

Preparatory Course for the Nutrition Test



Module Working Environment

Text for course participants

Most recently updated April 2010

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Preface

This module provides you with information about the conditions that might result in workplace accidents, work-related diseases, and over-exertion, and tools to help you prevent this from happening.

This includes the following:

- The guides and tools available to you from the Danish WEA - why these were prepared and how to use them.
- The special rules that apply to the employment of children and young people.
- The arrangements you may make at your place of business and for the work required, in order to take into account the physical as well as the mental working environment.



Greater efforts for a good working environment

With a good working environment you and your employees will thrive at your place of business, keeping the risk of strain and industrial accidents to a minimum. In order to achieve a good working environment you and your employees must take a number of problems into account, including risks of falling, bad working positions, heavy lifting, indoor climate, stress, and the working conditions of children and young people.

Since 1997, all enterprises have been required to carry out a workplace assessment (WA). A WA is a detailed assessment of the conditions at the enterprise that might influence the working environment, as well as an action plan on how to find a solution for potential problems.



Legislative requirements and guides

The conditions about the working environment are described in the Danish Working Environment Act. It is vital that you are informed about the Act, and the general requirements that you are subject to according to the Act.

The Danish Working Environment Act

Section 1. The Act aims at creating

1. A safe and healthy working environment which shall at any time be in accordance with the technical and social development of society, and
2. The basis on which the enterprises themselves will be able to solve questions relating to safety and health under the guidance of the employers' and workers' organisations, and under the guidance and supervision of the Danish Working Environment Authority.

Section 15. It shall be the duty of the employer to ensure safe and healthy working conditions.

Special reference is made to:

1. Part 5 on the performance of the work,
2. Part 6 on the design and fitting out of the workplace,
3. Part 7 on technical equipment, etc.
4. Part 8 on substances and materials.

A number of Executive Orders have been drawn up in connection with the Working Environment Act. In these Executive Orders, you can read about the requirements concerning the relevant areas that are covered by the Working Environment Act. For instance, you can find information on the performance of work. In cases where you have to work with the Working Environment Act at your place of business, there is a number of guides, working environment directories etc. that are easier to use than the Working Environment Act and the Executive Orders.

Guides and information material from the Danish WEA

Relevant issues on the working environment are described in a wide range of guides and information material from the Danish WEA. You should read the guides and information material relevant to the work at your place of business.

In the guides from the Danish WEA you can read about how the rules in the Working Environment Act should be interpreted. The guides are used for:

- clarifying and explaining words and phrases in the acts and executive orders;
- explaining how the requirements laid down in the regulations should be satisfied, according to the practice of the Danish WEA;
- providing information about the practices of the Danish WEA;
- explaining scopes and contexts etc. of the working environment legislation.

Working environment guides and checklists

The Danish WEA has drawn up sector-oriented working environment guides, describing the most important working environment problems in the relevant sectors. Your place of business may use these guides for evaluation of the working environment. Here you can read about what you should

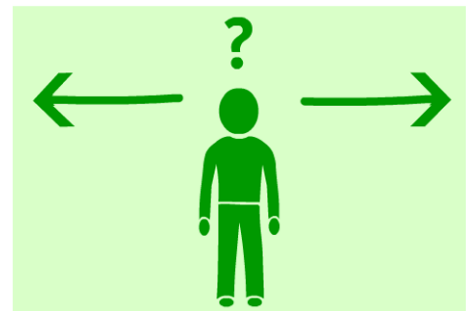


pay attention to in your particular line of business, and how you may get on with solving these problems.



