

Editorial

Around one in five work accidents in Belgium are related to maintenance activities, according to figures from 2005-2006. Moreover, 10 to 15% of all fatal accidents in Europe are connected with maintenance. Corrective maintenance (repair work) is an especial cause of accidents, but many accidents also occur because installations, tools, machinery or the workplace and so on lacked proper maintenance. This is why the design of jobs, processes, machinery and buildings are such important aspects in the prevent of work accidents, just as much as good management and maintenance.



Safe maintenance is in the interests of businesses: good maintenance helps minimise dangers at work. It is good for the productivity of the business and is a sign of efficient organisation. Maintenance pays off in every workplace and when every employee - including those whose roles are unrelated to maintenance - pay attention to it. Sometimes all that is needed is to report a loose telephone cable to prevent a potentially dangerous fall.

Safe maintenance is also in the interests of maintenance personnel: they are the most common victims of work accidents during subcontracting. Compared with other workers, they are more frequently exposed to chemical, physical, biological and psychosocial hazards. They may be the victims of occupational diseases or a serious or fatal accident. Psychosocial hazards such as stress are not to be underestimated. Often, they are the consequence of great time pressure, poor work organisation or excessively long or difficult working hours. Risk analysis, information and training are therefore key factors in efficient prevention policy.

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work is putting this theme in the spotlight by completely focusing its campaign for a healthy workplace in 2010 and 2011 on safe maintenance without accidents. On 25 November 2010, in conjunction with the FPS Employment, Work and Social Dialogue, it is organising the Belgium EU Presidency Safe Maintenance Conference in Brussels, including three workshops on the subthemes: maintenance services and working with contractors; safe maintenance through careful design of buildings, jobs and machinery; and maintenance and hazardous products. The campaign website <http://osha.europa.eu/nl/campaigns/hw2010/> has the complete calendar of events throughout Europe, leaflets, posters and other campaign material for use in the organisation, as well as practical tips on safe maintenance.

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Marc De Greef, Managing Director

COMPETITION

Photo competition "Safety never takes a vacation"

Operation Safety invites you to participate in our summer competition "Safety never takes a vacation". The rules are simple: if you witness a surprising work situation while on holiday, capture it on film and send the photo to our editorial board by 30 September. The three best photos will win one of our fine prizes.

Relaxing prizes

The winning photos will be announced in November and published in Operation Safety and on the Prevent website. First prize is a Bongo voucher worth 100 euros, second prize is a gift box with four cinema tickets (worth 33 euros), and the winner of the third prize will receive a 15 euro book token.

How to enter

You can enter by emailing your photo to the editors of Operation Safety (editor@prevent.be) by 30 September, together with your name, address, telephone number, the place (town/city and country) where the photo was taken and a brief description of the work situation. You may send more than one photo provided each one is of a different subject. The photo must have minimum dimensions of at least 1024 X 768 pixels and a quality of at least 300 dpi. More details can be found in the competition rules, which can likewise be requested by sending an email to editor@prevent.be.

Good luck!

For more details of the competition and the rules: ellie.maerevoet@prevent.be



FESTIVAL

ISSA organises the 8th International Film and Multimedia Festival



The International Film and Multimedia Festival is organised by the International Social Security Association. The Festival offers a worldwide overview of films and multimedia productions on safety and health at work and provides an opportunity to present your products to a major group of influential, international safety and health professionals. This year's 8th edition is an integral part of the XIX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, taking place from September 12 to 15, 2011 in Istanbul. ISSA invites you to register your entry via www.prevention.issa.int/film_and_multimedia_festival/ until January 31, 2011.

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CONFERENCE

PEROSH seminar: Research in action - Removing the gap between research and practical prevention

On 25 November 2010, the Partnership for European Research in Occupational Safety and Health will host a Seminar on Research in Action focusing on the necessity to increase and maintain the interaction between evidence-based research in workplace prevention and the practical implementation.

