

UMANA[®]



Safety at Work

BENEFITS EVERYONE

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Forewords

The idea that led us to republish this 'little' book after 20 years is evident from its original title. "Safety at Work benefits everyone" was not and is not a manual, nor is it the umpteenth handbook on safety regulations.

It is seen by Umana as a small contribution in helping to improve things for individuals - the quality of their work and well-being - and for companies needing to be competitive, by advocating a culture of safety that must be inseparable from the culture of work itself, and from that of society.

Once again, we take a thoroughly objective concrete approach, using practical examples to highlight how investing in safety can benefit both the company and the worker. Prevention is never a cost, just as fair dealing and lawful conduct of labour relations cannot be considered as costs.

We habitually talk to people, and with people: workers and companies alike. And at the same time, we do so in this publication. We consider safety at work, first and foremost, to be a factor in increasing the awareness and responsibility expected from each one of us.

Our firm intention is that this document should "stay alive" and continue to provide stimulus for all actors in the system. The new edition has been enhanced with descriptions of many new emerging risks - sometimes underestimated, but a potential threat nonetheless to the mental and physical well-being of everyone - risks, moreover, that new technologies and organizational systems do not necessarily help to diminish. The book will also be translated into several languages, given that prevention depends before all else on understanding and proper communication.

Our thanks to ANIV for their enthusiastic support of the initiative, in particular their scientific supervision of the publication and their help in spreading the message and raising awareness.

Attention to prevention and safety is a commitment that must be met on a daily basis if the role of Employment Agency is to be performed correctly, but it is in any case one of the core values embraced by UMANA, the most important of which being respect for the individual.

UMANANA

An initiative of this nature, promoting prevention with precision and punctilious care, and demonstrating the benefits of implementing safety at work, could not fail to meet with our fullest approval and support.

For almost half a century, the Association of Public Inspection Officials (ANIV) has brought together inspectors of the INPS, INAIL and National Labour Inspectorate, as well as local Health Authority staff concerned with matters of prevention.

The bond of association is anchored in a professional commitment to maintain dignity, lawfulness and safety at work, as stated in our charter of values: *Dignity, lawfulness and job security encapsulate and typify the fundamental values and commitment that inspire the people who join the Professional Association of Public Inspection Officials, known as ANIV. These three elements are inseparably combined, because each one derives from the slow and singularly arduous paths of improvement that have always characterized the human phenomenon of work, and still do so today.*

The fact of having a job to do cannot and must not justify the fact of a person's health being undermined: on the contrary, it increases the need to preserve life and safeguard mental and physical integrity, since these are inviolable assets that we have an inescapable human, social and legal duty to guarantee. There are always risks attached to production activities - some obvious, leading to accidents in the workplace, others less so, but dangerous nonetheless and giving rise to insidious occupational diseases - but all are manageable, thanks to the solutions offered by technologies and legal provisions, through the thoughtful and conscientious implementation of prevention and safety measures. Whilst the organization and oversight of prevention and safety are the responsibility of employers and work providers, correct and timely implementation also requires the active and equally conscious participation of all personnel, with self-evident advantages for everyone involved.

Mourning, mutilation and disability remain by-products of work to this day, but they are objectively avoidable: going to work and coming home healthy is not only possible, it is a duty, and the benefit is universal, individually and socially.

ANIV

The human, social and economic costs of non-prevention

Where prevention is poor, inadequate or altogether absent, the resulting damage produces unacceptable grief and suffering, not to mention inconceivable numbers in terms of personal injury and lost production, as well as increased unrest and a climate of discontent in the workplace. The figures at global level and across the European Union are staggering, as they are also in Italy.

Italy spends more than 45 billion euros every year as a result of accidents in the workplace and occupational illnesses.

Contributing to this enormous total are the costs of healthcare, compensation, and loss of production due to injury-related absences from work.

The central nature of health protection in a company is able to generate a force of positivity felt across all parts of the organization. When awareness as to the importance of good health is activated in the production environment, it spreads beyond the confines of the company and influences other areas of life: road safety, physical activity, eating habits, the quality and quantity of food we eat, ageing, as well as preserving wellness and self-sufficiency.

Healthy individuals work better, but above all, they live better!

There is an unacceptable and in some ways paradoxical situation that affects the approximately four and a half million enterprises operating in Italy. In the vast majority of companies - over ninety per cent - the proprietors are personally engaged in operational activities. **Accordingly, giving thought to prevention and safety is, not least, an action of direct self-preservation.**

THE COSTS OF IGNORING SAFETY FOR THE EMPLOYER
THE COSTS OF IGNORING SAFETY FOR THE WORKER
THE COSTS OF IGNORING SECURITY
FOR THE COMMUNITY

Clearly, before considering regulations, proper investment in safety and training, solutions made possible by technology, etc., there has to be a general belief and acceptance that if people are to work, there can be no question of their health having to be sacrificed: this is a natural and totally human expectation, a principle enshrined in the nation's constitution. And in any case, the cost of prevention is self-evidently far less than the cost incurred by damages.

Where prevention and safety are concerned, a particularly important contribution can be made through **increased inter-company solidarity**. Naturally, the level of commitment in this area will differ from large organizations to SMEs. In effect, it is the more extensively equipped companies with greater awareness that have to insist on high prevention and safety standards when contracting and working with smaller companies: not unquestioning bureaucratic compliance, but exchange of ideas, stimulus, collaboration.

With the improving regulatory framework, **the increased focus on sustainability and the different attitude of new generations, there is room for cautious optimism**, which must be accompanied by constant and determined action every day, never lowering our guard where health protection is concerned.

Accidents around the world based on data provided by the International Labour Organization (ILO)

Fatalities reported by Inail increased by 4.7% between 2023 and 2024, from 1,029 to 1,077, reversing a trend that for several decades had shown a decline (4,644 in the year 1963, falling to 1,768 by 1983, and again, falling to 1,433 in 2003). In 2024, the biggest increase was in deaths en route to and from work (from 239 to 280) whereas deaths in the workplace increased by 7 (from 790 to 797). Finally, it is worth noting that the total number of 589,571 accident reports published by INAIL (INAIL, 2025) also includes 77,883 cases concerning students, both public and private, to whom insurance protection was recently extended and implemented on an experimental basis by the Institute, showing an increase of +10.9% over the previous year (data from CNEL and Sole24Ore).

Accidents at work worldwide

Total annual accidents at work worldwide	317.000.000
Total deaths worldwide due to occupational accidents and illnesses every day	6.300
Total deaths worldwide due to occupational accidents and illnesses every year	2.300.000

Source - International Labour Office ILO / BIT / OIT Geneva

The annual economic value of non-prevention

<i>Every year</i>	<i>Value in billions of euros</i>
Worldwide	4.000
European Union	366
Italy	45

In Italy every day

2.249

Working people suffer injuries as a result of their activity, some fatal, others permanently debilitating, and thankfully, many also curable.

The daily number breaks down as follows:

3

people still die at work;

1.998

suffer an injury, some as a result of accidents and having permanent consequences;

248

people are diagnosed with an occupational illness.

Safeguarding the invaluable asset of mental and physical integrity

Work is one of the pillars of individual and collective well-being, offering opportunities for growth, personal fulfilment and economic stability. For work to make a real contribution to quality of life, however, it must be carried on in conditions of safety.

Every worker has the right to do his or her job in a safe environment where health protection and risk prevention are matters of priority. To prevent accidents and ensure an untroubled working day, avoiding any negative impact on private life, it is essential that everyone stays aware of the dangers that are present, and completely familiar with protective measures. Not only do injuries affect productivity, they can impair quality of life outside of working hours. Accordingly, promoting a culture of safety means investing in the well-being of individuals, so that they can return home healthy every day.

This publication explores the value of awareness and prevention in risk management, demonstrating how safety is not merely a duty, but a strategic choice, if the working and personal future of individuals is to bring satisfaction.

Awareness makes us cautious. Knowledge protects us from danger.

Do not minimize

Safety at work: a shared responsibility

All too often, safety at work is perceived as a mere bureaucratic obligation, a set of rules that must be followed in order to avoid fines or other penalties. But safety is much more than this: it is a constant commitment, a culture that needs to be instilled and nurtured day after day.

One of the most common mistakes is to say, “well, nothing has ever happened before...” but this type of mentality, widespread among employers and employees alike, is a breeding ground for accidents and injuries. Companies have a duty to assess risks proactively, investing in state-of-the-art training, equipment and procedures. But safety is not just a matter of having “paperwork in order”: every worker is called upon to take an active part, ensuring preventive measures are put into practice and reporting any situations of real or potential danger.

Taking a relaxed attitude because bad things have not happened in the past is a gamble that can have dramatic consequences. Confident familiarity with the work environment or personal experience are assumptions that create a false sense of security: safety is not about “knowing it all”, but a process of learning and improvement, always evolving.

Together, companies and individuals can build a work environment that is safer for everyone.

01



Manual handling of loads

This takes in all activities that involve lifting, pushing, pulling, carrying or moving a “load”, in other words, a weight. The same definition also includes so-called “repetitive movements”, that is to say, activities that involve frequent bodily action, even with minimal effort, particularly using fingers, hands and arms.



Good practices

When something needs to be moved, it is important to use the appropriate equipment.

If the use of special-purpose equipment is impossible or impractical, these simple tips may be useful:

- Adopt a firm stance, using the legs, not the back, to generate the effort;
- Take a firm grip on the item to be lifted or moved, holding it close to the body;
- Lift only such weights as are compatible with individual age and physique, observing regulatory limits.