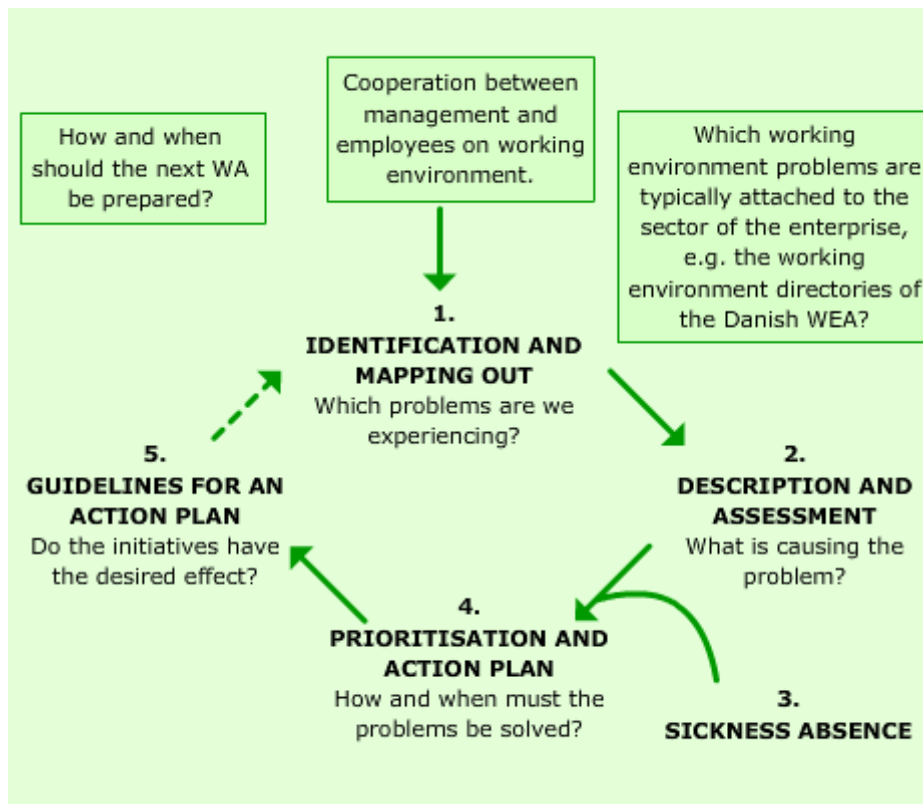
Workplace assessment (WA)

Employers at all enterprises with employees are obligated to carry out a written WA together with the employees or the safety organisation at the enterprise. All enterprises with more than ten employees must have a safety organisation which is to work for a safe and sound working environment. Family enterprises without other employees than a spouse and children are not required to carry out a WA.



It is up to the enterprises how they want to carry out the WA and how detailed it should be. The most important thing is that you and your employees find a method that fully analyses the problems. Therefore, you have to assess the working environment conditions at your place of business and describe the problems, and their scope. The WA must be in writing so that you are able to document to the Danish WEA that an assessment has been carried out at your place of business. You must keep the WA papers at your place of business - do *not* send them to the Danish WEA.

Any problems should be prioritised in the WA, and similarly you must draw up an action plan on how to solve these problems, the person responsible, and a description of how to follow-up on the problems.



If the work changes in a way that is significant to the working environment, the WA must be revised, otherwise it must be revised at least every third year. You may for instance choose to update your WA regularly, or you can carry out an assessment every third year. Both approaches require written documentation.





Workplace assessment checklist

The Danish WEA has prepared WA checklists. The checklist which is relevant to your place of business includes a number of questions that you and your employees must answer "yes" or "no" to. The questions which require a "yes" represent a working environment problem. Consequently, these questions should be a part of the action plan of the WA that your place of business must draw up in connection with the checklist.

Some problems are important to every sector. However, there may be circumstances at your place of business that are not mentioned in either the working environment guide or in the relevant checklist, and which you should therefore be aware of yourself.

Link

You should read one or more of the working environment guides from the Danish WEA on either "Shops", "Wholesale", "Hotel and camping" or "Restaurants and bars".

Also, sector-oriented WA checklists for "Shops", "Wholesale", "Kitchens", "Bakeries", "Hotel, hostel, boarding house", "Restaurants, cafés, bars etc." and "Discotheques and night clubs" have been prepared.

The documents can be seen on the website of the Danish WEA. <http://www.at.dk> (see under "Other information material") (in Danish).

It is a good idea to print the guides and checklists so that you can get a good impression of typical working environment problems.

Focus areas

Each year, the Danish WEA launches a number of national campaigns. In 2004, the campaign focused on the supervision of chefs, kitchen staff, and waiters. The campaign introduced a number of national actions at hotels, restaurants, bars, canteens and discotheques. The most important problems proved to be with heavy lifting (e.g. of beer crates between stockroom and bar) and frying odours because of insufficient kitchen ventilation.



Inspection visits

All enterprises irrespective of size and sector can expect a visit from the Danish WEA. Prior notice may or may not be given before the inspection visit.

