

**CONCLUSIONS FROM  
NATIONAL SURVEY ON  
SAFETY AND HEALTH  
ENTERPRISES  
MANAGEMENT  
(ENGE 2009)**

NIPO 272-13-024-0



MINISTERIO  
DE TRABAJO  
E INMIGRACIÓN



INSTITUTO NACIONAL  
DE SEGURIDAD E HIGIENE  
EN EL TRABAJO

## 1. CONCLUSIONS

### 1.1.1. ORGANISATION OF PREVENTION

#### 1.1.2. Participating bodies: prevention representative and health and safety committee

- ◆ Slightly over 40% of workplaces with six or more employees have prevention representatives. In industrial branches, over 50% of workplaces have representatives.
- ◆ Only slightly more than 20% of prevention representative positions are assumed by women.
- ◆ Almost all prevention representatives have received training in occupational health and safety since their appointment.
- ◆ Health and safety committees are largely found at workplaces with 50 or more employees who have prevention representatives. These committees most frequently hold four or more meetings per year; the frequency increases the larger the workplace is.
- ◆ The areas of health and safety that are most frequently the topic of consultations with prevention representatives are: *risk assessment, organisation of prevention, and organisation of training*; and those least frequently handled are: *workstations without risk for pregnancy, selection of work equipment and/or PPE and the introduction of new technologies*.
- ◆ In the absence of prevention representatives, the aspects on which employees are directly consulted most frequently are: *risk assessment, organisation of training, selection of work equipment and/or PPE and organisation of prevention*; and the aspects about which they are least frequently queried are: *the selection of an external prevention service, the selection of the mutual insurance for work-related accidents and illnesses and workstations without risks for pregnancy*.

#### 1.1.3. Preventive resources

- ◆ The evolution of the preventive organisation in the last ten years (considering the last three editions of the Survey and excluding the Agricultural sector to make possible to compare them) indicates, among other aspects, that: the percentage of companies that have adopted some sort of preventive management has increased; the presence of external preventive services has increased in all payroll sizes considered; and the frequency of companies with fewer than six employees in which prevention roles are assumed by the employer has decreased.
- ◆ The type of preventive organisation most frequently adopted by companies continues to be the external prevention service (73%) and this remains so, independently of the payroll size of the company considered. Most of the time, the

company hires the services of the segregated prevention company of its mutual insurance company for accidents at work and occupational illnesses.

- ◆ When the method adopted is the external prevention service, the company hires one or more of the preventive specialties, and over half of the companies hire out the four specialties. The preventive specialties hired, in order of frequency, are: workplace safety (92%), occupational medicine (71%), industrial hygiene (67%), and finally, ergonomics and applied Psychosociology (61.7%).
- ◆ Along with preventive specialties, companies contract with the external prevention service specific prevention activities. The most frequently requested activities are: prevention plan development and planning of preventive activities; risk assessment and its updating; and information and training of workers.
- ◆ The designated worker present in 15% of companies is a resource that is often combined with others, mostly with external prevention services. Upon taking office, the designated worker had training and/or experience in nearly 70% of cases. Although most of these employees received training following their appointment, with a range of training hours, 12% had no training or experience at the time of their appointment, neither were they trained later.
- ◆ 39% of large companies (250 or more employees) have set up their internal prevention service to address health and safety at work. Although higher-level functions are represented in the vast majority of these services, in at least 18% of cases there is nobody to carry out these functions.
- ◆ In 10% of internal prevention services that have technicians to carry out higher-level functions, only one preventive specialty is performed (mainly safety at work). The preventive specialties represented in these services, from most to least frequent are: safety at work (98%), ergonomics and applied psychosociology (85%), industrial hygiene (68%) and finally, occupational medicine (43%).
- ◆ Only 27% of companies with 250 to 500 employees that indicated carrying out particularly dangerous activities, listed in Annex I to the Regulations of Prevention Services, comply with the obligation to constitute an internal or a joint prevention service.
- ◆ In general, the assessment of the work carried out by external prevention services is satisfactory for almost 90% of companies; yet it must be noted that the percentage of companies that are dissatisfied with this service increases among the larger companies (with payrolls greater than 50 employees). The worst rated aspects are: time dedication; non-compliance with the planning; applicability of solutions and recommended preventive measures; and the speed of responses. In contrast, they are most satisfied with the ease of carrying out consultations.
- ◆ Other preventive figures within the company are: the *employee responsible for coordinating business activities*, present in 3.5% of companies; the *health and safety coordinator* in the construction sector, which has been reported by 11% of companies in this sector; and employees acting as *preventive resources present* during the implementation of activities or processes that are considered either hazardous or bearing extraordinary risk by legislation, reported by 4% of the companies.