Consequences

Lifting or moving weights incorrectly or for overly prolonged periods could cause problems for muscles and bones.

Such problems are not limited exclusively to the work environment; they can also have an impact on everyday life generally.

In particular, bad handling practices can lead to back pain, circulatory problems and difficulties with movement, affecting the general well-being of individuals and their ability to carry on daily activities.

How the worker benefits

Problems resulting from bad practices in the manual handling of loads may not always be considered occupational injuries, as they are often related to existing physical conditions (e.g. osteoarthritis) and develop gradually over time without an immediate cause-and-effect relationship.

Absences from work caused by conditions such as these are not classified as injuries, but as illnesses, and therefore qualify for a lower level of protection.

Observing safety rules not only protects you at work, it also helps by giving you a better everyday quality of life. Take care of your body and follow the correct practices, so as to avoid long-term problems and enjoy a healthier, more active life.

How the company benefits

It is essential to ensure that load handling operations are carried out in compliance with established safety procedures, and that personnel undergo medical examinations periodically.

Failure to abide by these rules can lead to an injury on the job, prolonged absences that are not recognized as injury-related, and consequently significant costs to the company.

For example, an absence of 60 days attributable to incorrect handling by the worker could result in costs to the company that are on average 50% higher than in cases where the injury is officially recognized as work-related.

In addition, an increase of just a few percentage points in the INAIL rate due to a higher number of accidents in the workplace can have a heavy financial impact on your company.

Adopting strategies of saving money by not investing in prevention and safety can cost you upwards of a few thousand euros, if your company has a small payroll, and indeed many tens of thousands of euros for a company with a significant number of employees (around 200/300 euros per person), creating a financial burden that will last for several years.

02



Mechanized handling of loads

This takes in the full range of activities involving the use of mechanical equipment to move loads, typically fork lift trucks, pallet trucks, conveyor belts, hoists, cranes etc.



Good practices

Where machines and equipment are used to move objects, suitable training is required, and knowledge of their correct operation.

It is very important for your safety that you are properly trained and well versed in the correct use of machines and equipment for handling loads.

Here are some tips on how to avoid injuries, including serious injuries:

- Observe the speed and weight limits specified for machines and equipment;
- Ensure that the load is stable, and positioned correctly;
- Avoid behaviour that could lead to distraction or lack of care;
- Always use the safety devices provided with the equipment.

Consequences

Using mechanical equipment at work wrongly or without authorization can be extremely dangerous.

Here are some serious accidents that can be avoided by using equipment correctly and complying with safety regulations:

- Crushing, caused for example by falling materials, or by the vehicle tipping over and the operator has not fastened the seat-belt;
- Crashes due to distraction, speeding, or failure to observe compulsory floor lane markings;
- Impacts and bruises resulting from collision with other equipment or against walls, shelves, machinery.

Self-evidently, operators must know how to use equipment correctly, and safety rules must be followed at all times.

How the worker benefits

The correct and authorized use of equipment ensures your safety, and moreover, it promotes a more productive and untroubled working environment. By following procedures, you avoid accidents, protecting your own safety and that of your co-workers, and contribute to general well-being within the company.

If you operate a fork-lift truck, for example, then once you have had the proper training, you can do your job efficiently and safely, reducing the likelihood of damage to materials and physical injuries, and avoiding the risk of having to answer, not least financially, for any kind of damages that may occur on your shift.

Your awareness and observance of procedures will not only prevent permanent disability and other serious consequences but also strengthen the safety culture within the company by creating a more secure working environment.

How the company benefits

Accidents that derive from the improper use or substandard maintenance of equipment used for lifting and transporting goods can result in significant costs, both direct and indirect, even when there is no injury to the worker.

In the case of direct costs, for example, those of a material nature such as the repair or replacement of a damaged vehicle and the goods involved in the accident can range from a few hundred to several thousand euros, depending on the severity of the damage. In the event of injury, moreover, medical treatment and rehabilitation for workers that may be affected can be very expensive, especially if the accident causes serious injuries such as fractures or crushing. Finally, the authorities may impose penalties for violations of safety regulations, adding further costs.

In the case of indirect costs, other factors must be considered: the cost of lost productivity, and time lost due to the accident, including a pause in operations to allow investigation. In addition, accidents can give rise to an increase in insurance premiums and costs related to contractual obligations with the customer, in the event that goods intended for the customer have been damaged in the accident.

Lastly, where an accident involves injury and subsequent absence of the worker, it may be necessary to organize further training courses in order to maintain manning levels and prevent future accidents. Investing in proper training, regular maintenance of equipment and organization of the workplace, the risk of accidents and the associated costs can be significantly reduced.

On average, an injury lasting 30 days will cost 150 euros per day, which includes the cost of the injured person and that of the replacement person (plus materials-related damages, if any).

03



Use of tools

This takes in all activities involving the use of manual or electrical equipment such as files, blades in general, hammers, drills and drivers, angle grinders, saws, etc.

Good practices

Hand tools and power tools alike are essential items of equipment in many areas of work, and countless everyday activities.

Whilst there are inevitable risks involved in using tools, these can be mitigated by taking the proper precautions.

If hand tools and electric power tools are to be used safely, it is essential that the user should have been given the appropriate training. When handling and operating certain of these tools, the user will often need to make a habit of wearing PPE such as gloves, protective eyewear and special shoes, which help to reduce the risk of injury.

Consequences

It is essential that hand tools and power tools are used correctly, in order to ensure safety and prevent accidents.

Taking care when using a hammer, for example, minor injuries or slight abrasions will be avoided. Similarly, handling a saw with due care helps to avoid surface flesh wounds like cuts and scratches.

When safety instructions are followed without fail, this will also prevent more serious accidents, such as deep cuts requiring medication, punctures that can damage internal organs, or amputation of fingers or limbs.

Using tools in the correct way does more than simply protect our health: it ensures that work can proceed more efficiently and safely.

How the worker benefits

Using hand tools and power tools correctly will improve the safety, efficiency and quality of your work.

Here are some reasons why it is so important:

- Significantly reduced risk of injury. By way of example, wearing personal protective equipment such as gloves, safety eyewear and special shoes can prevent serious accidents like cuts, abrasions, punctures and amputations. Wearing protective gloves while using a circular saw can be the difference between suffering a small scratch or a serious injury. Your personal safety is crucial for staying healthy and continuing to work without interruption.
- When you use tools correctly, you work more efficiently. When tools are properly handled, they will help you to get the job done quicker, and with less effort. Not only does this increase your productivity, it reduces the time needed for completion of the task in hand.

By taking time to learn the proper way of using work tools, and making a habit of wearing protective equipment, you can make a big difference to the quality of your work and to the state of your health.

How the company benefits

When work tools are well-ordered and well-managed, this becomes a source of profit, short-term and long-term.

Purchasing non-standard or unreliable tools simply to “save money” is a bad idea, and results in exposure to significant dangers and much higher additional costs, for example at least 300 euros in the case of a worker absent just 3 days with a minor cut, which includes not only the direct cost of lost wages, but also loss of productivity and possible medical expenses.

Ensuring that tools are used correctly by workers will not only improve safety and efficiency. There will also be a significant impact on:

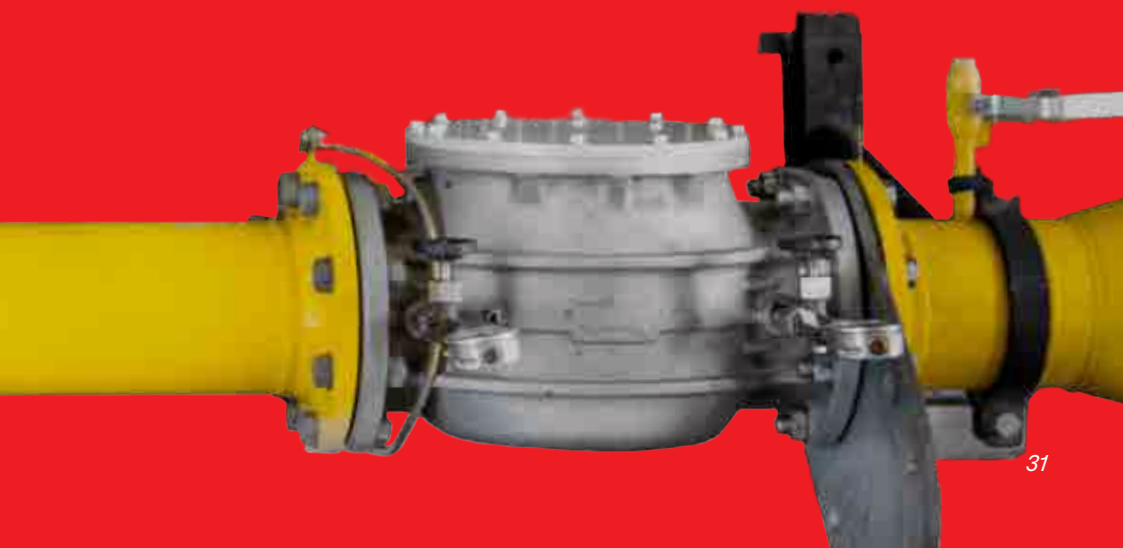
- **Quality of work:** when tools are used properly, precision and accuracy will be guaranteed, and the likelihood of errors and defects reduced. This naturally translates into better quality products and greater customer satisfaction.
- **Tool life:** when tools are used with care and in accordance with instructions, their service life will be prolonged. Tools that are properly maintained and used correctly require fewer repairs and replacements, which means lower operating costs.
- **Work environment:** a safe and well-organized workplace, where tools are used correctly, will always be conducive to a positive and cooperative climate. Workers feel more confident and motivated, a spirit of teamwork is generated, and better overall performance is achieved: everyone involved becomes calmer and more focused, and the efficiency and quality of their work consequently improves.