The inspector from the Danish WEA must show proof of identity and has the right to obtain access to the entire enterprise. Moreover, the inspector is entitled to talk to the employees and take pictures.

You can read more about the inspection methods of the Danish WEA under "Inspection" on the website of the Danish WEA: <http://www.at.dk>.

Decisions made by the Danish WEA

If the enterprise does not meet the obligations of the Working Environment Act, during an inspection visit the Danish WEA will issue a prohibition notice, an improvement notice or provide guidance. The Danish WEA can choose to do any of the below.

- The Danish WEA may issue a prohibition notice to your place of business in order to prevent imminent danger. If you receive a prohibition notice you must immediately cease all work.
- The Danish WEA may issue an improvement notice to your place of business in the event of significant working environment problems that require a solution. Your place of business must solve the working environment problems within a time limit that the Danish WEA stipulates in consultation with you.
- The Danish WEA may choose to submit a guide to you, if during an inspection visit, you discuss matters about the working environment that do not result in an improvement notice or a prohibition notice.
- The Danish WEA may issue a consultancy notice to your place of business. This means that you will need an authorised working environment consultant to solve the working environment problems at your place of business.
- If the violations are of a particularly serious nature, your place of business may be issued with a fine or be reported to the police.

If you disagree with the decision of the Danish WEA concerning your working environment conditions, you may appeal to the Working Environment Board of Appeal which is independent of the Danish WEA. A decision from the Danish WEA is always accompanied by an appeals guide.

Smiley

After an inspection visit, your place of business will get a Smiley. The Smileys are published on the Working Environment Authority's website and allow the general public to see how an enterprise is doing in terms of health and safety.



A Smiley with a crown indicates that the enterprise holds a recognised health and safety certificate. This means that the enterprise has made an extraordinary effort to ensure a high level of health and safety. Please note that you have to send the health and safety certificate to the WEA, if you want to have the crowned Smiley of your enterprise published on the WEA website.



A green Smiley indicates that your enterprise meets the statutory requirements on the working environment.



A yellow Smiley indicates that your enterprise has one or more problems with the working environment.



A red Smiley indicates that your enterprise has one or more problems regarding the working environment and has received a consultancy notice or a prohibition notice.

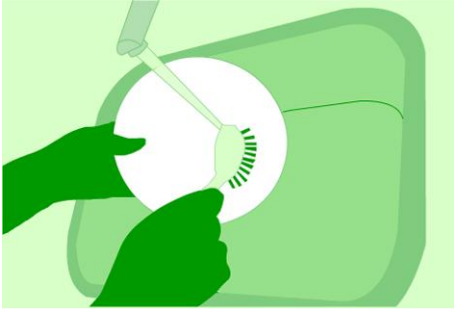
If you lose a crowned Smiley or a green Smiley after an inspection visit, and get a yellow or red Smiley instead, you may have the crowned or the green Smiley back four months after you have solved the problems that caused you to lose them.

Link

You can read more about inspection visits, the reactions of the Danish WEA, working environment certificates, the smiley scheme and the possibility of appealing decisions on the website of the Danish WEA: <http://www.at.dk>.

Skin and respiratory problems

Wet work and skin allergies



If your hands often come into contact with water, the skin degrades and softens. Consequently, the natural protective function of the skin decomposes, thereby making it easier to develop skin allergies. This is, for instance, the case in regard to work with citrus fruits, shellfish, fish, meat and certain vegetables and flowers that might cause an allergic reaction in the form of a rash or itching. The same applies if skin comes into contact with cleaning agents and disinfectants.

Respiratory problems in the kitchen



If your employees inhale frying odours in connection with frying meat and fish on a pan or in deep fat, their respiratory passages may be exposed to health damaging impacts. The frying odours often include substances that may cause cancer if the employee is exposed to them for a longer period of time.

Steam from washing machines and tank machines may also be harmful to inhale, because the steam may contain substances from the detergent that are health hazardous. If you use a tank machine for washing up, large quantities of steam are released when you open the machine after the

final flush. Likewise steam is released when opening an ordinary dishwasher before the tableware has dried off. There is a statutory requirement that the steam must be removed through local exhaust ventilation or a fume hood. If you open an ordinary dishwasher after the tableware has dried off, there is no requirement about local exhaust ventilation or fume hoods.

