

DGUV Kompakt



RECOMMENDED

The DGUV Prevention
Yearbook 2017

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TOP STORY

Violence in the workplace takes many forms

In 2016, more than 10,000 employees were victims of workplace violence

Whether it be a petrol station hold-up, dementia patients hitting out at their carers or the shock following a traumatic event, the violence that people experience when doing their job takes many forms. In 2016, more than 10,000 employees experienced violence in their workplace. The health and care sectors are particularly at risk. These figures come from the German Social Accident Insurance's Workplace Accident Statistics 2016.



Photo: DGUV / Wolfgang Bellwinkel

People who help other people as part of their daily work are often the target of aggression and assaults.

Violence in the workplace is a difficult topic. Like all other work-related hazards and stressors, employees are entitled to have their health protected from workplace violence. But how many people are actually affected? According to the figures from the DGUV's Workplace Accident Statistics 2016, there were 10,432 people who suffered a reportable workplace accident resulting from physical or psychological violence by another person. Just looking at this type of violent event alone, we see an increase of around 22% over the last five years (2012: 8,534 cases). However, 2016 did not follow the upward trend of previous years. 'It's difficult to say whether these figures reflect an increase in the risk of a violent incident or threat. For example, the employment rate has increased in recent years, especially in relevant areas such as care', said Dr Joachim Breuer, Director General of the DGUV. 'Added to this, is the fact that those affected are possibly more aware of this violence and this increases their willingness to report an incident.'

Employees whose job requires them to have contact with customers or patients are particularly at risk from third-party violence. In 2016, 31% (3,252) of all attacks on employees occurred in hospitals and care homes; another fifth in the public sector, on roads or on public transport (2,371). Assaults can have psychological consequences as well as physical ones. In 18% of incidents, a negative psychological effect was diagnosed as the most severe impairment. Victims have usually experienced a traumatic event, such as a robbery. 'The German social accident insurance institutions are very active in this area. They offer prevention and consulting services to companies that are specific to their sector. Employees who are victims of violence in the workplace receive the necessary medical and psychological assistance', said Breuer. Workplace violence has also received attention at federal lev-

'Employees who are victims of violence in the workplace receive the necessary medical and psychological assistance.'

Dr Joachim Breuer

el. The Bundesrat's resolution on 'Preventing violence against at-risk workers in the service sector' from July 2007 emphasises that conducting a risk assessment is an essential part of preventing third-party violence. The German social accident insurance institutions also assist with this.

Web: www.dguv.de › Zahlen und Fakten › Veröffentlichungen › Statistik zum Arbeitsunfallgeschehen 2016 (German only)



Signals

Dear Reader,

Retrospection is a good way to distinguish between signals and background noise. A strong signal this year came from the social elections, because they are an example of living democracy. The self-governing committees ensure that decisions are made where they have a decisive effect – at the grass roots. Another signal came from the EU Commission's White Paper and the debate on Europe's future. Germany's social accident insurance is committed to a Europe with a clear division of roles and responsibilities. This is the only way that high standards can be maintained in the future. The G20 nations sent a strong signal with their commitment to Vision Zero, a world without occupational accidents and work-related diseases. But Vision Zero shouldn't just remain a vision. The start of our nationwide *kommittensch* campaign starts exactly there: a culture of prevention needs to be established in companies and institutions so that, ideally, people don't have any accidents or suffer from any diseases. By the way, the Nobel Prize for Medicine 2017 was awarded for research into our internal, biological clock. The biologists recommend that we spend less time with our smartphones and more time sleeping. So, now and then, try switching off from all external signals and make more time for family, for friends and for yourself.

Dr Joachim Breuer
Director General of the DGUV

'No country wants to be constantly publicly scorned'

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), 2.78 million people die every year from work-related injuries and diseases. Another 160 million suffer from an occupational disease. In light of this, the Germany Presidency of the G7 Summit in June 2015 initiated the creation of the Vision Zero Fund (VZF) to prevent and protect against work-related injuries and diseases. Commitment to the fund was affirmed in a G20 statement in 2017. Dr Annette Niederfranke, Director of the ILO Office for Germany, took stock in an interview with DGUV Kompakt.