— 04



Use of machinery and equipment

This takes in the various activities that involve the use of stationary machine tools, typically lathes, milling machines, saws and pillar drills, or fully automated systems such as palletizing and packaging lines, lines for processing metals and other material, and manufacturing lines for food and non-food products.



Good practices

All machines are designed with the safety of operators in mind.

Accordingly, each one must carry the CE mark and be accompanied by a user and maintenance manual. Both are indispensable elements in ensuring safe use.

Machines and systems are equipped with protective devices that safeguard against possible dangers during operation. A typical example is the emergency stop device, which can be activated to immobilize the machine immediately when necessary.

It is important not to tamper with these protective devices, otherwise the protection they afford would be rendered ineffective. Using machines in a way not intended by the manufacturer can be very dangerous.

Most of the injuries that occur can be caused by mechanical hazards if:

- Guards are removed when moving parts are being processed.
- The rules governing use are not observed.
- Maintenance operations are carried out, or blockages cleared, with the machine in motion.

Following instructions and using protective equipment correctly are fundamental actions in the process of working safely and preventing accidents.

Consequences

Incorrect use of machinery and systems at work can have serious consequences, both for the safety of workers and for the integrity of facilities.

If equipment is used or managed wrongly, serious or fatal injuries can be caused: touching unprotected electrical parts can result in electrocution; operating a system that is substandard or malfunctioning can trigger fires or explosions, endangering the lives of people and causing significant material damage.

In addition, incorrect use can damage the equipment itself, reducing its efficiency and increasing maintenance and repair costs. Accidents and breakdowns can cause breaks in production, which for the company means lost output and lost income.

Failure to comply with safety regulations can lead to legal penalties and fines being levied on the company, and even criminal liability, should serious accidents occur.

If these consequences are to be avoided, it is essential that maker's instructions be observed, regular maintenance carried out, and proper training given to personnel regarding the safe use of systems and equipment.

How the worker benefits

Machines and systems are designed to anticipate human error and protect you from injuries caused by distraction or inexperience.

Protective devices such as barriers and guards ensure you cannot come into contact physically with dangerous parts of the machinery, such as gears, drive belts and blades. For example, safety barriers can prevent access to danger areas, whereas physical guards such as casing panels are positioned to enclose moving parts, preventing any accidental contact.

By observing safety rules when you work, you can concentrate entirely on the job in hand, confident in the knowledge that you are not running the risk of injury. For example, putting on personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and safety eyewear can prevent the risk of injuries when operating machinery.

Should you encounter any problem in the operation of the machine or the guards, the only action you need to take is to report it to your boss or supervisor: in this way you will be protecting not only yourself from the risk of injury, possibly serious, but all your co-workers too. If you notice that a machine guard is damaged or missing, report it without delay so that accidents can be prevented.

How the company benefits

Proper maintenance of machinery and systems is a source of profit, both in the short term and in the long term.

Skimping on maintenance of these assets may appear to bring “savings”, but this is false logic. Maintenance is a worthwhile investment not least because it prevents costly problems occurring and improves operational efficiency.

The correct use of machinery and systems is a factor in improving the quality of work carried on. When systems are used correctly and regularly serviced, they stay efficient and repair costs are kept to minimum, ensuring continuity of operation, reducing breakdowns and limiting breaks in production, all of which contributes to greater customer satisfaction.

In addition, when a company employs people who are suitably trained and skilled in the use of machines, systems are kept efficient, and problems - even of a serious nature - can be dealt with early, when promptly reported by users.

Situations such as accidents, injuries and emergencies - fire, for instance - can be avoided by ensuring a safe working environment. This approach also enables the company to avoid heavy fines and penalties, which can amount to several thousand euros, or even shutdown of the system or of the entire department.

— 05



Working at height and use of ladders

Generally considered, these are activities taking place at a height of more than 2 metres above a stable surface.



Good practices

There are many situations where work needs to be carried out overhead, either using portable ladders or on levels elevated above ground: these are operations that must be entrusted only to personnel trained and authorized to work at height.

- Before using a portable ladder, it must be inspected to make certain it is free of defects.
- The ladder must be positioned to ensure optimum stability, and in accordance with safety procedures.
- When ascending and descending, it is essential to keep a firm hold, facing toward the rungs, and guard carefully against loss of balance.
- No less important, always use the accompanying protective equipment designed to prevent falls and injuries.

It is essential to abide by safety rules when entering and operating in the work area. Scaffolding, staging and platforms are designed to protect against accidental falls. Observing the rules of use, always wearing the appropriate safety equipment, such as harnesses, hard hats and non-slip shoes, the risk of falling and sustaining injuries will be greatly reduced.

Consequences

It is important to observe the rules when using portable ladders, in order to avoid injuries resulting from crushing when opening, closing and positioning the ladder, or from falls that can occur due to an unstable surface, incorrect use of the ladder or insufficient care, or indeed damage affecting the ladder itself.

When working at great heights, abiding by the rules and using the protective equipment provided will protect you even from the more serious injuries that can follow accidental falls, such as trauma, bone fractures, and permanent damage.

Injuries sustained during this type of work can often lead to prolonged absences from work, and in the most serious cases, may result in permanent damage or loss of life.

How the worker benefits

Observing safety procedures, you are able to reduce the risk of accidents happening at work.

For example, wearing a harness and ensuring that fall protection devices are correctly fitted can prevent falls and serious injuries.

This allows you to keep working, without having to take periods of leave, which could be lengthy. It also means you guarantee your income and your ability to carry out daily activities and ultimately safeguard your well-being.

Furthermore, ensuring observance of safety procedures while you work will mean you are more focused on what you are doing: consequently, the outcome of your efforts will be that much better.

How the company benefits

The consequences of injuries sustained when working at height or using ladders incorrectly can be lengthy and costly.

In addition to the cost of replacing an injured worker, there is the hourly cost to the company of having a worker absent for an extended period - around 60 days, in the case of a minor fracture. These costs are far higher than the expenditure that would be involved in providing compliant ladders and the appropriate protective equipment. The cost of a compliant and efficient ladder is between 100 and 300 euros. A single injury involving trauma or fractures can cost more than 3,000 euros.

In addition, given the seriousness of the consequences entailed by these accidents, the workplace or construction site may be impounded, resulting in the suspension of activities, and by extension, economic losses due to breaks in production and delays affecting orders.

Investigations by the authorities and the legal advice needed when addressing questions of liability also involve a great deal of expense. The company may need to invest in new safety measures, additional training for workers, and the replacement of non-compliant equipment.

If there have been serious breaches of safety regulations, the company may be hit by administrative and criminal penalties, bringing economic consequences that can amount to thousands of euros. In addition, there are indirect costs such as damage to reputation, loss of future contracts and increased insurance premiums. Investing in prevention always pays off!

— 06



Noise

Noise levels in certain work environments, such as on construction sites, or where sheet and other metals are processed, or resistant materials being cut, can pose an insidious risk to the safety and health of workers.



Good practices

There may be machinery or processes in the workplace generating noise, measured in decibels (dB), at levels that can affect the ability to hear correctly.

Regulations on noise establish levels of action and limits of exposure. Where these limits are exceeded, prevention and protection measures must be taken to safeguard the health of workers.

These are the main rules that need to be followed:

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** workers should be provided with ear defenders that will protect their hearing;
- **Health Surveillance:** regular health checks should be arranged to monitor the condition of workers' hearing;
- **Training and Information:** training sessions should be organized for the purposes of showing workers how to use PPE correctly and informing them as to the risks of exposure to noise.

Consequences

If personal protective equipment is not used correctly, individuals risk various types of damage to the auditory system that can lead to hearing loss, with the ability to perceive sounds decreasing progressively, to the point of deafness.

But the risk is not only to a person's hearing. Prolonged exposure to noise can also adversely affect other sensory organs, causing loss of balance, dizziness and nausea.

In addition, noise can have physiological effects, for example inducing tiredness and a persistent sense of fatigue.

Finally, there are psychological effects. **Continuous noise can cause anxiety and discomfort, making it difficult to concentrate on the job.**

How the worker benefits

Observing safety rules in noisy environments, there are numerous advantages for your health and well-being.

Protecting your hearing, for example, you retain your ability to perceive sounds. By using the right kinds of protection, you can continue to enjoy everyday conversations and sounds.

But it is not only your hearing that benefits, your general health will benefit too. The use of protective equipment can help to reduce tiredness and persistent fatigue: with the right protection, you will improve both your productivity and your general well-being.

Finally, there are the positive psychological effects. Using PPE to reduce the discomfort caused by continuous noise, you can concentrate better on the work you are doing.

How the company benefits

It is important to conduct a precise assessment of the risk, taking accurate measurements of the noise levels emitted by machinery or processes. In addition, it is essential to design the workplace in such a way that the risk can be monitored continuously, and the assessment updated whenever conditions change.

Suitable devices like ear plugs or ear defenders must be provided to all exposed workers, but more important still is to make certain they are actually being used, correctly and in accordance with the training provided. A worker protected from noise maintains a higher level of concentration and achieves better results.

A business that pays more attention to safety will likely incur lower penalties for any non-compliances that may emerge, and reduce the costs relating to possible consequences by keeping noise-related illnesses to a minimum. This proactive approach will also help the company to avoid lawsuits and reduce the time needed to deal with audits by monitoring organizations.

Finally, ensuring a high level of safety means fewer breaks in production or business activity, thereby ensuring operational continuity.