If you clean the cooking and frying facilities using sprays, brushes or similar, and afterwards heat up the oven or frying pans, there is a risk of inhaling vapours that are harmful to your health.

Passive smoking



In the Danish restaurant sector, passive smoking at the workplace is the reason for between five and ten deaths per year, and about 80 to 140 cases of illness. Numerous incidents have proven that passive smoking is the reason for increased risk of lung cancer, heart disease and chronic illness of the respiratory passages; e.g. the risk of lung cancer increases by 25 per cent when non-smokers are exposed to passive smoking.

Employees at restaurants, bars etc. are to a much higher degree than most other job functions exposed to passive smoking; in fact even more than the level measured in homes of smokers.



New rules concerning smoking in public places were introduced from 15 August 2007. According to the legislation, smoking is generally not allowed indoors in public places.

As the owner of your own business, you are obligated to draw up a smoking policy. Your smoking policy must as a minimum include two elements. The smoking policy should inform the employees of:

- whether the employees are allowed to smoke at your place of business, and if so, where they may smoke;
- the consequences of violating the smoking policy.

However, you may *not* decide the whole smoking policy yourself. In order to protect the employees from passive smoking, it is no longer allowed to smoke indoors at workplaces. Even if legislation does not allow smoking at workplaces you are allowed to:

- set up a smoking room or smoking cabin;
- allow for an employee to smoke if she is working alone in the room.

If your place of business sells or serves food, the rules on smoking also apply to the customers. Neither the customers nor the employees are permitted to smoke indoors at places that serve or sell food. You may set up smoking rooms for customers, but you are not permitted to serve food or drinks to customers who are inside the smoking room. However, the customers are allowed to bring food and drinks into the smoking room. Small bars and serving places are subject to an exemption from the Act. It may be decided to allow smoking indoors if the area of serving is less than 40 m² and if food is not being served in the room.

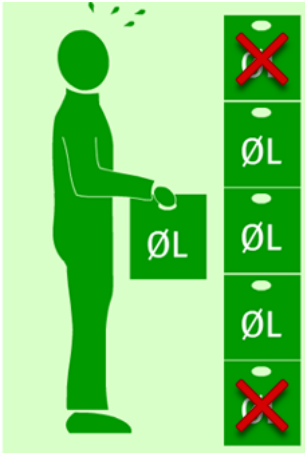
The person responsible for the place of business must ensure compliance with the smoking rules. If employees or customers are not in compliance with the smoking rules at your place of business, the Danish WEA may issue a fine to your place of business.

Link

More information about problems with skin and the respiratory passage in the guide from the Danish WEA at www.at.dk. Under the menu point "Regulations" you can find guides from the Danish WEA about cancerous substances and materials, ventilation at permanent workplaces and indoor climate.

Read more about the smoking rules at the website of the Danish WEA: www.at.dk.

Lifting and working positions



Man was created to move around and consequently can endure quite a lot of strain. However, it is important to find a balance between the expectations of the work efforts of the individual, and the amount of strain that the individual person is exposed to without the risk of injury. A body needs to exercise, but if a working position is very strenuous, it is only possible to work in this position for a short period of time.

As the employer, you must, together with your employees, ensure that work is arranged so that it is possible to change position and vary the movements.

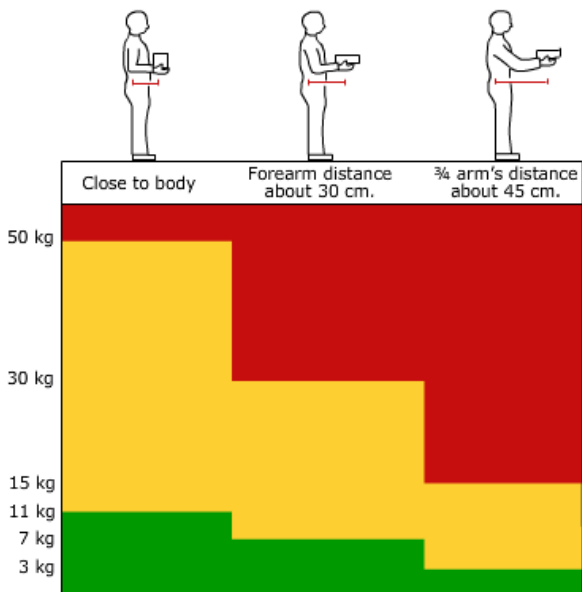
In particular, heavy lifting and bad working positions cause problems for the body, especially bones, muscles, limbs and tendons. This may for instance be due to insufficient space causing the employee to work in awkward working positions, do work standing up or while walking without the possibility of variation, and lift heavy boxes (e.g. between stockroom and serving rooms).