Through the presentation of strong case examples, this seminar will look into the possibilities for improving the interaction and communication between the different stakeholders. Moreover, it will consider the possibilities for improvement of the efficiency and cost-benefit of OSH interventions at workplace level via evidence-based research.



We will give leading European researchers and policy-makers the opportunity to debate the major drivers and policy challenges to progress and ensure the ongoing interaction between research and practical prevention.

The quality of future work and workplaces will be crucial in ensuring a healthy, competitive and productive society with a high level of social progress. As stated in the EU2020 Strategy, the ambition for Europe is to lead as a knowledge based and inclusive society. To understand the complexity of today's world of work and to remain resilient, a multidisciplinary approach and successful association of academic knowledge and practical implementation will be necessary.

As evidence-based research knowledge and results can be important drivers for change in society, workplace practice and experiences are crucial to increase the relevance of research for society. Evidence-based prevention is therefore essential in the design of effective and sustainable prevention strategies.

Increasing and guaranteeing the relevance of working life research for future workplaces and society calls for an integrated approach involving all stakeholders. The support of European social partners and decision makers is therefore a crucial condition to anchor the initiatives in a wider and long-term European framework.

The seminar will take place in Brussels, Belgium. Program and subscription form can be found at www.perosh.eu. Entrance to the seminar is free, places are limited though.

More information: nele.roskams@prevent.be

RESEARCH

European research into the role of social dialogue and its impact on employee welfare during restructuring programmes in the public sector

Since 2008, the European Commission has been involved in research into the impact of corporate restructuring programmes on employee welfare. Following the completion of the Hires and Hires Plus projects in 2009 and 2010 respectively, it is now financing a follow-up project: Hires Public.

In Hires Plus, all participating Member States took a critical look at the mechanisms involved in restructuring programmes in their country, considered the link with the health of the workers concerned and formulated a number of policy recommendations aimed at putting welfare at work higher up on the agenda during restructuring programmes. This was because during the Hires project, the conclusion had been reached that job insecurity has an impact on the working atmosphere and on personnel motivation that is far from positive. Insecurity breaks the bonds between employer and employee and creates a great deal of extra stress for the latter, which can lead to increased rates of sick leave and lower productivity.

Hires Public is focusing on the role of social dialogue and its impact on employee health during restructuring programmes in the public sector. The project starts on 1 October 2010 and will finish on 30 September 2011 with a closing event in Brussels.

During this year, the partners in the project will each analyse two cases of restructuring in the public sector, divided into four subsectors: central government, local government, education and health care. In each case, the partners will investigate the extent to which health issues are taken into account during the restructuring process. They will also identify the competencies that social partners need in order to limit the impact of restructuring programmes on workers' health. The partners will be assisted in this by a support group of employee and employer representatives.

The Working Lives Research Institute of the Metropolitan University London will lead Hires Public, with support from Prevent; Astrees (Association Travail Emploi Europe Société) in France; BAuA and the University of Bremen in Germany; the Institute of Cognitive Sciences and Technologies in Italy; the Institute of Professional Health at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia; the University of Jyväskylä, Finland; and Land Training and Consulting in Romania.

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TOOL

Do the mental health promotion check and receive three free posters!

123 businesses have already completed the online questionnaire that was developed for the campaign Move Europe - Work. In tune with life. In this way, these businesses have been able to take a look at their policy on mental health promotion - an excellent basis from which to make a start on or further develop efforts to improve mental health at work.

Good practice examples are also being presented during the campaign. On the basis of a more thorough analysis of their policy, a panel of judges will select four businesses as examples of good practice. These will be presented to the public at a closing seminar in spring 2011.

If you are convinced that mental health promotion policy in your company is an example of good practice, but have not yet completed the questionnaire, don't worry: you can still fill in the Mental Health Promotion Check at www.move-europe.be. Even if your policy is still in its early days, it is useful to go through the check, since focused feedback will help you on your way. Moreover, every company that does the check will receive three attractive posters. These give workers concrete tips, so you can use them immediately to start raising your employees' awareness.