Dr Niederfranke, in 2015, the initiative to ensure more sustainable supply chains in the textile industry and other sectors was launched and the VZF was established. The VZF is located at the ILO and that's where specific projects are developed and implemented worldwide. How would you sum up the last two years?

The challenges are enormous. 2.78 million fatalities as a result of work-related accidents and diseases can only be effectively tackled if countries abide by labour standards and set safety standards across borders. The aim of the Vision Zero Fund is to structurally and sustainably improve local conditions. Projects in Asia (Myanmar) and Africa (Ethiopia) in their textile sectors are under way. In addition, a cooperation venture with Siemens has been established as part of a public-private partnership in Africa. But changes don't just happen overnight; they take time. A positive sign to the world community is the expansion of the Vision Zero Fund into a G20-wide initiative. Industrialised, emerging and developing countries are working together to improve working conditions in global supply chains and to prevent occupational accidents.

Bangladesh is the world's second largest producer of textiles. In December 2016, tens of thousands of workers went on strike for higher wages. Businesses and the government responded with layoffs and repression. What are the consequences of this for the international community and the Federal Government?

The right to strike is a basic human right. ILO Convention 87 has protected freedom of association since 1948. A year later came ILO Convention 98 on the right to bargain collectively. These central labour standards oblige all 187 ILO member states to comply with their requirements. It is a primary responsibility of each government to ensure and follow core labour standards in its own country. Bangladesh is a sovereign state, but there are ways to denounce any abuses. The ILO has a complaints and investigation procedure that monitors international compliance, and governments are required to report. No country wants to be constantly publicly scorned, not least because they don't want to jeopardise their credibility and reputation internationally. It also took a long time to establish labour rights in Germany. This requires a reliable national legal framework and structures, especially unions, which still need to be expanded. This is exactly what the ILO is working on in Bangladesh, together with the government and the social partners.

Together with the ILO and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, the DGUV has organised four study visits for delegations from Bangladesh. These dealt with real-life OSH, social dialogue and assistance with establishing a social accident insurance system. How do you rate this initiative?

To experience first-hand how social partnership is lived and breathed in Germany is extremely beneficial and we encourage this, especially when it comes to implementing in their own country what they've seen and



Photo: DGUV

Information on OSH and accident insurance from a single source: a delegation from Bangladesh during a study visit to Germany in 2015. One of their stops was a visit to the Institute of Work and Health of the DGUV (IAG) in Dresden.

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Dr Annette Niederfranke

learned in Germany. This is because concepts that have developed over decades here can’t be transferred one-to-one. There has to be social dialogue in the home country and an understanding of which key elements need to be set up and how to do this. We are strongly behind the DGUV initiating this process. Real-life examples are so important. They inspire confidence that ideas can pass the reality test and that, in the long term, everyone benefits from safe and healthy working conditions, social security and social dialogue. There is a direct link between OSH and productivity.

Photo: Niederfranke



Dr Annette Niederfranke
Director of the ILO Office for Germany

What’s coming up next for the VZF?

We’ve started in Asia with the textile industry and we’re now extending our activities to other continents and sectors. Special focus will be on Africa and the agriculture and infrastructure sectors. There is a great opportunity when developing new sectors – roads, public infrastructure – to include safety and OSH from the very beginning, and to work proactively instead of only becoming active when terrible accidents occur. The aim is to also get the business community on board, which is why further cooperation with it has been initiated. We are also working on integrating VZF initiatives even better with other large-scale projects and initiatives in individual countries so that assistance truly comes from a single source.

TOPIC

EU 2018 Work Programme

In October, the European Commission presented proposals that it would like to finalise before the end of the European Parliament’s legislative term in May 2019. The initiatives included in the Work Programme for 2018 aim to strengthen the future Union of 27. In addition, solutions to major challenges such as boosting growth and jobs are to be found.

‘The recently announced Pillar of Social Rights should help improve working and living conditions in the Member States.’