### 1.1.4. PREVENTIVE ACTIVITIES

- ◆ The most common preventive activities carried out at the workplace are medical examinations (81.1%), risk assessment (76.9% in all sectors except Construction) and the development of the prevention plan (64.7%). Preventive activities increase the larger the workplace is; and, according to economic activity, Construction and Industry (especially in Chemistry) are the sectors presenting the highest percentages in the various preventive actions considered. Another factor that is positively related to the implementation of preventive activities is the existence of the Prevention Representative at the workplace.
- ◆ The most frequently adopted methods of coordination in the field of occupational risk prevention in the case of *corporate overlap* are: exchange of preventive information among overlapping companies (43.5%), imparting joint instructions appropriate for existing risks (35.4%) and the joint establishment of preventive measures and procedures (34.4%).

### 1.1.5. Risk assessment in the Agricultural, Industrial, and Service sectors

- ◆ Although most workplaces have carried out risk assessments, 20.2% of workplaces report that no risk assessment had been carried out.
- ◆ The Industrial sector presents the greatest percentage of workplaces that have carried out risk assessments across the entire centre (81%), followed by the Service sector (72.7%) and, finally, the Agricultural sector (68.3%).
- ◆ The analysis of the performance of risk assessments and the incidence of occupational accidents and/or diseases in the past two years indicates that in 19.3% of workplaces that have assessed risks, occupational accidents and/or diseases have occurred; the percentage is 10.2% for workplaces in which risks were not assessed.
- ◆ In regard to workplaces in which no risk assessment has been done, 55.4% report that there are no risks in their centre, while workplaces that have carried out risk assessments report the absence of risks in 38.1% of cases. These results may indicate that risk assessment increases the identification and recognition of risks.
- ◆ The main reasons for reviewing risk assessments at the workplace are: the selection of work equipment (37.1% of workplaces) and the modification in the facilities or conditions of workplaces (32.7%).
- ◆ Of workplaces that have carried out risk assessments in all or part of the centre, 84.4% indicate that they inform their employees of the assessment results, while 13.1% do not.
- ◆ When it comes to informing employees of the risk assessment results, the most frequent means of doing so is only verbally (40.1%). On the other hand, the persons who tend to inform are primarily the employer/management (especially in workplaces with fewer than 10 employees) and the technicians of the prevention service (osh specialists).
- ◆ In the past two years, the most frequently evaluated aspects at the workplace have been: the *safety of machinery, equipment, materials, and work facilities* (75.5%),

*working postures, physical strains, and repetitive movements (75.1%) and workplace design (furniture, space, surfaces, etc.) (71.2%); additionally, these same aspects are those for which the most measures have been adopted.*

#### **1.1.6. Health and safety plans in the Construction sector**

- ◆ When companies act as developers, 37.3% carry out health and safety studies. When they act as contractors: 55% draft and update their health and safety plan, and 53.8% request the necessary information from subcontractors to adapt their health and safety plan. In the three cases discussed, the percentage of companies that fail to answer these questions is surprisingly high (34.5%, 26.5%, and 26.2%, respectively).
- ◆ On the other hand, when the company acts as a subcontractor, 50.5% of workplaces report that the contractor requests them the information needed to adapt their health and safety plans; and 54.7% report that they receive from the contractor that part of the health and safety plan which is relevant to them. In these cases, the high percentage of "don't knows" or "No answer" obtained with regard to these issues is also significant (31.6% and 30%, respectively).
- ◆ The aspects that are "always" included in the safety and health plans are most frequently those relating to the safety of machinery, equipment, materials, and work facilities (74.5%), working postures, physical strains and repetitive movements (63.2%), and physical agents (noise, vibration, radiation, temperature, and humidity, etc.) (56.9%). On the contrary, those "never" included are most frequently: psychosocial and organisational aspects (work hours, breaks, rhythm, stress, etc.) (15.3%), biological agents (bacteria, protozoa, viruses, fungi, and parasites) (13.8%) and hazardous, noxious, or toxic chemical products or substances (11.9%).
- ◆ In 87.1% of Construction workplaces it is reported that employees are informed about risks affecting their job or function; on the other hand, 10.4% report not doing this.
- ◆ When employees are informed of the risks, the most common means of doing so is verbally as well as in writing (48%). The most frequent situations are: the employer/management inform only verbally (20.4%), only in writing (9.2%), or in both ways (11.9%), and prevention service technicians inform in both ways (11.3%). The employer/management tends to be the most significant informant in workplaces with fewer than 10 employees.

#### **1.1.7. Organisation of occupational medicine. Medical examinations**

- ◆ In general, and especially in microenterprises and small companies, the employer is not very familiarised with Occupational Medicine as a preventive discipline, being simpler for him/her to identify derived activities, such as the medical check-up.
- ◆ 81.1% of business managers said that, in the last year, employees have been offered the opportunity to undergo a medical check-up. Most respondents said that these were general physicals (63.8%), and only 17.3% report that the examinations had a specific character related to their occupational hazards.