-07



Mechanical vibrations

These are risks due to oscillations that are generated by the pressure waves of a machine when in operation, and transmitted to the worker using the machine.

Good practices

Mechanical vibrations occurring at low, medium and high frequency can damage the worker both locally (hand-arm complex) and throughout the entire body.

The risk is assessed by taking instrumental measurements that allow the definition of exposure values, and corresponding classes of risk.

Thereafter, the appropriate prevention measures must be identified for each class of risk: these can include health surveillance, training and information of workers, adoption of technical and organizational measures, and periodic monitoring of the risk assessment.

Consequences

Exposure to mechanical vibrations can have adverse effects on various parts of the body.

For example, vibrations affecting the hand-arm complex can cause vascular disorders, such as narrowing of the blood vessels in the fingers, and they can also lead to osteoarticular problems, typically arthritis and neurological disorders such as loss of feeling, or tingling, and muscular problems such as tendinitis.

Whole-body vibrations, on the other hand, can be the cause of lower back pain, and similarly of spinal injuries, such as a herniated disc.

Over time, for example, these problems can affect drivers of heavy vehicles who are exposed to vibration for prolonged periods.

How the worker benefits

The equipment and machinery installed in a workplace help you to perform tasks with labour-saving advantages.

Following the rules provided to you by your employer and explained to you during training, you will be able to use this equipment with full awareness and do your job to the best of your ability.

By using the items of PPE provided, following the rules and observing prescribed time limits, you significantly reduce the harmful effects that can come from mechanical vibrations: in short, you protect your well-being and ensure you can carry on your daily professional and private activities to the best of your ability.

And should you suspect that the equipment or machinery is not working properly, report it immediately: by doing so you will help yourself and your co-workers.

How the company benefits

There are numerous options for adopting technical and organizational measures to prevent risks associated with mechanical vibration:

- Putting in place suitable scheduled maintenance programmes will ensure that equipment is always in good working order, reducing downtime and increasing productivity.
- Organizing work shifts in such a way that periods of exposure to vibration are alternated with periods of rest, the well-being of workers will improve, and their efficiency and motivation will be increased.
- Maximizing the awareness of workers, they are also able to foresee problems, preventing accidents and occupational illnesses.
- One positive aspect of keeping exposure levels within safe limits is that there will be fewer potential absences from work, since the effects of vibration-related sickness can be avoided: problems affecting the joints or the back render a worker less active, and this becomes a cost item.

These measures do not serve only to protect workers from health and safety risks: they also represent a strategic investment for companies, as they help ultimately to increase operational efficiency, maintain reputation and ensure long-term sustainability.

— 08



Exposure to hazardous chemicals

This covers a spectrum of risks associated with the presence of hazardous chemicals - including but not confined to their deliberate and direct use - to which workers can be exposed if they come into contact with, ingest or inhale hazardous substances, singly or in combination. Many workplaces can be affected by the presence of gases, fumes, vapours or dust, due to the nature of substances present or used on site.

Good practices

Chemicals are present in many work environments as a consequence of their being used in processes, or generated as a by-product of other operations, such as the fumes given off when welding metals.

It is important to have a precise idea of the chemicals present on site, and to be able to assess their impact.

To prevent the risks associated with hazardous chemicals, measures must be taken to ensure proper risk management, so that workers can be protected. These measures will be related to the actual work environment, which must be organized and equipped in such a way as to minimize exposure.

It is also essential to protect workers by installing collective systems, such as fume hoods, screens etc., and providing PPE (masks, apparel, gloves).

Lastly, it is especially important that personnel should receive training in safety rules and procedures, and undergo regular health checks.

Consequences

Exposure to hazardous chemicals can have various consequences health-wise, which depend on the chemical-physical and toxicological properties of the substances, the way they are used, and the dose absorbed.

Some of the consequences in question include intoxication, that is to say the absorption of chemicals, which can lead to poisoning with symptoms that vary depending on the type of chemical substance, and chronic illnesses that come from prolonged exposure, such as respiratory diseases, dermatitis, tumours and reproductive problems.

In extreme cases, finally, exposure to high doses of particularly toxic chemicals can be lethal.

The main pathways of exposure include inhalation, dermal contact and ingestion.

How the worker benefits

Hazardous chemicals can affect you even without you being aware of it. The effects of exposure will often only become evident over time. Accordingly, awareness of the risks helps will ensure your attention stays high.

With knowledge of the products you are using and awareness of the work you are doing - especially when it involves the presence of chemicals - you can have no doubts about the importance of observing rules.

Never underestimate the importance of ensuring that the equipment provided is used correctly, likewise collective protective systems such as fume hoods or screens, and always wear the appropriate PPE.

How the company benefits

A careful approach to these issues is also particularly important because of the effects that chemicals can have on the social community in which the company is embedded: proper control and disposal of chemicals, dust, gases and vapours is essential not only for workers on the company payroll, but also for compliance with the requirements of corporate social responsibility, which companies cannot ignore.

Businesses that do not abide by the rules do damage to people, the environment and the community, and are also guilty of unfair competition.

Companies need to invest in prevention, carefully analyzing all sources of danger and training personnel so that they are made aware as to the importance of the measures taken to protect them and conscious of the risks: this will bring notable benefits, economically and in terms of image.

Even in the least severe of cases, recovery from intoxication can involve an absence of a few days to several weeks.

09



Exposure to biological hazards

The risks considered in this case are due to the presence of biological agents such as bacteria, fungi, viruses and allergens.

Good practices

Hazardous biological agents may be present not only in the health sector, where the risk is certainly ever-present and high, but also in many other sectors where there are people at work.

Typical examples are agriculture, food production and food processing, or waste and refuse management.

Biological agents must be identified by preparing a precise risk assessment.

To prevent the risks associated with biological hazards and reduce exposure to the substances and pathogens involved, workers need to be protected by collective systems such as fans and extractors, or physical barriers, or by items of PPE such as masks, safety eyewear and gloves; the work environment must also be appropriately organized and properly equipped.

It is also of paramount importance that personnel should receive training in safety rules and procedures, and undergo regular health checks.

Consequences

Exposure to biological hazards can have various health consequences, such as infections caused by bacteria, viruses or fungi, allergies and intoxications, and chronic diseases.

The pathways of transmission are ingestion, inhalation and dermal contact.

How the worker benefits

Biohazards often have an impact without you being aware of it. For example, bacteria in contaminated surfaces can cause infections without producing immediate symptoms.

Increased awareness helps you stay alert to the importance of avoiding infections, allergic reactions and diseases.

With knowledge of the job you are doing and awareness that there are biological threats in the workplace, such as airborne viruses or mould in wet environments, you will have little doubt about the importance of observing rules. Never underestimate the importance of using equipment correctly, typically autoclaves for sterilization, likewise collective protective equipment such as fans and extractors or screens, and always wear the appropriate PPE.

How the company benefits

A careful approach to these issues is fundamentally important not only for the people exposed, but also because of the effects that these biohazards might have on the social community of which these same people are members.

By investing in a careful analysis of all sources of danger, and in training people to make them aware of the risks, and the importance of the measures adopted for their protection, companies will significantly enhance their business and image.

A perfect example is the spread of diseases or infections resulting from contagion within healthcare facilities: besides causing significant harm to frail persons, events of this kind also damage the image of the facility.

10



Video terminals

This takes in the full spectrum of risks associated with the use of computers and monitors by workers, male and female, for at least 20 hours per week.



Good practices

Preventing the negative effects associated with the use of computers and monitor screens has to start with design and organization of the workplace: guaranteeing adequate work spaces, ensuring good lighting and avoiding reflections, providing ergonomic workstations - all these are fundamental aspects in ensuring that users of video terminals will be properly protected.

Similarly, training is a key element in providing workers with guidance on how to use video terminals correctly, protecting their health: recommended practices include keeping a correct distance from the screen, sitting up straight with hands resting naturally on the desk, and working no more than 2 hours at a stretch before taking a break.

Finally, workers should undergo periodic medical examinations to ensure that their state of health is monitored, and they can continue to do their job.

Consequences

Using a computer for hours at a time can cause various problems, especially with the muscles, bones and eyes; long hours at a video terminal can cause mental fatigue, back pain or difficulty concentrating, and these problems can persist even outside the work environment.

How the worker benefits

Keeping to the proper ways of doing things that were explained to you during the video terminal training course, you will ensure your well-being, both at work, and elsewhere in your private life.

Keeping yourself healthy, looking after your back and your eyes in particular, and maintaining your ability to concentrate, not only will you be able to guarantee quality and precision with every task you take on, but your private life will be happier and smoother too.

How the company benefits

Problems with eyesight, or back issues, can in some instances cause workers to be restricted in what they are able to do, which means reduced operational capacity, and consequently, the costs of ensuring coverage.

Mental fatigue is also a problem, which can derive from the repetitiveness of tasks and the difficulties arising both from the use of technical equipment and the procedural complications caused by application software.

If certain simple safety rules are not followed when doing any kind of work, even sitting at a computer, people tend to be less productive. This means a reduction in the quantity and quality of the work produced.

The cost of following safety rules for the use of video terminals is practically negligible, but is of enormous value for the health and productivity of workers.

Designing and equipping workstations with the needs of operator health in mind does not involve any additional cost.

11



Emerging Risks

Digitalization-related issues

Good practices

Various strategies can be adopted to address the risks of increased digital communication and interaction.

In the case of more senior workers, it is important to offer refresher courses and continuous training programmes, so that they can acquire the necessary digital skills. Also useful are mentoring programmes, where workers with greater technological expertise provide support to those who are less expert.

