



RECOMMENDED

Comparative study on accessibility in companies

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TOP STORY

Workplace accident figures 2019

Accident figures broken down by groups of insured persons for the first time

The risk of having an accident at work fell again in 2019. This is the result of the annual review by the German social accident insurance institutions for the public and private sectors, which the DGUV published in June 2020. There were 871,547 reportable workplace accidents. In 2018, there were 877,198. The number of commuting accidents fell by 1,855 to 186,672 accidents.

For the first time, the figures for workplace accidents, commuting accidents and new accident pensions were shown separately in two categories. The first category consists of accidents that occurred in an occupational context. This includes all accidents suffered by employees and company owners. The second category includes accidents at work suffered by other groups of insured persons. This is because volunteers, emergency workers, people in rehabilitation and others are also covered by statutory accident insurance. The separate listing allows a more nuanced look at the different groups of insured persons.

Last year, there were 811,722 work-related accidents. This means that the risk of having an accident at work decreased by 1.4% compared to 2018. In an occupational context, 180,355 people were involved in accidents on their way to or from work; among the other groups of insured persons, the number was 6,317. New work-related accident pensions last year amounted to 12,458 in an occupational context and 904 in other insurance groups. The slight decline in the number of accidents in the occupational environment continues the trend of recent years. Director General Dr Stefan Hussy said: 'This trend is an incentive for us to continue our efforts to promote a good prevention culture. In addition to our regular activities, this currently includes our commitment to safe and healthy working during the coronavirus pandemic'.

And in 2020? The pandemic will undoubtedly cause a shift in the occupational disease sector this



Photo: DGUV

Volunteers are also covered by statutory accident insurance. For the first time, the figures for workplace accidents and commuting accidents suffered by insured persons outside an occupational context were recorded separately.

year. For example, a significant increase is expected in Occupational Disease Number 3101, as COVID-19 can be classified as an occupational disease under this number, provided the relevant conditions are met. In addition, further developments in occupational disease legislation as a result of the 7th Amendment Act of Book IV of the German Social Code are likely to see an increase in the number of occupational diseases being recognised. For example, the obligation to cease work will no longer apply from 1 January 2021. This means that giving up work is no longer a prerequisite for recognition of nine occupational diseases. This all means new challenges for the German social accident insurance system for this year and the next.

Web: www.dguv.de › Webcode: dp1317837 (German only)

FYI

Occupational Disease Number 3101

This covers infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, measles and COVID-19, which can be recognised as occupational diseases in the case of insured persons who work in health services, welfare services and laboratories, or who are volunteers in these areas.



Photo: Jan Röhrl/DGUV

Win-Win

Dear Reader,

The coronavirus pandemic means one thing above all else for many people and business sectors: restrictions and losses. But it also shows where issues have been ignored, which affect us even more in these difficult times.

The German EU Council Presidency has recognised this and added some of these challenges to its agenda. Its aim is to make Europe stronger, fairer and more sustainable, by driving forward the EU action plan 'Human Rights and Decent Work in Global Supply Chains' in the coming months. Decent, safe working conditions around the world also have the potential to contribute to the standardisation of competitive conditions and help combat wage dumping.

When it comes to establishing and further developing decent and safe working conditions, the German social accident insurance has sound competence, including across borders. For example, the DGUV has been involved for some years in the development of a statutory accident insurance system in Bangladesh. The government now wants to introduce statutory accident insurance as part of a pilot project. This is another step towards establishing uniform global standards for social security.

Dr Stefan Hussy
Director General of the DGUV

“We must raise awareness of the dangers, perhaps with more emotion than ever before”

Freight vehicles are responsible for transporting a large proportion of goods within European countries. Time and again they are involved in serious accidents. This was also shown in a recently published report by the European Transport Safety Council (ETSC) ‘How to improve the safety of goods vehicles in the EU?’ DGUV Kompakt spoke to Dr Klaus Ruff, Deputy Head of Prevention at the German Social Accident Institution for the Transport Industry, Postal Logistics and Telecommunications, about what causes accidents and measures for improving road safety.