Problems can also easily occur if pregnant women have to do heavy lifting or lengthy work while standing or walking.

You should also be aware that special rules apply for children and young people. You may read more about this in the section “Children and young person's work/Physical strain”

As the owner of your own business, you are responsible for ensuring that new as well as experienced employees are advised on good working positions and good working movement. Use for instance the assessment model in the two diagrams on assessing strain to show your employees how much they may lift and carry as a maximum without over-exerting their body or back:

Diagram on assessing strenuous lifting



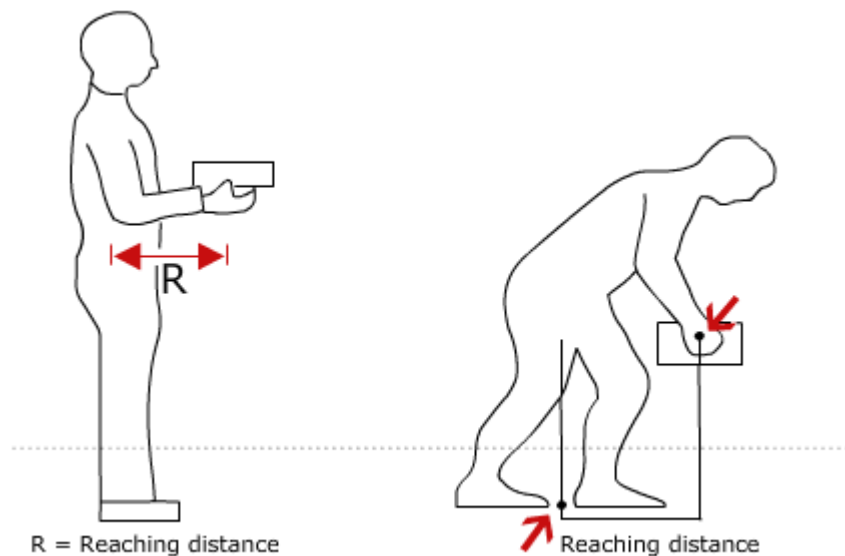
Red area: The strain is unacceptable. There is a risk of over-exertion if a person often works in these positions for longer periods at the time. The greatest risk is in connection with positions and movements near the outer positions of the tendons.

Yellow area: The task should here be assessed in relation to duration, degree of standstill/fixed position, and whether the body is strained in more ways at the same time, e.g. lifting in strenuous working positions.

Green area: The work takes place with good positions and movements. The task must however be evaluated, if the employee still experiences physical problems with the work.



The distance at which a person has to reach for something in connection with work movements is of great importance to the strain. In this regard, you should be particularly attentive of pregnant women, as lifting close to the body may involve larger reaching distances, and thus increase the burden on the arms and back.



R = Reaching distance

Reaching distance

Try lifting some objects yourself while holding them at different reaching distances from your body:

Close to your body, at forearm distance (about 30 cm) and with almost stretched arms (3/4 arms' distance, about 45 cm).

Try it yourself

Try to see how much your muscles are affected by repetitive working positions:

- Do some **static muscular exertion** by keeping one arm stretched horizontally from your body without "dropping" your arm; the shoulder musculature will be tense the whole time and will quickly start to "burn".
- Compare this with **dynamic muscular exertion** where you bend and stretch your arm the whole time in one coherent movement; now you can make this movement for a long time without the burning sensation in your muscles. This also applies in preventing employees from having work functions where they are required to "tense" the same muscles without being able to change the movement or relax.

When you need to carry something

When something needs to be carried this must as far as possible be without the use of technical equipment/aids.

