicals

If a chemical substance or product is classified as dangerous, the manufacturer or the importer must put a danger label on the packaging with information about at least:

- the name or trade name of the substance or product and the name and address of the person responsible for placing it on the market;
- name(s) of the dangerous contents that lead to the danger classification;
- EC registry numbers for substances, for example the EINECS (7) or ELINCS (8) numbers;
- standardised indicators of danger, danger symbol (9), risk indicators (R-phrases (10)) and safety directions (S-phrases (11)). Provisions are also laid down for preparations containing several dangerous substances which require several symbols and risk phrases.

Risk symbols, risk (R) phrases and safety (S) phrases are indications of the substance hazard and of safety measures relating to that substance. Both the R and S phrases are set by the directives of the European Community (9). They are used in the labelling of the package and in safety data sheets to warn and guide the user of the dangerous goods and preparations. Risk phrases are standardised presentations of the potential harm of the product for health and safety in normal handling and use, for example R21 'Harmful in contact with skin'. Safety phrases and their combinations present preventive measures to be taken such as S15 'Keep away from heat'.

The Workplace use, extensive and standardised additional information has to be given in the safety data sheets regarding health effects, contents of the product, appropriate protection measures and personal protective equipment.



EW 2003 Campaign material (2)

- **A Report:** Case studies of successful communication measures for the transmission of information relating to DS
- **Magazine**
- **Website:** dedicated multilingual information resource for the Week and in the future

→ <http://osha.eu.int/ew2003/>

European Week for Safety and Health at Work 2003



DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES
HANDLE WITH CARE


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WHAT is the European Week for Safety and Health at Work?



The European Week 2003 is an information campaign aimed at making Europe a safe and healthy place to work by promoting activities to reduce the risks of working with dangerous substances. With the backing of all Member States and enlargement countries, the European Commission and Parliament, trade unions and employers' federations, this annual initiative has become the largest workplace safety and health event in Europe. It provides a unique opportunity to focus attention on the importance of safety and health at work.

[More details](#)

Call for nominations for 4th European good practice awards 2003



05/05/2003: The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work invites nominations for the fourth European Good Practice Awards in occupational health and safety. The 2003 award scheme will recognise companies or organisations that have made outstanding and innovative contributions to the prevention of risks from dangerous substances at work, within enterprises.

[More details](#)

Communicating information about dangerous substances



08/04/2003: The Agency is producing a series of factsheets on occupational safety and health information about dangerous substances for the European Week for Safety and Health at Work 2003. Effective communication about the risks to workers' health and their management in the workplace is a common challenge for employers, workers, and their representatives. This factsheet presents points to consider for successful communication.

[More details](#)

EW 2003 dedicated websites in Europe

 Your Link to Safety and Health at Work
<http://agency.osha.eu.int>


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News

7/5/2003

[UK National Audit Office independent report on improving the management of health and safety risks to staff in NHS trusts](#) 

7/5/22003

[IRL - Public asked for their view on ban on smoking in the workplace](#) 

6/5/2003

[IT - 6th International Congress on Work Injuries Prevention, Rehabilitation and Workers Compensation \(WorkCongress6\)](#)

Good Practice award scheme

- **Recognition of outstanding contributions to risk prevention**
- **National nominations / European jury**
- **Good practices published: on Agency and national websites and booklet**
- **Awards presented at Closing event**



good practice awards 2003

Successful prevention of risks from dangerous substances at work

Call for nominations



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Colloquium and Closing event

- **Closing event 24 November**
 - **Expert workshops**
 - **Colloquium - policy perspectives**
 - **Good practice award ceremony**