To reduce the stress that can come from an excessive use of computers and digital devices, it is especially important to impose reasonable operating time schedules and ensure that regular breaks are taken.

Regarding the aspect of work-life balance, it is essential to establish clear-cut working hours while also promoting the right to disconnect, so that no one is under pressure to be “endlessly available”.

In the case of smart working, maintaining regular and structured communication with employees who work remotely can reduce feelings of isolation.

Similarly, a sense of belonging and cohesion can be fostered among employees by organizing corporate events, even virtually.

Finally, in order to address risks relating to organizational measures, assessments must also be carried out regularly in non-conventional work environments, so as to provide clear safety guidelines and ensure that employees can access adequate technical support and resources, enabling them to work safely from any location.

Companies that implement these solutions are able to mitigate the risks associated with digital communications and interactions, ensuring a safer and healthier working environment for all employees.

Consequences

With digital communications and interactions increasing all the time, new risks can emerge, given the difficulties that may be experienced by older workers when using new technologies, as their digital skills gradually become outdated.

In addition, with the increasingly extravagant use of computers and digital devices, and the large quantities of information handled, workers can become stressed and suffer negative effects on their physical and mental health.

Constant access to emails and company platforms can lead individuals to feel pressurized into being endlessly available, work longer hours, feel isolated and experience difficulty separating their work life and private life, with serious consequences such as burnout.

For individuals in a smart working situation, reduced interaction with colleagues and less active participation, due to working from home for long periods, can lead to social isolation and detachment from the company, not least with regard to occupational health and safety issues.

Furthermore, smart working introduces new risks in non-conventional working environments, where the employer cannot always guarantee effective prevention and protection measures.

To address these risks it is important that the employer should, at least once a year, circulate written information on the general and specific risks associated with smart working, so as to ensure the health and safety of workers.

How the worker benefits

Digital technologies can have a genuinely positive impact on your work.

One notable advantage is that you can access continuous training on the subject and develop your digital skills: participating actively in the training on offer, taking up the opportunities provided by your company, you will get to increase your professional skills and improve your productivity and satisfaction.

Another important advantage is the greater degree of flexibility that the use of digital technologies can give you: think, for instance, of how communicating with your work group can be made so much easier, and how much simpler it becomes to access important resources or information you need for the tasks you have in hand, or how time-saving it can be to organize meetings remotely, giving you greater independence in managing your working day, and consequently your personal commitments.

A judicious use of digital tools can help you plan your working day and appointments more efficiently, allowing you to schedule tasks and organize work with your managers and your team to better advantage: this will improve your personal well-being by reducing spells of unproductivity, improving organization and giving you relief from the relentless pressure of deadlines.

How the company benefits

Continuous training and mentoring programmes help to keep peoples' skills updated, reducing the digital divide and increasing confidence in the use of new technologies.

This can improve productivity and efficiency, making work more rewarding.

An effective management of time is especially important.

Establishing clear-cut working hours and promoting the right to disconnect, it becomes possible to achieve a healthy work-life balance, improving the quality of life for employees and co-workers.

Maintaining regular communication and organizing corporate events, in person or virtual, fosters a sense of belonging and cohesion among team members, reducing feelings of isolation.

12



Emerging risks

Work-related stress



Good practices

Promoting a culture of well-being is important: it means creating a work environment that places value on the mental and physical health of employees.

The options, for example, include introducing flexible working policies, encouraging regular breaks, and promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Improving the work environment is another essential step, ensuring that it is comfortable and safe, that is to say, with well-lit workspaces and well-organized work schedules.

It is also essential to clarify the objectives and roles of personnel. Good communication can reduce uncertainty and the stress that goes with it. It is vital to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of their roles and of the corporate goals.

Finally, there are gains to be made by implementing tools to monitor the level of stress among employees and evaluate the effectiveness of the measures taken. This may include periodic surveys, inviting anonymous feedback.

Consequences

Work-related stress can have various adverse consequences, on both physical and mental health.

For example, stress can lead to anxiety problems, depression and burnout. On a physical level, stress can contribute to cardiovascular diseases, musculoskeletal disorders and gastrointestinal problems.

Stress can reduce productivity, leading to increased absenteeism, as well as to presenteeism, i.e. attending work but contributing comparatively little. This can have a negative effect on the performance of a business. Working relationships can also be affected, with a deterioration of group dynamics and increased conflict between colleagues.

For companies, stress affecting employees can lead to significant costs, such as an increased incidence of accidents and injuries, higher staff turnover, and resistance to change.

Addressing work-related stress is therefore a crucial step in improving the well-being of workers and the efficiency of the organization.

How the worker benefits

It is important to be aware of the effects that stress can have on your work and personal life, and to adopt different strategies in managing work-related stress.

For example, organizing your work efficiently, setting priorities and taking regular breaks can help you avoid overload.

Exercising regularly can improve your mood and reduce stress; even a short walk during your lunch break can make a difference.

It is important to maintain a balanced diet and drink plenty of water: this helps to keep energy levels high and reduce stress.

Talking to colleagues, friends or family members can offer important moral support, so never hesitate to ask for help when you need it.

Taking part in training and professional development courses can increase self-confidence and reduce work-related stress.

Finally, make sure you have time for yourself, away from work: this is especially important in enabling you to “recharge your batteries” and maintain a good work-life balance.

How the company benefits

A company where employees are always stressed is a company that inevitably loses productivity. People under stress tend to make more mistakes and work less efficiently.

In addition, stress can cause health problems, causing more people to take sick leave more often. This not only creates difficulties for those who have to take on the work load of absentees, it can also increase costs for the company. Absences from work with sickness related to stress-related issues can last up to several weeks in any given year, and the costs can be up to 2500 euros per person.

The corporate climate is also a factor of particular importance. A positive work environment fosters cooperation and good morale among employees, who become more inclined to cooperate and support each other, creating a more pleasant and productive atmosphere.

Companies that care about the well-being of their employees will also attract more talented candidates for recruitment. What is more, satisfied employees are more likely to stay with the company, and the costs of staff turnover and training new recruits are therefore reduced.

Finally, managing work-related stress effectively can lead to long-term financial savings. Investing in the prevention and management of stress can reduce the various costs of dealing with personnel illness, decreased productivity, and staff turnover.

In short, looking after the well-being of employees is not only a matter of ethics: it is also a positive strategy, and one that can improve the efficiency and competitiveness of the company.

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Emerging risks

Shift work



Good practices

Companies can do a great deal to help employees manage their shifts and reduce the risks associated with scheduling.

For example, good planning is crucial, as it ensures that employees have enough time to rest between shifts.

Another effective strategy is to offer flexibility in the organization of shifts. Allowing staff to swap shifts can help them to manage their personal and work-related needs more effectively.

Consequences

Shift work can have a significant impact on health and well-being.

Working unconventional hours can lead to sleep problems, for example insomnia. This can cause chronic fatigue, increasing stress levels.

In addition, irregular shifts have been linked to various physical health problems, including cardiovascular diseases, obesity and diabetes. Mental health can also be affected, due to the increased risk of depression and anxiety.

Another aspect to consider is the impact on social life, inasmuch as working unconventional hours can limit the time available for family and friends, leading to a sense of social isolation. Moreover, fatigue and lack of sleep can increase the risk of accidents in the workplace or when travelling to and from work, compromising safety.

How the worker benefits

Awareness of the effects that shift work can have is essential, if you are to ensure your well-being.

Maintain a regular sleep schedule, go to bed straight away on returning home, set the alarm clock always at the same time if possible, and keep the room dark and quiet: these are steps that help you get a good night's rest.

Stick to a healthy and regular diet, especially when on night shifts, avoiding any excess of sugars and fats: this will help you to regulate your rest patterns, and keep your concentration levels high.

With just a few measures, you can achieve a state of general well-being that will allow you to work productively, reducing the risks of drowsiness and fatigue, and manage your personal needs at the same time.

How the company benefits

When shifts are planned fairly, employees feel they are getting more respect and consideration. This can help to reduce absenteeism, since individuals will be more motivated to come to work knowing that their needs are being taken into account. And when employees are happy, the quality of their work improves: they are not tired or stressed, so they can concentrate better and the results of their efforts will be of a higher quality.

In complying with laws and regulations on shift work, a company will not only avoid legal penalties, but also demonstrate that it cares about the safety and well-being of its employees. This can improve employee morale and motivation, creating a more positive and collaborative working environment.

Finally, efficient shift management can also reduce costs, given that by avoiding unnecessary overtime and optimizing the use of human resources, a company can save money and invest in other important areas of business interest.

14



Emerging Risks

Working Alone or in Isolation (WAOII)

Good practices

It is essential to proceed with an assessment of the specific risks associated with work carried out in isolation.

This means identifying potential dangers such as accidents, threats of aggression or health problems. Once the risks have been identified, appropriate training can be given to workers so that they know how to manage emergency situations and use safety equipment correctly.

Communication is another crucial aspect. Isolated workers should be equipped with effective communication devices, like mobile phones or radios, so that they can call for help when in need. In addition, it is good policy to implement monitoring systems that will keep a regular check on the health and safety of workers.

It is also important to have well-defined emergency procedures, including evacuation and rapid response plans. Finally, suitable safety equipment such as first aid kits and PPE should be provided, as these can make all the difference.

By taking these measures, employers can help create a safer environment for personnel working alone or in isolation.

