

Saving lives together

Quick resuscitation can save lives. However, in Germany, not enough people are able to help. German social accident insurance wants to help raise awareness. It is therefore supporting the Resuscitation Action Plan of the German Resuscitation Council and the German Medical Technology Association (BVMed).

Every year in Germany, over 60,000 people suffer a cardiac arrest – away from a hospital. Providing quick resuscitation can be the difference between life and death. Currently, only around ten percent of those affected survive. First aid in a work context is a responsibility of social accident insurance, which is why the umbrella organisation is supportive of placing a greater focus on this area. “Guaranteeing the provision of first aid in the workplace is a core responsibility of social accident insurance,” says Dr Stefan Hussy, Director General of the DGUV. “German social accident insurance is able to play a key role in further raising awareness.”

First aid – an important issue in occupational safety and health

According to the accident prevention regulation “Principles of Prevention” (DGUV Regulation 1), employers are required to provide and regularly train sufficient first aiders. The action plan essentially sets out to make people in Germany more aware of the issue. “We believe this is right, and in particular regard it as the responsibility of the social accident insurance to train company first aiders in resuscitation. It can save colleagues’ lives,” explains Hussy. The DGUV also welcomes what the action plan is calling for: more defibrillators being made available – in public places or



Providing quick resuscitation can be the difference between life and death.

in suitable company-based contexts – and integrating the topic within schools and training. The “Erste Hilfe? Ehrensache!” (“First aid? Obviously!”) campaign, run by the DGUV regional associations within the prevention programme “Jugend will sich-er-leben” (“Young people want to live life, and safely too”), is already contributing to this.

Initial and further training reorganised

In order to ensure first aid provision in companies, more than 2 million company-based first aiders are trained each year. The costs are covered by the German social accident insurance institutions. They also ensure the quality and standardisation of training nationally. In 2015, there was a rethink of the concept behind initial and further training. An evaluation shows the success of this restructuring. According to the assessments of around 15,000 first aiders, the courses are largely high quality and increase levels of competency. It is also evident that company-based first aiders take on the responsibility for longer periods of time and this therefore ensures continuity. It is also important to note that many also use first aid privately or in the public sphere. This means that, by providing initial and further training of first aiders, accident insurance is also making an important contribution to society. In order to give first aiders greater

Resuscitation action plan demands:

1. Resuscitation training courses for all age groups
2. Widespread use of telephone-assisted resuscitation and first aid systems
3. More defibrillators in places and locations that are accessible to the public and heavily frequented and where people spend long periods of time
4. National defibrillator register

certainty in their work, increasing use could be made of digital tools such as first aid apps or electronic reporting systems. In 2021, as part of the Coalition agreement, the Federal Government agreed on a package of measures relating to resuscitation. “The action plan specifies measures needed to raise the profile of first aid. German Social Accident Insurance sees itself as an important stakeholder in fulfilling this collective responsibility,” explains Hussy.

→ Resuscitation action plan:

www.grc-org.de › Our Work › Action Plan Resuscitation (German only)

→ Results from evaluation of initial and further first aid training:

www.forum.dguv.de › Issue 3-2024 (German only)



Preventing violence in the health sector

Employees working in the healthcare sector make a key contribution to our society. This was abundantly clear in recent years, particularly during the coronavirus pandemic when doctors, nursing staff and many other health service employees cared for large numbers of seriously and critically ill patients. Unfortunately, medical staff are increasingly the target of violence. This is a situation we cannot accept.

The next phase of our #GewaltAngehen campaign, which tackles violence against emergency workers, is therefore focused on health service employees. As with the two previous professions of emergency service workers and security personnel, our very clear position, once again, is that: violence is unacceptable! Employees must be better protected and everyone involved must be made more aware of this issue.

Effective prevention and support are key to less violence and aggressive behaviour. Employers are expected to assess the specific risks and identify appropriate measures for reducing instances of violence. If employees also receive proactive training, for example in de-escalation measures, they can reduce the likelihood of violent acts occurring by using learned approaches to managing situations. Appropriate follow-up care, such as psychotherapy treatment, is also essential if violence does occur.

We are all required to play our part in preventing and reducing violence. Let's tackle this together!

Yours Dr Stefan Hussy
Director General of the DGUV

Let's talk about BEM! Where are we now? What do we want to be?



Source: S Amelle Walter – adobe.stock.com

By introducing the occupational integration management (BEM) 20 years ago, legislators created a tool for helping people reintegrate back into work following an illness or accident. This protects jobs and retains skilled workers. Particularly today, with the skilled worker shortage, BEM is intended to be available as a tool for retaining skilled workers.

But is the BEM process being adopted in practice? How can companies be made more aware of the support and benefits provided by pension and accident insurance? And where does more work need to be

In the autumn, DGUV and the German Pension Insurance Association (DRV Bund) will host the networking event "Gesundheit fördern, Fachkräfte sichern".

done? The German Social Accident Insurance and the German Federal Pension Insurance want to discuss these issues. On 26 September 2024, they are therefore hosting the networking event entitled "Gesundheit fördern, Fachkräfte sichern" ("Promoting health, retaining skilled workers"). The event is being held at the DGUV in Berlin. If you would like to attend, please contact us at: veranstaltungen@dguv.de. We look forward to seeing you!