- ◆ The activities that most frequently lead to specific risk-related medical check-ups are Chemical and Construction although, in any case, these only take place in one in four workplaces pertaining to these sectors.
- ◆ Awareness and knowledge of specific risks is associated with an increased frequency of health surveillance activities depending on the risks.
- ◆ According to the data obtained, less than 10% of medical check-ups are carried out in Mobile Units and/or in locations temporarily adapted for those purposes.

### **1.1.8. Health and safety training**

- ◆ Over half of workplaces have carried out some training activity relating to health and safety at work in the last two years (61.3%). Training activities have been carried out mainly in the Construction, Chemical, and Metalworking sectors, and the number of training activities increases the larger the workplace.
- ◆ The group that more training on health and safety at work receives is the group of employees in general (84.3% of workplaces), followed by upper management (68.7%), persons specifically carrying out health and safety functions (63.1%) and immediate supervisors (60%). Contractor staff ranks last with 25.4%.
- ◆ The most frequently reported reasons for carrying out this training, as reported by business managers, are the general improvement of training on the subject (68.4%) and the hiring of new employees (33.4%).
- ◆ The three entities accounting for the bulk of the training are: external prevention services (40.4%), mutual insurance for occupational accidents and diseases (35.2%), and the company itself – its internal prevention service, joint prevention service, and designated employees included—(31.8%).

### **1.1.9. INVESTMENTS IN MACHINERY AND WORK EQUIPMENT**

- ◆ 40% of the workplaces surveyed reported to have invested in the acquisition of new machinery in the last two years. By activity sector, the lowest percentage of workplaces having made an investment of this type is found in the Services sector (33.6%), while the highest percentage is found in the Construction sector (59%). By size of workforce, more than half of workplaces with 50 or more employees acquired new machinery.
- ◆ 16% of total machinery acquired or renovated was new, this percentage reaching 19.2% in the Services sector. This value highlights the importance of other means of machinery renovation, such as second-hand, leasing or self-manufacture, for which a significant effort must be made to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements. In workplaces with more than 249 employees the percentage of new machinery acquired reached 39%.
- ◆ Of all legal requirements applicable to new machinery acquired, the CE Declaration of Conformity has the lowest compliance rate (87.8%).
- ◆ Compared to 2003, the level of compliance with the CE Mark and the CE Declaration of Conformity increased in 2009 (a difference that is statistically

significant), while compliance relative to having an Instruction Manual in Spanish remained stable. On the other hand, there continues to be a high frequency of workplaces that report not knowing if the machinery they have purchased complies with established legal requirements; despite this, the level of ignorance regarding whether a new machine carries a CE Mark and a CE Declaration of Conformity has decreased, while this has increased with respect to the Instruction Manual in Spanish.

- ◆ 79% of workplaces that acquired new machinery in the last two years establish purchase specifications based on their foreseen use and contemplating the applicable regulations. On the other hand, 92% of workplaces that acquired new machinery, and that had established a procedure to acquire machinery, also possess a procedure for receiving the machinery, verifying compliance with the applicable regulation.
- ◆ The procedures for acquiring machinery exist most frequently in the Chemical, Metalworking, and Health/Veterinary/Social Services activities. The procedures for receiving machinery are established in over 90% of workplaces in all the economic sectors considered, with the exception of Financial Brokerage, Real Estate, and Rental/Business Services (75%) and Other Social and Personal Activities (88%).
- ◆ If these procedures exist, the frequency of revision of the risk assessment because of new selected equipment is higher.

#### **1.1.10. BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

- ◆ The priorities of companies in early 2009, when the economic crisis was already perceived by most of them, show a clear move towards increasing productivity over other objectives such as quality.
- ◆ In addition to the two major business strategic objectives (productivity and quality) and considering the size of workforce, in companies with 500 or more employees other factors play an important role, such as *developing new products or services*, *reducing production or distribution costs*, and *improving the management of occupational hazard prevention*; on the other hand, considering the type of activity the *reduction in production or distribution costs* (in Chemical) and the *reduction in labour costs* (in Transportation and Communications) become relevant.
- ◆ In line with the above-mentioned priorities, workplaces use various management tools aimed at ensuring greater quality and resolving problems in this field, and at engaging their staff in cost reduction ('just in time' practices) and fostering greater productivity (multi-skilling, teamwork, schedule flexibility, compensation based on performance, etc.). Subcontracting and/or outsourcing the company's own activities is also important. Most of these management tools are more common in companies with 250 or more employees; greater ease of access to information and advice in implementing organisational innovations might explain why larger firms are most willing to undertake organisational changes.
- ◆ Some of these tools have been especially designed for the industrial sector, such as "just in time" practices, and others such as multi-skilling or work in independent teams have been trialled for longer in this sector. Thus, it is not surprising that in industrial sectors in general, these are employed more frequently. Nevertheless, in many branches of the service sector these initiatives are also applied. In Construction, the traditional practice of subcontracting and/or outsourcing is notable.