Consequences

There are various risks to working alone or in isolation, which must be given due consideration in order to ensure the safety and well-being of workers:

- **Physical risk:** if an isolated worker is in difficulty, as the result of accident or illness, for example, the absence of co-workers can delay rescue operations and increase the severity of the consequences.
- **Psychological risk:** prolonged isolation can lead to stress, anxiety and even depression. Lack of social interaction can adversely affect the mental well-being of an individual. Personal safety is also a critical aspect: isolated workers may be more vulnerable to aggression or theft, especially if they are operating in remote locations or hostile environments.
- **Ergonomic risks:** no longer under direct supervision, isolated workers could start to adopt incorrect postures, or use equipment improperly, thereby increasing the risk of injury.
- **Communication risks:** the difficulty of communicating quickly with co-workers or superiors can complicate things when managing emergencies and attempting to solve problems. If a machine breaks down and there is no one that can be called immediately for help, the resulting delay can have significant consequences.

How the worker benefits

Observing safety procedures is always the best policy. Personal safety is the number one priority.

By following the rules and using personal protective equipment, you can ensure you have a head start in the event of difficulties or accidents. Furthermore, awareness and knowledge of the rules will enable you to react better in emergency situations, increasing the likelihood of a positive outcome.

Observing the rules and using the right PPE, you will be able to work efficiently and experience less stress and anxiety: as a result, your productivity will increase, as also will your employer's appreciation of your efforts.

How the company benefits

Purchases of PPE for employees working alone or in isolation amount to a few hundred euros.

With this small expense, it becomes possible to handle situations of worker distress promptly, ensuring the appropriate level of personal protection, guaranteeing the return of the worker, and reducing the costs associated typically with the absence and replacement of human resources. In addition, the company avoids negative legal consequences - penalties, fines, lawsuits etc. - and saves thousands of euros.

By ensuring that workers operating in isolated areas are monitored continuously, the company is also protecting its assets: the ability to communicate with the worker ensures that prompt action can be taken in the event of attempted theft or operational difficulties, and any losses consequently kept to a minimum.

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Emerging risks

Linguistic and cultural differences



Good practices

There are several measures that can be taken to improve the safety of foreign workers and reduce the risks associated with their job:

- **Language training:** offer courses in the home language, to improve understanding of safety instructions and operating procedures;
- **Multilingual material:** when manuals, signs and safety instructions are printed and displayed in several languages, all workers will be able to understand the information;
- **Safety culture:** in promoting a culture of safety, the emphasis should be placed on prevention and attention to risks, regardless of the different cultural backgrounds that workers may have;
- **Mentoring:** assigning mentors who can give expert guidance, foreign workers will gain a better understanding of safety procedures and feel safer in their working environment;
- **Continuous feedback:** it is important to create open communication channels where workers can express their concerns and suggestions regarding safety, so that the company, in turn, can continuously adapt and improve its practices.

Consequences

Working in a company where there are people from different parts of the world, a number of interesting challenges can emerge, especially in matters of safety.

If instructions and safety signs are not clear to everyone because they have been formulated or written in a language that not everyone understands, accidents could occur.

Moreover, risk can be perceived differently by people from different cultures, and this may influence their approach to rules and regulations.

Accordingly, training on safety must also be adapted. If the principles are not understood by everyone, they will not be effective.

Finally, allowances must be made for certain cultural or religious practices in order to protect all personnel and organize work activities in such a way as to create an inclusive and respectful environment.

How the worker benefits

An inclusive environment breaks down language and cultural barriers, making communication clearer and more effective, reducing misunderstandings and increasing safety at work.

Working with people from different cultures broadens your outlook.

By embracing diversity, you contribute to an inclusive, welcoming and respectful working climate, while also improving your own well-being and satisfaction.

How the company benefits

A company attentive to linguistic and cultural differences is able to organize its activities creating an inclusive and safe environment: promoting linguistic and cultural diversity improves communication and collaboration within the company, creating a more harmonious and productive work environment, improving the well-being of employees, reducing the risk of conflicts and maintaining operational continuity.

In this scenario, the safety of employees will be protected by virtue of the fact that they have a proper understanding of the rules and procedures.

Another advantage - often underestimated - is that by placing value on diversity, the company will attract superior recruitment candidates. Employees who feel more welcome and valued develop a growing loyalty to the company, which helps to reduce staff turnover.

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Emerging risks

Age



Good practices

Younger workers may lack experience, which means that continuous training is essential. Providing these individuals with the right kind of training on a continuous basis, together with good supervision, they will be better able to understand the risks and observe safety procedures.

For older workers, on the other hand, it is important that workstations are adapted to meet the physical needs of users: tools that reduce physical exertion can make all the difference.

Consequences

In departments or offices where persons of different ages work together, the risks for each of them could be different.

Older workers might perform certain tasks only with difficulty, especially those that call for physical exertion, whereas their younger counterparts could be led by lack of experience to underestimate certain dangers, or they might not follow safety procedures correctly.

For young persons on work placement or dual training programmes, failure to take the age factor into account not only exposes the young worker to safety risks but can also have serious legal consequences, as there are precise restrictions in this area (work at night, lifting weights, working hours).

In addition, there are psychosocial risks that both age groups can face. Older employees may feel stressed or overwhelmed if working conditions are not suitable, whereas the young may feel under pressure to lose no time in demonstrating their proficiency.

How the worker benefits

If you are a young worker, there are generally mentoring programmes available, where more experienced workers share their knowledge with you: these provide an opportunity for interaction that will accelerate your learning and professional development by helping you to improve and focus your attention on the safest way to do the job you are entrusted with.

If you are an experienced worker, observing safety rules and working in ways that may be “different” to what you have always been used to, you can protect your safety and well-being with confidence.

How the company benefits

Awareness as to the importance of age in the management of human resources is a key factor for any company in seeking to ensure that the workplace it offers is a safe and inclusive environment.

Age management policies do much to support the professional development of young workers, and may include mentoring programmes, where workers having a certain level of experience share their knowledge with the younger intake, increasing their awareness of what it takes to do their job better, not least with an eye to matters of safety.

A working environment that welcomes all ages promotes diversity and inclusion. Young workers can benefit from a more harmonious and collaborative environment where the skills of everyone involved are valued.

If work is organized giving due importance to the critical aspects of age, it becomes possible to reduce the risk of occupational accidents or illnesses, and indeed to limit the costs generated by these events.

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Emerging risks

Issues related to harassment, abuse, hiring and role recognition

Forms of violence in the workplace can be manifested in various ways. Behaviour such as bullying, gender discrimination and sexual harassment can originate in the workplace, for example, or they can be perpetrated by persons outside the organization, as in the case of external assaults. These instances of violence can take different forms: psychological, physical or sexual: some may occur as single episodes, others more frequently or repetitively, and the consequences for the victims can be many and various.

Good practices

Preventing abuse and harassment in the workplace is a crucial factor in ensuring a safe and respectful environment for all employees.

Various measures can be taken by companies to achieve this. First and foremost, it is important to establish clear company policies defining what constitutes abuse and harassment, adopting a position of zero tolerance toward such behaviour.

These policies must be communicated clearly to all employees, so that everyone is aware of the rules and consequences.

Training and raising awareness are key elements of the process: with regular training courses for all employees, including managers, situations of abuse and harassment can be identified, anticipated and managed more effectively.

It is especially important to put in place secure and confidential procedures for reporting abuse and harassment. If worried or upset, employees must know who they can turn to, and how, and they must feel safe in doing so, without fear of retaliation.

Finally, it is essential that policies and procedures adopted in respect of abuse and harassment are monitored on a regular basis to verify their effectiveness, making changes when necessary to improve prevention and management.

Consequences

The consequences of abuse and harassment in the workplace can be serious and far-reaching, affecting both the victims and the work environment as a whole.

For individuals who suffer the abuse, the consequences can be of a psychological nature - fear, anxiety, stress and sleep disruption - and these also pave the way for physical consequences, which have an impact on a person's productivity.

Among the consequences for the company is the creation of a bad, even hostile work environment, which has a negative effect on activity and morale, hindering productivity and collaboration while increasing absenteeism and job turnover.

There is also a cost in terms of lost reputation: companies that do not deal firmly with abuse and harassment can suffer damage to their good name, making it difficult for them to recruit and retain the kind of people they would like.

Finally, companies may face legal action and penalties if they fail to identify and handle cases of abuse and harassment in an appropriate manner.

How the worker benefits

Knowing what the company policies are with regard to harassment and abuse, you will be aware of and familiar with the procedures put in place, which means you are able to see when something is wrong, you know how to report an incident, and you can be sure of your rights and responsibilities.

But equally, your way of doing things must conform likewise to the rules that the company has established; the right attitudes and behaviour on your part will help to create a positive climate with co-workers.

It is also important to use the channels for reporting inappropriate behaviour in good time: you could help to prevent unpleasant situations before they happen.

