

Focus on IFA's work

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New trends for the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions – The Risk Observatory

Problem

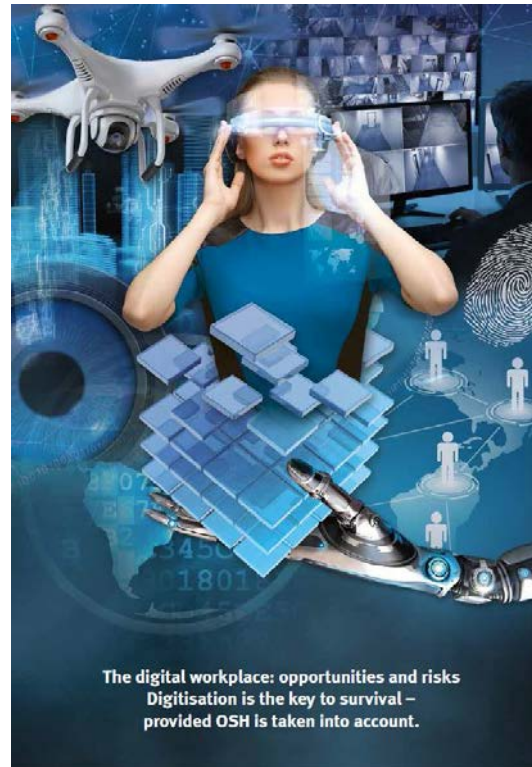
The world of work has become more complex in recent decades and is influenced by new developments in the areas of technology, society, ecology, business and politics. Examples of these developments are migration, the globalization of product and information flows, automation and interconnection in almost all areas of life, and demographic change. Such developments present new challenges to workers and to work structures and processes. They also necessitate modern, proactive preventive activity that is effective at an early stage and that presents solutions wherever possible before accidents and diseases occur.

The Risk Observatory at the IFA, which is maintained at the IFA, strategically monitors emerging developments with the aims of detecting trends relevant to the workplace and new safety and health risks to workers as soon as possible and identifying suitable preventive measures. The Risk Observatory gears this activity to a broad range of developments, and analyses their relevance to occupational safety and health systematically and by sector.

Activities

The Risk Observatory's work is based upon a web-assisted survey of around 400 labour inspectors from all the accident insurance institutions.

It is intended to deliver answers to the following questions:



Digitalization is changing traditional worlds of work and employment models

- What developments will lead to significant safety and health risks for insured individuals in the next five years?
- What are the safety and health risks in question?
- What preventive measures could be effective?

The survey is being conducted at staggered intervals in three groups (clusters). The make-up of the clusters is such that accident insurance institutions

whose insurance pools are similar in structure (public sector, manufacturing industry, service industry) are located within the same cluster.

The first round of the survey was completed at the end of 2015. The survey cycle begins again in 2017. The results of the preceding survey phase will be considered in the concept of each new questionnaire.

The results are analysed individually for each accident insurance institution, extended with literature surveys, edited from cross-sector and sector-specific perspectives, and supplemented with concrete proposals for preventive activity. The quality of the results is assured by a results workshop conducted with the prevention managers. At the end of the process, each accident insurance institution receives a report containing individualized information on its main trends, the associated risks, and conceivable preventive measures.

Results and Application

The results of the first survey round show that almost all of the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions consider three topics to be particularly urgent:

- Intensification of work and expansion of responsibility
- The increasing proportion of older persons
- Interconnection, reachability and surveillance by computers and ICT

The top ten developments also include the topics of mobility, the skills shortage and precarious working arrangements, which are central to the discussion of Work 4.0. However, the key prevention topics of the future also include familiar issues such as noise and imbalanced ergonomic stresses. It is notable that a need for action is also evident in areas lying outside the core responsibilities of the accident insurance

institutions: lack of exercise outside work, and unhealthy nutrition.

The results of the DGUV's Risk Observatory are used by the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions as a basis for their prevention activities in the near future. Besides the evaluations conducted individually for each accident insurance institution, the brochure entitled "Human beings at the centre: priorities for the occupational safety and health of tomorrow" describes the ten issues accorded priority for the preventive activities of the accident insurance institutions as a whole.

In order to ensure that the Risk Observatory reliably reflects the need for occupational safety and health activity in the field, in-plant evaluation involving over 700 OSH professionals was conducted following the first survey round. The evaluation showed the labour inspectors' appraisal of the situation in the companies to be realistic.

Area of Application

Accident insurance institutions, the prevention services of the accident insurance institutions, OSH professionals, companies, institutions, the wider public.

Additional Information

- It's all about people: priorities for tomorrow's occupational safety and health. Published by.: Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung (DGUV), Berlin 2016
www.dguv.de/webcode/e1159702

Expert Assistance

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Literature Requests

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