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 web magazine
www.dguv.de/kompakt

Page 2: “What’s at stake is nothing less than human lives” – Interview with Stefan Grieger, Director General of the German Road Safety Council (DVR)

A plan to combat heat

Climate change is having an impact on the world of work: In addition to intense UV radiation, increased allergy exposure and emerging pathogens, high temperatures and heat put a strain on workers’ bodies and minds. And the longer a heatwave continues, the more it limits our performance, increasing the risk of accidents. However, businesses are not yet sufficiently well prepared for this.

After summer is before summer when it comes to heat protection management. Even if we didn’t have such a hot spell this year, the next heat wave is sure to come. Now is the time to evaluate protective measures and adapt them.

People who do heavy physical work or work outdoors are particularly affected by high temperatures. People in precarious jobs or with pre-existing conditions are also more at risk. Because hot spells are becoming more frequent and lasting longer, new occupational groups are also being added. If people work in buildings without cooling – for example in older buildings or warehouses – their health is also at risk from high temperatures and heat.

“Heat stress in the workplace is unfortunately often taken for granted,” explains Dr Stefan Hussy, Director General of DGUV. “The resulting health risks are often underestimated by employees and managers alike.”

The effects can be seen in health consequences such as fatigue, lack of concentration, dehydration, but also depression or increased aggression. There are also economic consequences when people are less productive in hot weather or working hours are lost.



Heat can affect everyone, not just those working outdoors.

Recognising and documenting hazards

Heat protection is a management task. If managers can’t take the necessary workplace precaution themselves, they must appoint suitable staff who can. It should be checked whether the requirements of the Technical Rule for Workplaces ASR A3.5 “Room Temperature” are being observed. Vulnerable groups should be identified and given special consideration.

Once the hazards of heat have been identified, they need to be documented for each workplace in the risk assessment and suitable measures must be derived.

Effective measures can be to reduce the workload, shift working hours or adjust breaks. Cool break rooms, shaded areas, drinks, light meals and suitable clothing should be available.

“The working world is not yet sufficiently prepared for heat,” says Hussy, “but we urgently need to think about climate change when it comes to occupational health and safety. Some accident insurers, such as

the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the Building Trade or the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for Trade and Industry, have been dealing with the heat hazards for quite a while now. The German social accident insurance will also transfer this knowledge to other branches of industry. Our research projects also help to explore all the effects of climate change on the world of work.”

In 2017, the Federal Environment Agency (Umweltbundesamt) published a set of recommendations for the creation of heat action plans. Although these are primarily aimed at municipalities, they can also support companies in developing protection concepts against heat-related illnesses and fatalities. The German social accident insurance institutions advise companies and point out measures according to the TOP principle (see graphic on page 4).

→ forum.dguv.de › 1-2023 (German only)

→ www.dguv.de › webcode: p022351



Interview with Stefan Grieger, Director General of the German Road Safety Council (DVR)

“We want everyone to get there – to their destination, not death.”

Dear reader,

First aid concerns all of us, as accidents can happen anywhere – in our spare time, at work and at school. It doesn't take much to make a major difference during the first few minutes after an accident – even if all we do is call the emergency service.

Yet many people don't. Why? Maybe because they don't have the knowledge or the courage or even the sense of responsibility. I think this should change in our society. That is why I am pleased that this year's prevention programme of *Jugend will sich-er-leben* – JWSL for short – has the motto “First aid? A Matter of Honour!”. The programme seeks to familiarise young people with first aid procedures right from the beginning of their working lives.

Acquiring knowledge and practising different situations helps to keep a cool head in the decisive moment. JWSL has developed videos that help to raise awareness of the issue during vocational training, and some of the trainees may even decide to become first aiders within their company. Each company has first aiders who ensure that the right action is taken in an emergency. Even a one-day course provides everyone with the necessary knowledge. The course fees are covered by the accident insurance institutions. It is also good to know: Anyone who provides first aid – no matter where – is legally insured.

And: getting fit in first aid should not only be a topic for trainees. First aid should be taught in an age-appropriate manner at school. The more practice, the better. First aid? A matter of honour!

Yours
Dr Stefan Hussy
Director General of the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV)

When a survey was held by the German Road Safety Council (DVR), it was found that people's attentiveness to others was rated worse on the road than in other areas of life. The #mehrAchtung initiative (#MoreConsideration), of which the DVR is a member, is currently seeking to encourage more thoughtfulness among the public. How can this be achieved? And how have accident figures been developing? These are the questions asked by DGUV Kompakt in an interview with Stefan Grieger, Director General of the German Road Safety Council (DVR).

Mr Grieger, the German Highway Code contains an important key statement: “Road use requires continuous caution and mutual consideration.” Why is it still necessary to run a road safety campaign for more attentiveness to others?