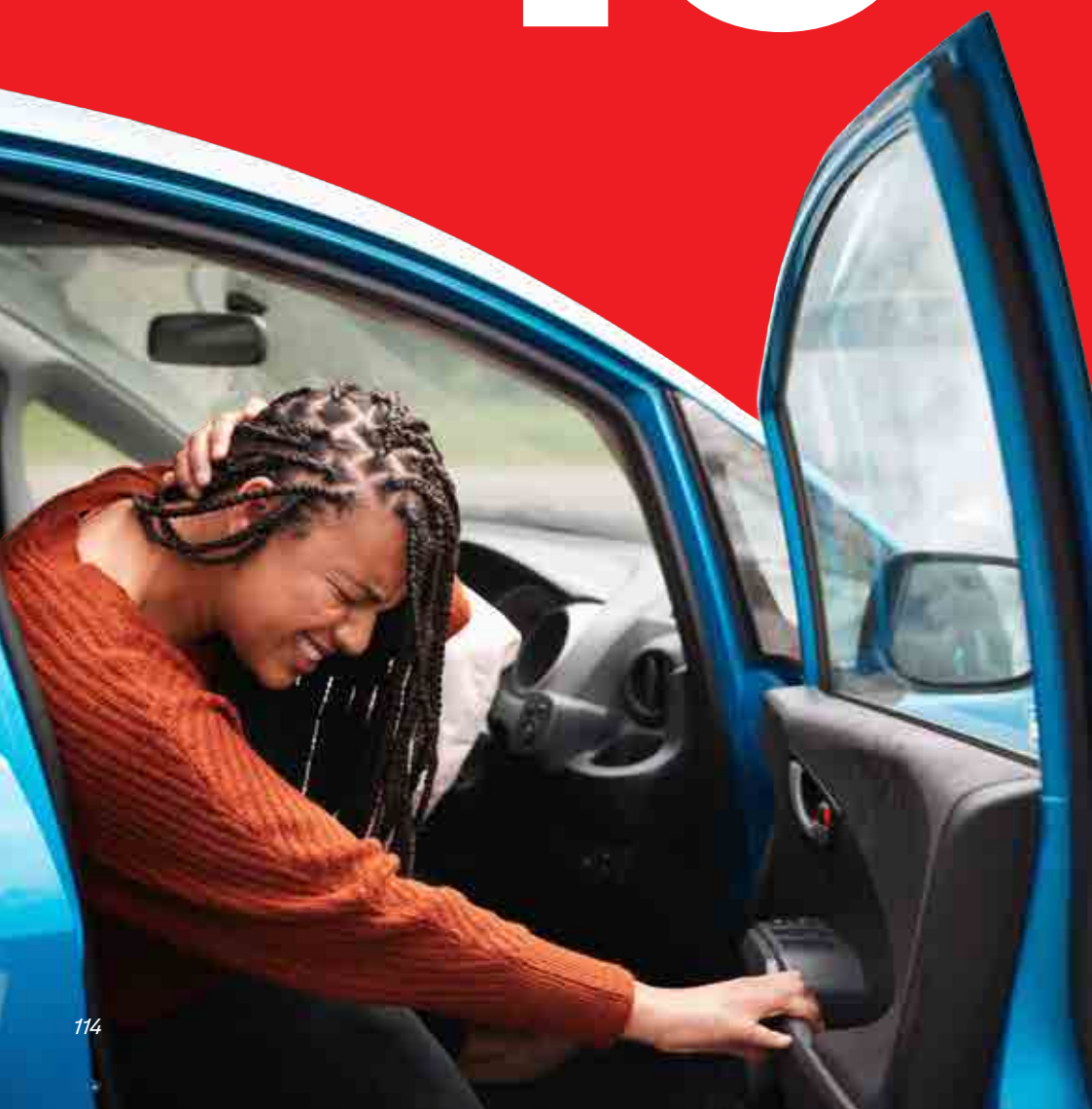
How the company benefits

Implementing a clear code of conduct that defines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and includes procedures for reporting and dealing with harassment is the first step in protecting employees: if people working at your company know that certain kinds of behaviour are not only inadmissible but also penalized, they will feel safer on the one hand and pay more attention to their own behaviour on the other, creating a generally more positive environment.

A company that stops bad behaviour situations from happening will have less absenteeism and more motivated staff: absences due to psychological factors such as anxiety or depression can last for several months, with significant costs. The cost of losing an employee to illness for 90 days is around 5,000 euros, to which the expense involved in finding a replacement must be added.

Should absences of this nature also involve legal consequences, the costs could ultimately be even higher, even of tens of thousands of euros.

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Emerging risks

Road traffic and commuting accidents

This takes in the full range of accidents and injuries that can happen when individuals are out on the road, either as part of their job, or simply on the way to work or on their way back home.

Good practices

It is vital that journeys between home and work and between one place of work and another are suitably planned: choice of route and assessment of traffic levels can make all the difference, and have now become much easier with the help of navigators available on any smartphone. Busier roads increase both the risk of having an accident and the stress generated by uncertainty surrounding the ETA, which can lead individuals to adopt a less cautious driving style.

It is important to raise awareness regarding compliance with the highway code and correct behaviour when on the road: organizing theoretical and practical training courses to improve skills in these areas can make a real difference. Also of particular importance is the proper maintenance of vehicles.

Consequences

The road can be two things: it can provide the route taken between home and work, and it can also be an actual workplace.

The main causes of accidents include traffic jams and heavy traffic, adverse weather conditions, and bad driver etiquette such as speeding and distraction, often due to using a mobile phone when at the wheel.

On this very same subject, one might ask the hypothetical question: would you risk driving 100 metres with your eyes closed? The answer would probably be “absolutely NOT”.

And yet, a vehicle travelling at a speed of 70km/h will cover 100 metres in approximately 5 seconds - about the time it takes to glance at a notification on your smartphone.

How the worker benefits

Driving with due care and attention always pays off. You might have an “aggressive” driving style, with sharp acceleration, frequent overtaking and a tendency to exceed speed limits, or you may naturally be more cautious, but the time it takes to get to your destination will not vary greatly. With caution, you will be at less risk of an accident and less stressed. Adopting a cautious approach and observing the highway code will always be preferable, because:

- You can focus on what the other road users around you are doing, and react appropriately;
- You arrive at your destination unharmed and more relaxed;
- You will save money on fuel, and the cost of routine servicing carried out on your vehicle will also be less, with wear and tear much reduced (especially brakes, suspension, etc.);
- With less risk of injury and doing damage to your vehicle, you will be saving many thousands of euros.

Assess how you are feeling physically and mentally before driving a car or riding a bike: this is the best form of prevention. If you feel tired or drowsy, cancel or at least postpone your departure, especially if you have a long journey to make.

How the company benefits

Promoting a culture of road safety can only be good, for any company. Encouraging all staff to exercise care and caution when travelling between home and work or from one company premises to another can reduce road accidents, which are an all-too-common cause of people being absent from work for long periods of time.

Managing work shifts and staff schedules to best possible advantage will bring a company real benefits, as it can prevent road traffic or commuting accidents caused by excessive fatigue or stress, as well as protecting the organization from possible legal actions that could cost several thousand euros.

Where employees use vehicles of any kind provided by the company:

- It is essential that servicing be carried out regularly and correctly, so as to cut the costs of frequent breakdowns and keep the vehicles in good working order;
- It is important to insist on the careful use of vehicles by personnel.

Clear and well-defined rules on proper conduct will bring great benefits: on the one hand, fewer accidents and a reduction in costs resulting from personal injury and vehicle breakdowns, and on the other hand, lower expenditure on fuel and major servicing that will typically accompany aggressive driving. Driving carefully rather than aggressively, fuel consumption can be reduced by around 15% for a given transit time, and with less wear and tear on the vehicle.

19



Emerging risks

Smart Working and Home Working

Increasingly, the organization of labour finds us having to work in 'smart' mode, often from home. In professional and non-professional caregiving or housekeeping activities, it is in the home where work actually takes place on a permanent basis. Home environments were not designed originally for work, and there is no provision for proper risk assessment.

Surroundings may differ widely, but there is one factor in common: the workplace is a domestic dwelling.

Good practices

Whether working in one's own home, as in the case of smart working, or on another domestic premises, such as when caring for dependent persons, cleaning private homes or maintaining and looking after indoor or outdoor areas generally, the mutual exchange of information between workers and employers and knowledge of the workplace and the activities to be performed are key factors in protecting the health and safety of all concerned.

If the place of work is not one's own home, it is important, for example, to be familiar with the heating and air-conditioning system, how to turn it on and off; where the electricity meters are located and how to turn them on; also where the necessary first-aid kit is located and what it contains. Also important is knowing what numbers to call when needed (ambulance and fire brigade), and where the nearest emergency services are located. In all homes, space must be set aside for a small cabinet containing medical supplies or pharmaceuticals indispensable for dealing with emergencies.

In the event of an injury or accident occurring, it is essential that those expected to provide first aid should at least observe a few basic rules:

- alert the ambulance service if necessary, giving useful information on how to find the location, and general details of the casualty;
- assess the vital functions of the casualty, and thereafter, inform qualified personnel of the steps that have been taken;
- wear protective clothing (gloves, masks, etc.);
- move the casualty only if necessary and do not leave him or her until qualified personnel arrive;
- provide the appropriate psychological support.

Consequences

Every year in Europe, the rate of accidents in the home is most definitely high, albeit difficult to quantify exactly: it is estimated to be three times higher than the rate of fatalities connected to road accidents - already one of the main and most common causes of death at work.

We do not perceive home environments as dangerous to our health and safety, or that of others, and consequently we tend to pay less attention. Also, there are often no first aid stations, or we do not know where they are located.

It is important for employers to make employees aware of these issues. Almost all of the risks relating to injury or illness discussed on previous pages are present in the home, just as on a company premises: manual handling of loads, use of tools, electricity, noise, exposure to chemicals or biological hazards, video terminals, work-related stress and the risk of aggression, working hours and shifts, work in isolation, etc...

How the worker benefits

Whatever risks may be connected with work in the home environment, both for smart working and home-based helpers and carers, raising awareness is a first requirement in promoting the growth of a more widespread culture of safety and risk prevention.

Certainly, the level of attention paid to these issues in a domestic environment is lower, and it can take much longer to activate first aid services, depending not least on our ability to react in good time, especially if we are alone.