- ◆ Four out of ten workplaces of companies with 50 or more employees apply a management system of health and safety at work based on the technical specification OSHAS 18001, which is applied by more than one out of two companies in the construction sector.

### **1.1.11. NEGATIVE HEALTH EFFECTS: ESTIMATES, INVESTIGATION, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES**

- ◆ The health risks identified by business managers vary depending on the nature of the activity, accidental risks and risks of an ergonomic nature being the most frequently recorded (39.6% and 38.4% of workplaces, respectively).
- ◆ The results indicate the recognition, as a risk linked to work conditions, of non-traditional risks, such as those related to stress and which lead to the appearance of behavioural changes (depression or anxiety). The identification of these non-traditional risks is three times higher than conventional risks, such as the risk of diseases caused by chemical, physical, or biological agents.
- ◆ The entrepreneur's awareness of occupational risks constitutes an area that can clearly be improved in the context of promoting a preventive culture; for example, approximately 1 out of 5 business managers in Construction report that risks do not exist at their workplace, and 3 out of 4 managers in Health/Veterinary/Social Services activities do not identify any risk of disease caused by chemical, physical, or biological agents.
- ◆ In 21.5% of workplaces, occupational accidents and/or diseases have occurred in the last two years.
- ◆ Both in the case of minor accidents leading to sick leave, as well as in that of occupational diseases, the affected employees most frequently continue to carry out their jobs without their working conditions having been modified (65% of minor accidents and 64% of diseases), while in the case of serious accidents, the affected employees are frequently reincorporated to the same position once it has been modified (38.3% of serious accidents).
- ◆ In general, preventive action on a workstation following an occupational accident or disease can clearly be improved upon. In more than two out of three situations, the affected worker is returned to a workstation in the same environmental or safety conditions that existed at the time of the accident or disease.
- ◆ 16% of occupational accidents and 29% of occupational diseases occurring in the last two years have not been investigated. The investigation in this field is more frequently carried out in larger firms, while companies with less than 10 employees are the weakest in this aspect. In these companies, 1 out of 3 incidents goes without investigation.
- ◆ When the negative health effect, accident or disease, is investigated, the investigation is mostly carried out by the staff of the company itself (61.1% of diseases and 50.4% of accidents).
- ◆ 87.7% of business managers do not have data on the economic costs of accidents occurring at their workplaces, the most sensitive companies to this issue being those with 250 or more employees; despite this, only 27% of large companies have data on the economic impact of accidents.



- ◆ When the employer does have information on the economic costs of occupational accidents, these are practically limited to knowledge of the amount of the *fees to the mutual insurance company for occupational accidents and diseases or INSS* (76.5% of workplaces where occupational accidents have occurred in the last two years).
- ◆ The interpretation of the causes behind occupational accidents made by the business manager is limited, as it usually focuses on two factors: first, causes related to behavioural factors while carrying out the task (*distractions, carelessness, absentmindedness, or lack of attention -56.4%-*) and secondly, causes related to the physical requirements of the activity (*forced postures or carrying out excessive strain -36%-*).

### 1.1.12. MOTIVATION AND REASONS FOR PREVENTING OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

- ◆ In light of business managers' responses, the health and safety situation in the workplace in 7.6% of companies had some sort of negative consequence, the most frequent being *written warnings or penalties for one or more employees and proposed penalties by the Labour Inspectorate*.
- ◆ Construction and Industry are the sectors where more companies indicate negative consequences derived from the preventive situation; within Industry, the Metalworking activity stands out. Depending on the size of the workforce, adverse consequences derived from health and safety conditions are more frequent in large companies of 250 or more employees, while these rarely exist in microenterprises with less than 10 employees.
- ◆ *Improving working conditions by ensuring the safety and health of workers and complying with current legislation* are the two most common reasons alleged in the first place by the companies that act in the prevention of occupational hazards. However, if all the reasons alleged are considered, regardless of the order in which they were rated (first, second, or third), *compliance with current legislation* is the reason that most drives companies to carry out preventive actions.
- ◆ The assessment of the current regulations concerning prevention of occupational risks is overall positive. Among the best-rated features of this regulation are included its efficiency and applicability. On the other hand, the worst rated aspects are: *its low profitability, its orientation towards the industrial sector and its orientation towards large companies*.
- ◆ The activities most critical of this regulation are Financial Brokerage, Real Estate, and Rental/Business Services, Construction and Chemical sectors. By workforce size, very large workplaces of 500 or more employees are those that most frequently consider the current regulation to be *excessive*; and very small or small workplaces are those that most frequently consider it to be of *low profitability*.