Happy with your job? Survey shows positive results

People say you need to enjoy your job. But do we? The majority of employees in Germany enjoy their work, it is important to them and makes them feel appreciated. These were the results of a representative survey of around 2,000 persons in gainful employment conducted on behalf of the Initiative Gesundheit und Arbeit (Health and Work Initiative, iga). According to the iga survey, job satisfaction has risen continuously since 2016. There is also a high level of satisfaction with the social working environment. Almost 90 percent of respondents agreed at least somewhat that they are supported by their colleagues. Cultural diversity and the trend towards mobile working also received a largely positive assessment. More than 80 percent somewhat, mostly, or completely agreed

with the statement that working with people from other cultures is an enriching experience. And what about mobile working? More than one in four people occasionally or frequently work outside the workplace, for example from a home office. Over 90 percent of those surveyed who spend at least 40 percent of their working time in mobile working view the ability to work anywhere as an advantage. In terms of health in the workplace, the role of the manager must not be underestimated. More than half of the respondents stated that the manager is mindful of the employees' workload.

→ www.iga-info.de > Publications > iga.Barometer 2022 (German only)

Good to know!

Health and Work Initiative (iga)

Pooling knowledge, sharing experiences and promoting health in the workplace together – that is the aim of the Health and Work Initiative (iga). The *BKK Dachverband* (umbrella organisation of company health insurance institutions), the associations of *vdek* (substitute health funds) and *IKK* (guild health insurers) and DGUV work together within the initiative. They analyse trends in the world of work and develop approaches to prevention and intervention in order to ensure safe and healthy working.



We need to take the risk of non-melanoma skin cancer seriously and protect ourselves – at work and at home



Summer, sun, UV-rays – too much of it can lead to skin cancer. **Claudine Strehl** from the DGVU's Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (IFA) explains how to best protect yourself.

Ms. Strehl, summer is here and we are spending a lot of time outdoors. Climate change means that skin cancer, heat and allergies are becoming increasingly important issues. Is this also influencing research by the social accident insurance?

Yes, definitely. Climate change is also posing major challenges for occupational safety and health. The issue concerning us is how we can protect employees from potential hazards caused by climate change. We also do not have any specific knowledge of those changes we can expect locally. The problems themselves, in some cases, are nothing new, but the extent of the problems certainly is. Then there's also the fact that issues such as heat and UV radiation now have to be increasingly considered together. They are, by their nature, closely linked, but have so far only been considered in isolation. As a result, protective measures sometimes contradict each other. We have to think outside the box in order to find sensible and practical solutions.



Many employees are not aware of their own risk.”

How can the IFA help?

One way the IFA can help is by identifying at-risk groups. For this we look at which hazards exist in different workplaces across a range of sectors and whether protective measures are necessary. To support this, data on occupational exposure to UV radiation is being collected and analysed as part of the GENESIS UV measurement project.

On the other hand, we are also evaluating existing protective measures for their effectiveness and acceptance. For this purpose, we are conducting material testing and developing a testing policy intended to

ensure the suitability of sunscreens for use in occupational settings.

Non-melanoma skin cancer mainly affects occupational groups working outdoors – on construction sites, in agriculture or in gardens. How can these employees best protect themselves?

In occupational safety, we have the established TOP principle: first technical, then organisational, and then personal measures. This also applies when protecting yourself from UV radiation. Work areas with strong exposure to sunlight should therefore be shaded by tents, tarpaulins or umbrellas. A further possibility is to reorganise work so that outdoor activities take place at times of day when UV radiation is less intense. Employers must also supply their employees with protective clothing – long-sleeved shirts, long trousers, head covering with a wide brim and sunglasses. Areas of skin which then remain exposed must be protected with sunscreen with a high to very high sun protection factor.

Apart from clothing and organisational measures, is there anything else companies can do to protect their employees?

Providing regular training and information to employees about the risks is also important. Many employees are unaware of the risks they face – there is much work to be done here in terms of education. This should also involve discussing potential protective measures, preferably with appropriate examples which are clear and sector-specific. Training is a

component of Preventive Occupational Medicine in accordance with Occupational Medical Rule (AMR) 13.3. The offering and use of this, however, occurs far too infrequently. Basically, we need to take the risk of non-melanoma skin cancer seriously and protect ourselves – both at work and in our private lives.

Might digitalisation also be able to help in the prevention of non-melanoma skin cancer?

In my opinion, digitalisation can be a helpful source of support. For example, this would allow employees to be informed via apps regarding the current workplace-related UV index and the protective measures needed. By digital means, explanatory information can also be disseminated to different target groups more easily and in a largely easy-to-access manner. AI systems are now being used for the purpose of detecting skin cancer early. The aim is that they will help to identify skin changes at an early stage.

How can those affected identify early symptoms?