Hurting oneself at home may not be recognized as an accident at work, but as an illness, which means there is less protection in this regard. Also, on behavioural questions, the lines between work and private life can become blurred, with the risk that certain symptoms may not be recognized as indicating an occupational illness, since they are difficult to identify precisely.

A domestic accident while working, which is not recognized as a work accident, will not entitle you to the same forms of assistance as would be given in the event of disability, or support in the event of temporary and permanent incapacity (the associated disadvantages are self-evident).

How the company benefits

Today, smart working is increasingly becoming an organizational strategy aimed at fostering the well-being of employees and enhancing their work-life balance. It is therefore indispensable, at the level of implementation, to eliminate all of the logistical and organizational conditions, however slight, that may subvert this important goal.

All of the considerations mentioned on previous pages with regard to risks — especially emerging risks, but not only these — have a corresponding and specific parallel where work is performed in the home, and it is not always satisfactorily identifiable and assessable by the employer: this is true in the case both of smart working and of caregiving (albeit, we repeat, there are huge differences between the two types of work).

Even trivial injuries can sometimes lead to very long absences: what might have seemed an ideal solution in terms of productivity, well-being and performance can turn out to be a boomerang, if not properly managed. With very little effort and almost zero investment, but with training and a little advisory support, it is possible to reduce the frequency of domestic accidents, both at work and in the course of other daily activities at home, and this can bring a significant benefit in terms of business costs, not to mention social costs: when a worker is forced to be absent for a month following a domestic accident, or suffers a permanent disability, regardless of whether the event is a work accident or an illness, it is a situation that entails social, business and personal costs that companies must make every effort to minimize.

PREVENTION COMPANIES

Tools for
companies and
workers

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Education informatics training

A group of people are seated in a meeting room, viewed from behind. They are looking towards a large presentation screen that displays a whiteboard with diagrams and text. The room has large windows and a modern, professional atmosphere.

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Good practices

According to articles 36 and 37 of Italian Legislative Decree n° 81, employers are under obligation to plan and provide suitable information and training courses for all workers, as part of ensuring their protection from occupational risks.

But besides being an obligation, with non-compliance punishable by imprisonment or a fine of up to 6,000 euros, training is essentially an investment that can bring significant savings over the long term, reducing the costs incurred when accidents occur, and improving the competitiveness of the company.

Well-trained workers are more aware of risks and know how to avoid them, a factor that improves operational efficiency and creates a safer and more productive working environment.

How the worker benefits

It is most certainly your right to take part in training, but it is also your duty: failure to attend the mandatory training courses provided by your employer could even result ultimately in dismissal.

First and foremost, however, training is an opportunity: the process of training helps you become more aware of how to work “better”, both from a practical standpoint, by improving your skills, and in developing your ability to protect yourself and protect others.

How the company benefits

A company classified as high risk, faced with the obligation of offering 6 employees a complete generic training course, consisting of a first 4-hour module followed by a 12-hour module, will spend a total of around 1300 - 1500 euros. The fine for failure to provide training can be as much as 11,398 euros, and to this must be added the costs of the training itself, which the employer in any event remains bound to deliver.

But training is not an activity or a service that can be considered in the light of an immediate cost/benefit ratio: in reality, it is an investment that will not only prevent injuries and accidents, but also create an environment that prioritizes well-being, attracting and holding on to the best human resources.



Health surveillance

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Good practices

Health surveillance is a statutory requirements for all tasks where a health risk is identifiable, pursuant to Article 41 of Italian Legislative Decree n° 81, or if deemed necessary on the basis of Risk Assessment.

Examples of jobs requiring health surveillance: video terminal operators, material handlers, workers exposed to physical risks such as noise or vibrations, also to chemicals, to carcinogenic or mutagenic agents and to biological hazards, or persons who work at night, work with electricity or work at height.

For particular tasks that may have an impact on the safety and protection of third parties, it must be established that workers are not involved in drug addiction or the use of narcotic or psychotropic substances, for example, personnel operating road vehicles with higher-category driving licenses or with a certificate of professional competence, train drivers or maritime pilots, and drivers of earth-moving and cargo-handling machinery.

Health surveillance must include:

- Preventive or pre-recruitment medical examinations, serving to verify the absence of any indications that a worker might not be able to perform a given job;
- Periodic medical examinations, allowing a physician to determine that individuals are fit and well;
- Medical examinations pending a change of job or, where required statutorily, on termination of employment;
- Before resuming work, following an absence of more than 60 days for health reasons.

Penalties for failure to carry out health surveillance or for allocating jobs to workers deemed medically unfit can exceed 5,000 euros.

How the worker benefits

Besides being compulsory if you are a worker, currently employed, occupational health surveillance is genuinely important and brings many benefits. Think of the reassurance, for example, in knowing that your health is monitored regularly. This means that any problems can be identified and addressed before they become serious. The negative effects of improper conduct with regard to safety measures will have a much worse impact on your personal life than on your professional life.

How the company benefits

Health surveillance is important for many reasons that go beyond merely avoiding the risk of paying penalties. Ensuring that workers undergo health surveillance means that their suitability for the job can be ascertained over time, both prior to allocation and while actually in post: this protects the safety of workers, who will perform their tasks with greater confidence and awareness, and it also protects the company, reducing the risk of often prolonged absences, and guaranteeing operational continuity.

Moreover, a work environment where the employees health is prioritized will tend to be a more productive one: individuals feel good, more motivated, and work better. Finally, a company that complies with health surveillance regulations has no worries regarding fines and legal headaches, which is a win-win situation.



Personal protective equipment



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Good practices

Personal protective equipment (gloves, ear defenders, shoes, hard hats, belts and harnesses) is mandatory in the case of activities that expose parts of a worker's body to the risk of injury or hurt. Protection is required for the head, face, eyes, hearing, respiratory tract, hands, feet and body.

Personal protective equipment must be provided and used when risks are either unavoidable or cannot be reduced sufficiently by way of other measures. Items of PPE must also comply with standards, ensure compatibility with the risks and working conditions, and satisfy the ergonomic and health needs of the worker. For example, issuing ear defenders with a level of insulation much higher than actually needed, the wearer could be put at risk just the same, given that in addition to attenuating the noise, the PPE would block out the sound of alarms or the warning shouts of co-workers, in the event of an emergency.

Given the importance of PPE for the protection of workers, education and training in the correct use of these items is essential in order to ensure their effectiveness. If a respiratory protective mask is worn incorrectly, it will do nothing to ensure the safety of the wearer.

Finally, a company that invests in safety, demonstrating that it takes care of its staff, will succeed in enhancing its reputation and more easily attracting potential new employees and customers.

How the worker benefits

Before all else, your personal safety is fundamentally important. Wearing PPE significantly reduces the risk of occupational injuries and illnesses in the short and long term, as well as avoiding health problems that could manifest themselves years later.

The use of PPE is required by law, and failure to comply with regulations can result in penalties being imposed both on you and on your employer. Moreover, PPE can make the workplace safer and more comfortable. Finally, using PPE is a visible sign of responsibility and professionalism, it shows the care you take for your own safety and that of your co-workers.

How the company benefits

If employees use PPE correctly, a company will have fewer accidents and occupational illnesses to deal with. There will be fewer breaks in activity, fewer days of injury and sickness, and the workforce will be more productive. Accidents at work can be very costly, in terms both of medical expenses and of claims for compensation: active prevention can significantly reduce the financial impact of these items.

For example:

- Cut-resistant gloves: 15-100 euros VS **Infortunio da taglio: oltre 1000€**;
- Hard hat: 15-40 euros VS **Injury from trauma: over 2000 euros**;
- Fall arrest harness: 30-100 euros VS **Injury from fall: over 4000 euros (falls often result in permanent disability or death).**

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Good practices

Safety has to be an absolute priority for every company. Communication plays a crucial role in this. It is not simply a matter of following rules. It is about creating an environment where everyone feels involved and is aware of the risks. Clear and precise communication is essential: information must be readily comprehensible to avoid misunderstandings that could result in accidents.

An important tool in this respect is signposting. Whether by visual warnings (signs, light signals, beacons, etc.) or audible warnings such as sirens or buzzers, workers must be alerted to risks and dangers so that they are forced to avoid certain kinds of behaviour or at least modify them.

Communication regarding safety cannot be a one-time event: it is an ongoing process that must be continuously updated. For example, if new equipment or hazardous substances are brought on site, workers must be informed immediately and provided with the necessary training.

Special care must be taken to create the best possible format for communication regarding the management of particular emergencies. Take for example the malfunctioning of machines or systems: unforeseen problems can always occur, and in these situations, it is essential that workers are informed about what to do and especially what not to do, and that they report the problem immediately to the competent person or persons in the organization. In the event of serious events such as fire, earthquake or health emergencies, damage-limitation procedures rely heavily on communication: knowing who to warn and what to do can mitigate the adverse effects on people's safety.

How the worker benefits

Communication involves active involvement: in other words, it is not enough to listen and do nothing; rather, it is important to take part in discussions, ask questions and share experiences. When everyone is involved, the perception of risk will be heightened, and safer behaviour adopted.

How the company benefits

Establishing good communication, both of a general nature, and specifically on matters of occupational safety, represents a key investment in creating a solid health and safety culture for the workers of any company.

Indeed, where safety is concerned, investing in communication can help to cut costs in the long run. With fewer accidents occurring, there will be fewer work stoppages, less sick leave and reduced legal costs. In addition, a good safety record can translate into lower insurance premiums.

A safe work environment characterized by smooth and effective communication improves employee morale and satisfaction. When employees feel safe and know that their employer cares about their health, they will be more motivated and more productive.



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