For more information: www.move-europe.be and karen.muylaert@prevent.be



IN MEMORIAM

Joëlle Degroote (1957 - 2010)

Joelle Degroote, our esteemed colleague, died on 14 July 2010. She was 52.



Joelle worked for more than 30 years as an information specialist at Prevent. She started her career in the documentation centre of the NVVA, the predecessor of the current institute. After a period as a facilitator for short training courses, she returned to her roots as an information worker.

She performed this role with dedication and passion, supporting study and research projects, publications and consultancy activities with document searches.

Joelle was also an inspiration for Prevent's clients and partners - a pivotal figure who contributed creatively to the search for answers to the specific prevention and welfare problems faced by businesses.

Joelle liked to seek perfection in the service she provided to her colleagues and to clients, and this high level of motivation and dedication brought her the respect of all.

After a brief hospitalisation and a serious operation, the first signs were hopeful. Numerous current and former colleagues, friends and acquaintances dropped in to see her and listen to her new plans. Recently, however, her state of health took a severe turn for the worse, and she died on 14 July 2010 in the university hospital in Ghent.

In Joelle we have lost a motivated, meticulous, dedicated colleague who was always ready to listen and had a great deal of human warmth. On behalf of the whole Prevent team I would like to express my condolences to her husband and children. Joelle will always retain a special place in our hearts.

Marc De Greef
Managing Director

PUBLICATION

Safety and health at work in business management

At the end of July, the report Mainstreaming OSH into business management was published. It brings together information from literature and policy on how safety and health can be integrated in business management and presents instances of good practice. The report was compiled under the leadership of Prevent and the Polish organisation CIOP-PIB and was commissioned by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

Management of safety and health at work, an examination of the literature shows, is most effective when it is a component of the overall management process: the more closely it is linked to an organisation's core activities, the more significant the role it plays during organisational shifts such as restructuring programme or rapid technological innovation. Yet the literature shows that management systems to do with safety and health at work are mainly implemented in order to prevent work accidents. The aspects of physical and above all mental health promotion lag behind.

Using good practices from twelve EU countries, the report shows that a policy on safety and health at work that forms part of the business culture has positive effects on working conditions, sick leave and the costs associated with sickness and accidents, and hence on the organisation's productivity and competitiveness.

One of the examples used in the report is the Province of Antwerp. There, the personnel service decided that it could no longer ignore changes on the employment market and new HR trends. Employee welfare became the central theme in the Province's strategy memorandum for 2007-2012. The personnel service, which was transformed into the HR department, started to work closely with the Internal Service for Prevention and Protection at Work. Both services were reinforced and relocated, and are now even on the same floor. In this way, a joint project emerged in 2006 for safer working conditions, less absenteeism and a faster return to work: "Van Lijden naar Leiden" ("From Suffering to Leading"). The pilot project at the Zilvermeer recreational facility did better than expected (the number of work accidents and days off in 2007 was half the level of 2005), despite an extremely limited budget.

The complete report (in English) can be downloaded for free at <http://osha.europa.eu>. Factsheets in all EU languages are available at <http://osha.europa.eu/en/publications/factsheets>.

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Prevent is a multidisciplinary institute centred on the prevention of occupational risks through the promotion of the quality of working conditions and the improvement of work organisation. The institute provides support, advice and information for businesses and organisations, such as occupational accident insurers, external prevention and protection services, sectoral organisations, the social partners, the government and other societal actors.

Prevent is dedicated to the development, collection and mobilisation of occupational safety and health knowledge. To this end, the institute carries out research and studies centred on practical experience. In addition, it gathers information and documentation from all over the world. Lastly, the institute contributes actively to the development of regional, national, and international networks in order to exchange information and experience.

The institute transfers its accumulated knowledge using various means such as consulting, disseminating information and documentation, writing and editing publications, developing training programs and carrying out information and awareness campaigns. The institute gives particular attention to the issue of occupational safety and health in SMEs.

prevent

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