Early symptoms can differ widely and often only develop very slowly. They generally appear in old age when immune systems are weaker. The most common signs include rough, scaly patches of skin that do not heal, but also reddish patches that bleed or crust. Skin changes such as these should be examined by a dermatologist at an early stage. Generally speaking, non-melanoma skin cancer can be treated effectively if it is detected early.

2023 saw 7,587 suspected cases of skin cancer and 3,517 cases being officially diagnosed as an occupational disease caused by natural UV radiation.*

Those predominantly affected are men in the professions of mason, construction machine operator, roofer, carpenter, and joiner. On average, people are aged 72 when skin cancer is detected.

* Those affected from the Social Insurance for Agriculture, Forestry and Horticulture (SVLFG) are not included in the figures.

Reduced risk of accidents at work

The recently published data from German Social Accident Insurance shows a positive trend in the figures for accidents at work and commuting accidents. The number of people suffering an accident at work reached an all-time low – if you do not include the coronavirus pandemic years of 2020 to 2022. Over this period, working hours and mobility were heavily influenced by the pandemic. The German social accident insurance institution recorded 783,426 reportable accidents at work across Germany as a whole – almost 90,000 fewer than in 2019. Commuting accidents to or from work fell slightly by 2000

compared to the pre-coronavirus year of 2019. However, the total number of accidents at work and commuting accidents resulting in a fatality in 2023 is at the lowest figure on record at 599 fatalities.

Lower risk of accidents

There was also a marked fall in the relative risk of an accident. In 2023, this figure was almost 3 occupational accidents fewer per 1,000 equivalent full-time employees* than in 2019. The reduction is due to both the decline in accidents at work and the increase in the number of hours worked.

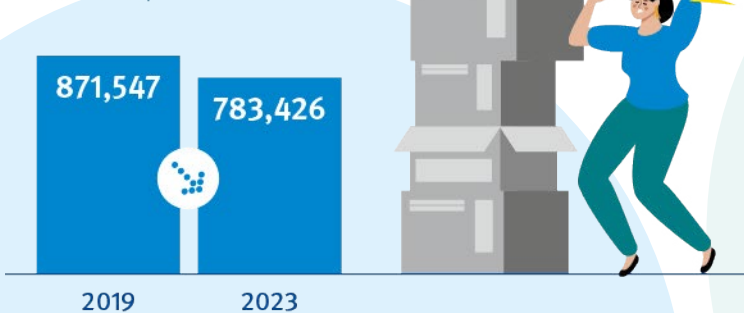
Fewer reports of occupational diseases

The coronavirus pandemic saw a significant increase in the reports of suspected occupational diseases. In 2023, this number fell again for the first time since the start of the pandemic. While Covid-19 cases still accounted for 80 percent of reports in 2022, in 2023 the proportion was 45 percent.

➔ www.dguv.de > Facts and figures

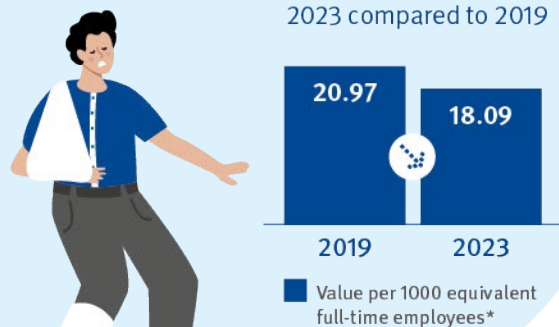
ACCIDENTS AT WORK

2023 compared to 2019



RISK OF ACCIDENTS

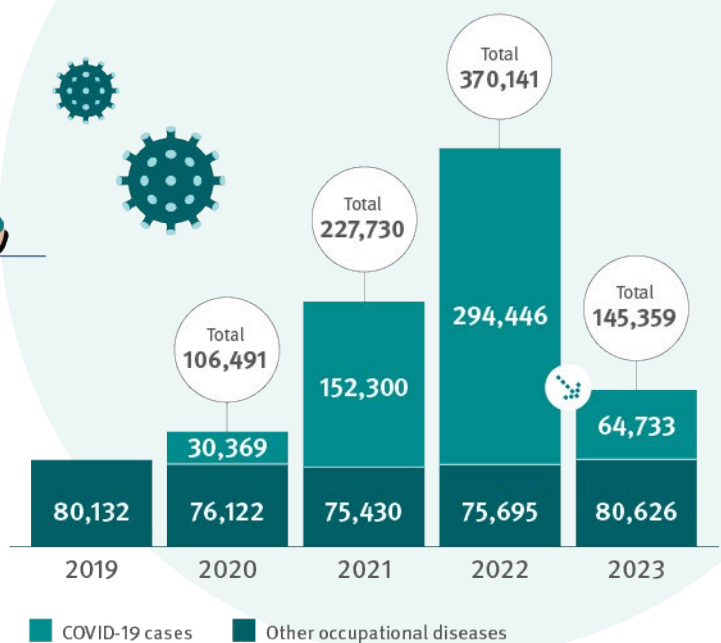
2023 compared to 2019



* Statistically, one equivalent full-time employee is equivalent to the number of hours actually worked on average in one year by a full-time employee

REPORTS OF SUSPECTED OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

2019–2023



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