Dr Ruff, according to a recently published report by the European Transport Safety Council, almost 6,000 people in the EU lost their lives in 2018 due to a collision with a truck. How is the situation in Germany and what circumstances are responsible for most of these accidents in this country?

The Federal Statistical Office has published figures on the causes of accidents for Germany in 2018, which are roughly in line with our data. According to these figures, 20.5% of accidents involving goods vehicles are a result of trucks not keeping enough distance. Errors when turning, making U-turns, reversing, and entering or joining traffic follow in second place with 16.4%. This is followed by errors concerning right of way and priority with 11.2% and incorrect speeds with 9.8%. Distractions certainly play a significant role in drivers not maintaining distance and failing to adjust their speed. In Germany in 2018, there were more than 28,000 accidents with a personal injury involving at least one goods vehicle. That is 1.8% less than in 2017, but still far too many.

Distractions when driving are considered one of the most frequent causes of collisions. What are the reasons for this and how can such accidents be avoided in the future?

The causes are partly due to higher traffic volume. Truck mileage and the number of

registered passenger cars is increasing, sales of bicycles are growing every year, and new means of transport such as small electric vehicles are all taking up space on the roads. But despite the increase in traffic density, especially in cities, some drivers still think they need to make a phone call or send a text message. This results in them not paying attention to the road for some seconds. In critical traffic situations, however, these seconds can be crucial. At a speed of 50 km/h, three seconds of distraction means driving 42 metres without full attention. We must raise awareness of the dangers, perhaps with more emotion than ever before. From a technical perspective, advanced driver assistance systems are likely to see a further reduction in traffic accidents, especially features such as emergency braking, lane assistance, turning assistance and intersection assistance.

According to the ETSC report, the number of accidents due to a lack of keeping sufficient distance has remained constantly high. What can modern technology do to help with this?

Adaptive cruise control helps to maintain the correct distance in a very convenient way. If the vehicle in front brakes suddenly, the emergency braking system activates. But technology cannot fix everything! If legislators want drivers to maintain a safe distance as per the German Road Traffic Act, they must also monitor compliance with these regulations.



Photo: Tim Mueller-Zitzke - stock.adobe.com

Europe's roads are like a second home to many truck drivers. However, time and again they are involved in serious accidents.

During the nationwide shutdown, road freight transport kept operating on the whole. Nevertheless, the pandemic has not left the industry unscathed. What are the challenges now?

Certain sectors, such as event and trade fair logistics, are fighting for their survival. However, most road haulage companies have quickly adopted the new hygiene regulations and are in the process of making up for the loss of orders caused by the coronavirus. But now that the roads are getting busier again, the old problems are back: full parking spaces, traffic jams and blocked ramps. In recent months, the industry has shown how flexibly it can react. It would be nice if this flexibility, together with further digitalisation of processes, could help to solve the problems that lie ahead.

The EU Parliament recently adopted reforms to improve working conditions and thus increase safety in goods transport. How can the German social accident insurance assist with these improvements?

The reforms are good. They not only create fairer competition but also clearer and more uniform EU rules on the posting of mobile workers and better rules concerning rest periods. This will allow drivers to work under better conditions with greater job satisfaction. This satisfaction should also have a positive effect on the performance of drivers and thus result in a reduction in accidents. The police and the Federal Office for Goods Transport are responsible for ensuring compliance with road traffic regulations. Although our expert staff also carry out checks, we attach greater importance to education and motivation. This also reflects the wishes of our insured companies. We participate in on-site safety days, promote our various topics at rest stops and events, and publish media - including in the native language of the drivers. We will continue to pursue this path.

Photo: BG Verkehr/Ralf Hühne



Dr Klaus Ruff
Deputy Head of Prevention at the German Social Accident Institution for the Transport Industry, Postal Logistics and Telecommunications.