Between a norm and the lived reality there is always the acceptance of the rules. We have set out to improve this acceptance - which also always has to do with insight. The fact that manners in road traffic sometimes leave a lot to be desired is not a new phenomenon. The DVR already successfully promoted better cooperation in road traffic in the 1970s with the "Hello Partner, Thank You Campaign". We hope to achieve something similar this time as well. And it's not just about trivia like exchanging swear words. This is about nothing less than human lives. Every minute there were 4.5 accidents on our roads last year. That's more than 2.4 million accidents. Those who are distracted, drunk or driving at excessive speeds endanger not only themselves but also their fellow human beings. Last year, 2,788 people were killed in road accidents. Our goal is Vision Zero. We want everyone to get there – to their destination, not death.

But are those accident figures really just down to improper behaviour on the part of road users?

People make mistakes. That will always be the case. But these mistakes should no longer lead to death or serious injury. Vision Zero has succeeded in encouraging vehicle manufacturers, urban and road planners and other system designers to take responsibility for road safety. There are many approaches here, for example so-called forgiving roads, where structural measures are used to mitigate the consequences of misbehaviour by road users. Nevertheless, each and every road user has a personal responsibility. The #mehrAchtung campaign appeals to people's personal attitude. Respect and consideration help to save lives. Anyone who causes suffering or even death to another person through their own fault carries this with them for the rest of their life. Isn't it much better to show consideration for each other?

“
Respect and thoughtfulness help to save people's lives.”

The 2022 accident figures from the German Federal Statistical Office show that the proportion of cyclists involved in fatal accidents has almost doubled since 2000. What needs to be done to improve the safety of non-motorised traffic?

In addition to insufficient visibility, poor infrastructure is often a contributing factor to accidents involving cyclists. Particularly at intersections and junctions, when crossing lanes and on cycle paths that are too narrow, accidents also occur due to the infrastructure. We therefore call for a modernisation of the infrastructure – especially for the benefit of vulnerable road users. But here, too, mutual consideration naturally plays a role.

Auto, Rad, Lkw. Wir sitzen alle im selben Boot.

Bringen wir #mehrAchtung auf die Straße.

#mehrAchtung

Eine Verkehrssicherheits-Initiative
von Verkehrsverbänden, Gewerkschaften
und Partnern: mehrachtung.de

Photo: © DVR

The road safety initiative #mehrAchtung (#MoreConsideration), which is supported by the DGUV and Germany's social accident insurance institutions, is calling for a more positive attitude on the road.

Is it just an issue for towns and cities?

No, it's just as relevant for rural areas. Cyclists are relatively unprotected, they have no "crumple zone". Any accident can therefore lead to serious injuries. Only ten percent of cycling traffic currently takes place outside built-up areas. Nevertheless, around 40 percent of fatal accidents occur here. Only a quarter of all accidents are caused on rural roads. But almost 60 percent of all traffic fatalities occur there. Lowering the speed limit on narrow rural roads would be a first suitable measure to reduce the number of road casualties and the severity of the consequences of accidents.

season. By the way: public transport is still the safest way to get to school.

Right now, the German Federal Government is in the process of introducing a law to legalise cannabis. How will it impact road safety?

Research has shown that cannabis consumption increases the risk of road accidents. It can seriously impair a person's ability to drive, as it interferes with their cognitive skills, in particular. Anyone who drives under the influence of this drug risks their life and the lives of those around them. We would therefore urge the German government to cover the effects of cannabis use on road safety in their information campaign. There's a simple rule: if you smoke pot, don't drive, and if you drive, don't smoke pot. Narcotics should have no place on the road. It's the same with alcohol.

➔ German Road Safety Council (DVR):
www.dvr.de (German only)



Stefan Grieger,
Director General of the
German Road Safety Council (DVR)

**Narcotics should have
no place on the road.**

Another group that is particularly at risk on the road is schoolchildren. Can parents help to make the way to school safer for them?

Parents can contribute a great deal. For example, it would make sense for them to practise the way to school with their children. The daily school run – i.e. taking and fetching children by car – tends to make the way to school more dangerous for everyone. Children who are always driven to school do not learn how to navigate the roads. Equipping school bags and clothing with reflectors also makes an important contribution, especially in the dark

A joint strategy for mental health

Mental health in the world of work is to be promoted by a joint prevention strategy of all stakeholders. The kick-off will be at the 38th International A+A Congress from 24 to 27 October 2023.



The coalition agreement wants to make longer and healthier working a focus of old-age security policy. To this end, a "Healthy Work" action plan is to be launched and the principle of "prevention before rehabilitation before retirement" is to be strengthened. Both projects require a joint prevention strategy and more closely linked activities by policy-makers, social insurance funds, social accident insurance institutions, associations and companies.