The proposed social fairness package for March 2018 is particularly relevant to social security. The intention is to have an initiative which makes social security more accessible for workers in non-standard employment. The aim is to close existing gaps so that all workers, regardless of their employment status, can contribute to and access social protection. The EU Commission also plans to establish a European Labour Authority and a European ‘social security number’. Projects already in progress will also receive further support. These include the introduction of a European services e-card, as well as a revision of the Regulation on the coordination of social security systems. In addition, the recently announced Pillar of Social Rights should help improve working and living conditions in the Member States. It will act as the basis of a European, social market economy and promote a sustainable welfare system. The implementation and enforcement of legislation must also be improved in order to achieve better results in practice. As part of the ‘Union of Democratic Change’ heading towards 2025, the EU Commission wants to promote subsidiarity and start fewer legislative procedures, while making them more efficient.

Web: www.dsv-europa.de/en > News

'We are kommitmenschen'



Marking the German social accident insurance institutions' new *kommitmenschen* prevention campaign is the DGUV's latest Prevention Yearbook. There is a major objective for the campaign's launch: to establish a culture of prevention in all companies, organisations and educational facilities in order to prevent fatal or serious workplace accidents and occupational diseases as completely as possible. One section of the 2017 Yearbook is devoted to Vision Zero. Other sections cover the digital transformation of the world of work and its impact on OSH, the significance of standardisation, and current developments in occupational health. Experts from Germany and around the globe from various disciplines and institutions make sure that the 'bigger picture' isn't missed.

Click [here](#) to download or order the Yearbook.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Better protection for expectant mothers

The Maternity Protection Act underwent a fundamental reform in 2017. Many of the changes come into force on January 1, 2018. A significant change has been made which expands the group of people covered by the Act. As of 2018, female school and university students will also benefit from maternity protection under certain circumstances. There are also new obligations for employers. They are expressly called upon to avoid a blanket work ban. This can be done, for example, by adjusting working conditions or a temporary re-

assignment. Only when these measures are unsuccessful, can a work ban come into question. In addition, pregnant women are not permitted to do work that must be done within a specific time frame. Pregnant women must also be given more say in how their working hours are structured when it comes to extra work and non-standard hours.

Web: www.bmfsfj.de

➤ **search term:** „Reform MuSchG“
(German only)

DGUV Self-governing Committee restructure

The DGUV Members' Meeting has been reconstituted for the new social election period. As is the case for the German social accident insurance institutions, the DGUV is steered by a self-governing committee consisting of honorary representatives from employers and insured employees. This means that real-life insights flow directly into the design and organisation of prevention and rehabilitation, as well as taking into account various interests. On 30 November 2017, the Members' Meeting elected Stefan Weis (insured persons' representative) and Helmut Et-

schenberg (employers' representative) as their chairmen. The newly elected board then elected Manfred Wirsch (insured persons' representative) and Volker Enkert (employers' representative) as the new chairmen of the board. Wirsch continues in his role from the previous social election period as chairmen representing insured employees. Enkert replaces Dr Rainhardt von Leoprechting as the representative for employers.

Web: www.dguv.de (Webcode: dp1058144)
(German only)

IMPORTANT DATES

29-31 January 2018
REACH 2018 Stakeholders' Day
HELSINKI, FINNLAND
www.echa.europa.eu > **Reach 2018**

30 January 2018
Towards an inclusive society?
Fundamentals and design
recommendations for employing
people with disabilities
WUPPERTAL
www.institut-aser.de > **Veranstaltungen**

6-7 March 2018
WAI Network Annual
Conference: Healthy leadership
and HR development
BERLIN
www.arbeitsfaehig.com/de
> **Seminare/Tagungen**

NUMBER OF THE MONTH

100!

The German Institute for Standardization (DIN) celebrates its 100th anniversary on 22 December 2017. DIN is an independent platform for standardisation in Germany and worldwide.

LEGAL INFORMATION

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Publishing committee: Dr Renate Colella (Chair), Udo Diel, Professor Dr med Axel Ekkernkamp, Markus Hofmann, Gabriele Pappai, Dr Udo Schöpf, Karl-Sebastian Schulte
Editorship: Gregor Doepke, Kathrin Baltscheit, DGUV, Glinkastr. 40, 10117 Berlin
Editorial team: Kathrin Baltscheit, Elke Biesel, Katharina Dielmann, Jan-Peter Schulz
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Contact

KOMPACT@DGUV.DE
WWW.DGUV.DE/KOMPACT