TOPIC

AI White Paper

EU Member States and other interested parties were able to participate in the consultation on the EU Commission's White Paper on Artificial Intelligence (AI) until 19 May. The DGUV, together with the German Social Insurance European Representation (DSV), also submitted comments.

In February, the EU Commission presented policy and legal options on the development of AI in the EU Member States. The Commission's White Paper on AI puts forward a proposal that focuses on excellence and trust in the use of AI. The Commission believes that traceability and transparency of decisions, especially those made in the health sector, are important.

The DSV agrees with the EU Commission on many points, because it is clear to the DSV that the use of AI offers opportunities in the area of social security. In combination with a European exchange of experience, AI has the potential to improve health care.

Nevertheless, the DSV points out that there needs to be amendments. The White Paper currently only focuses on consumer protection for AI-based products and systems. The DGUV has therefore pointed out that employees should be given equal consideration. They expect the same respect for their rights and safety.

Furthermore, the EU Commission has proposed distinguishing between low-risk and high-risk AI applications. In the view of the DGUV, several risk classes with corresponding control mechanisms are more appropriate. Voluntary quality seals for AI-based products or systems can also be considered for a high standard.

The EU Commission will use the contributions received in order to put in place measures to support the development of trustworthy and safe AI in the EU Member States.

Web: www.dsv-europa.de ›
Position papers

Best practices for inclusive work



Photo: Andi Weiland – Gesellschaftsbilder.de

Accessible workplaces – a comparative study provides ideas and examples of best practice from abroad.

How can access to the general labour market be improved for people with disabilities? This question is addressed in the DGUV study 'Inclusion Survey in Other Countries – International Comparative

Study on Accessibility in Companies'. The study looked for examples worldwide of how to make work accessible.

For example, the study describes an Austrian management consultancy which has set itself the goal of highlighting the potential of people with disabilities, both as customers and employees. Another example is an Israeli service provider which has prioritised the rehabilitation and re-integration of people with mental health problems into the labour market.

The 12 innovative examples from all over the world can inspire German companies to create better accessibility in the workplace.

Web: www.dguv.de > **Webcode:** p021491 (German only)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Start of the German EU Council Presidency

'Together for Europe's recovery' is the Federal Government's motto for the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Germany assumed the rotating Presidency for six months on 1 July. The

COVID-19 pandemic represents a major challenge. The programme of the German EU Presidency will focus on permanently overcoming the COVID-19 crisis and on Europe's economic and social recovery. The programme also focuses on implementing the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights. Other key areas include health and safety at work, and the protection of workers in non-standard employment. The aim is to encourage an EU action plan on human rights and decent work in global supply chains. The programme will also focus on rules for the use of artificial intelligence in the EU Member States. Overall, the aim is to make Europe stronger, fairer and more sustainable.

Web: www.eu2020.de



Photo: German Presidency of the Council of the EU 2020
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Campaign for sustainable mobility

Every year from 16 to 22 September, local authorities and interested organisations can showcase innovative transport projects and promote sustainable mobility as part of European Mobility Week – from school competitions to electric vehicle tests.

Web: www.umweltbundesamt.de > **European Mobility Week (German only)**

EUROPÄISCHE
MOBILITÄTS
WOCHE
16. bis 22. SEPTEMBER

Photo: EU Commission DG MOVE

IMPORTANT DATES

17 – 18 September 2020

GfA Autumn Conference 2020

Web: www.gesellschaft-fuer-arbeitswissenschaft.de > **Veranstaltungen**

6 – 8 Oktober 2020

Arbeitsschutz Aktuell Digital

Web: www.arbeitsschutz-aktuell.de

21 Oktober 2020

3rd German Pedestrians Congress

Web: www.fussverkehrskongress.de

NUMBER OF THE MONTH

108,787

... accidents occurred on the way to or from school in 2019, as covered by student social accident insurance. This was 559 accidents less than in 2018.

Source: DGUV

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