As the first joint activity of an overarching cooperation, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) plans to focus on mental health in the world of work. The focus will be on mental stress at work, how to deal with mentally ill persons in employment and the obstacles to their (re)integration. This project ties in with the "Mental Health Offensive", which started in 2020.

The A+A Congress is to be the prelude to developing a joint strategy to destigmatise mental illness. This will include measures for humane work design, participation and the removal of barriers to employment for people with mental illnesses and better access to the diverse offers and support services. The statutory accident insurance will also be represented at the A+A Congress. It is also involved in the Joint German Occupational Safety and Health Strategy and the National Prevention Strategy for Good Work Design and Mental Health.

Mental Health in the Workplace,
24 October 2023, 14:45 – 17:45 hrs

➔ www.basi.de/aa-kongress/
(German only)

Heat as a health hazard

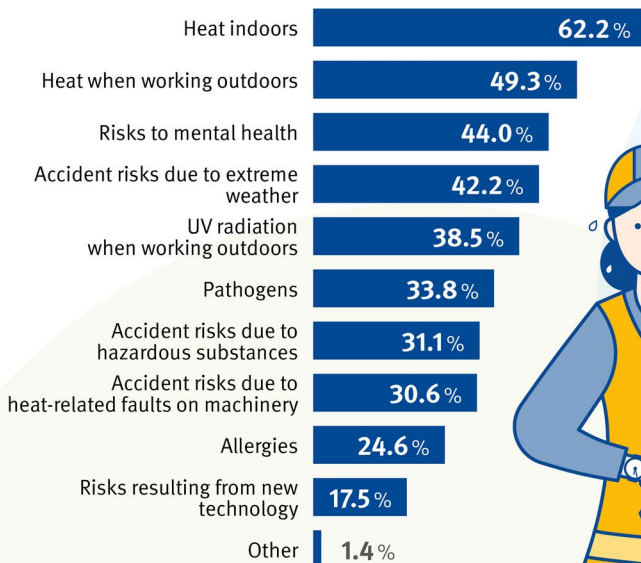
It is getting warmer in Germany. As temperatures rise, so does the risk of more frequent and more intense heat waves. These are a burden on health and can impair the physical and mental performance of employees. Many companies have already realised that

occupational safety and health must take climate change into account. According to a survey conducted by the DGUV in 2022, around two-thirds of employees see a need for action in the case of indoor heat and half in the case of outdoor work. 44% also see

risks to mental health as a result of climate change. The TOP principle helps in the selection of suitable.

➔ www.dguv.de › webcode: p022351

In your view, which climate change risks should be addressed to ensure that a workplace stays safe and healthy? (Multiple responses possible; n=1.039)

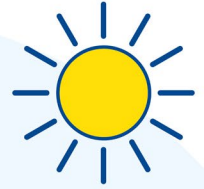


Measures against heat – TOP-principle



T TECHNICAL

- Provide shading
- Provide ventilation
- Provide air conditioning



P PERSONNEL

- Raise awareness
- Keep hydrated and eat light meals
- Observe break times
- Wear suitable clothes
- Reduce physical exertion where possible

O ORGANISATIONAL

- Provide drinks
- Adjust working hours, working time patterns and workplaces
- Provide cool break rooms
- Adjust workwear
- Develop emergency plans and heat protection plans



Kick-off for the new EU-OSHA campaign

Safe and healthy work in the digital age – this is the current motto of the European Healthy Workplaces Campaign of the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA).

The kick-off event for the launch in Germany will take place on 2 November 2023 at the German Social Accident Insurance in Berlin. The effects of digitalisation on the safety and health of employees will be discussed. The main topics of the campaign in Germany are: Remote work, smart digital

systems for implementing occupational safety and health, and advanced robotics and AI-based systems in occupational safety and health. OSH experts from practice and science as well as the social partners will be present.

The national focal point of the EU-OSHA, the German Social Accident Insurance and the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health invite you to attend.

➔ <https://healthy-workplaces.osha.europa.eu/en>



This is the theme used by EU-OSHA in its Healthy Workplaces Campaign

Imprint

Published by: German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV), Dr Stefan Hussy (Director General). The DGUV is the umbrella organisation of the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions for the public sector and for trade and industry.

Deadline: 12/09/2023

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Translation: Intercontact GmbH

Layout: Atelier Hauer & Dörfler GmbH, www.hauer-doerfler.de

Publisher: Content5 AG, Welfenstraße 22, 81541 München

Printed by: MedienSchiff BRUNO

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Image sources portraits:

Page 2: Jan Röhl/DGUV
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