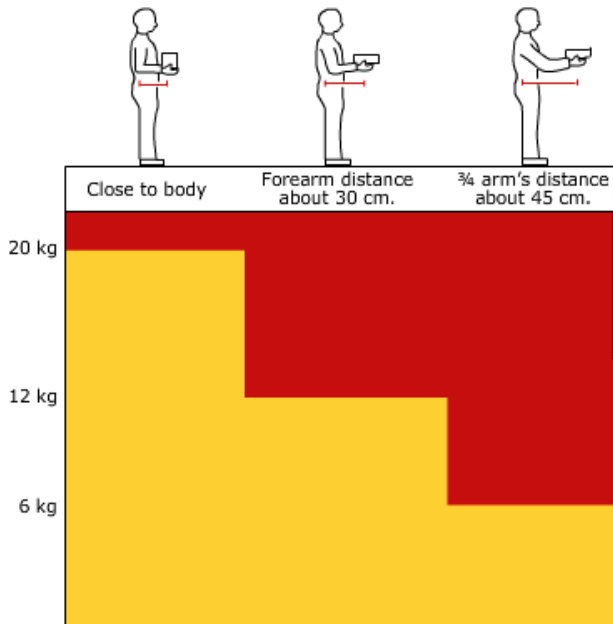
When you need to carry objects for distances of more than two meters you must use the diagram below on assessing strain in order to evaluate the maximum weight of heavy objects that you may carry. In general, you must avoid carrying anything at all, as this wears down your body and exposes you to unnecessary risks. For instance, you might slip or stumble, and consequently injure yourself.

If you have to carry a heavy object, it is therefore important that you make an assessment of the transport route. Be aware of any stairs or other obstacles. Generally, the transport route on which you carry the heavy objects must be levelled, tidied and have good lightening. At the same time you must ensure that the floor is stable and slip-resistant.



In the diagram on assessing strain, you can see how much you may carry as a maximum without over-exerting your body. The weight limitations presuppose that other factors do not aggravate the strain.

Diagram on assessing carrying



Red area: The strain is unacceptable no matter how far you carry the weight. There is a risk of acute over-exertion of the muscles, tendons and joints. As with lifting there might be a risk of over-exertion in case of repetitive work tasks. The risk is greatest in relation to positions and movements near the outer positions of the tendons.

Yellow area: The task should here be assessed in relation to duration, degree of standstill/fixed position, and whether the body is strained in more ways at the same time, e.g. lifting in strenuous working positions. If you have to carry a weight that is within the yellow area, the transport route cannot be more than 20 meters on a level surface. An ordinary step or stair on the transport route may be ranked as the same as a carrying distance of 1 meter.

If, for example you need to carry an object for 15 meters, the object must not weigh more than 20 kg.

Green area: As the carrying of objects should be avoided as far as possible without the use of aids, there is no green area.

Link

More information about lifting, carrying and work positions in the guide and notices of the Danish WEA at www.at.dk. Under the menu "Regulations" you will find the guides of the Danish WEA about "Performance of work" (in Danish).

There's information here about:

- Lifting, pulling and pushing
- Repetitive, strenuous work and monotonous repetitive work
- Manual handling
- Assessment of work positions and work movements

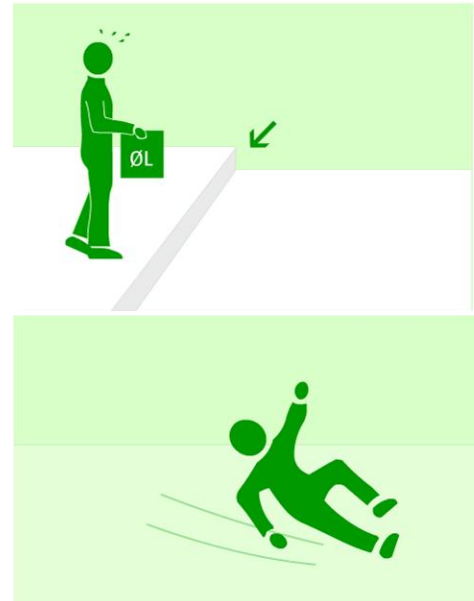
You may also consult the guide "Working environment of pregnant or breast-feeding women" at www.at.dk (in Danish).

Arrangement of the workplace

The workplace of the individual employee must be arranged as appropriately as possible. This means that there should be space for furniture, tools and materials to be placed appropriately. It is important that the floor of the workplace is levelled, tidied and fixed, and that there are no differences in levels or steps which might cause a risk of falling. It must be possible for all tasks to be done safely and without exposing the employee's body to strains, awkward working positions and monotonous work.

You should especially pay attention to the risk of slippery floors in coolers and cold stores. Therefore such rooms should have special slip-resistant flooring.

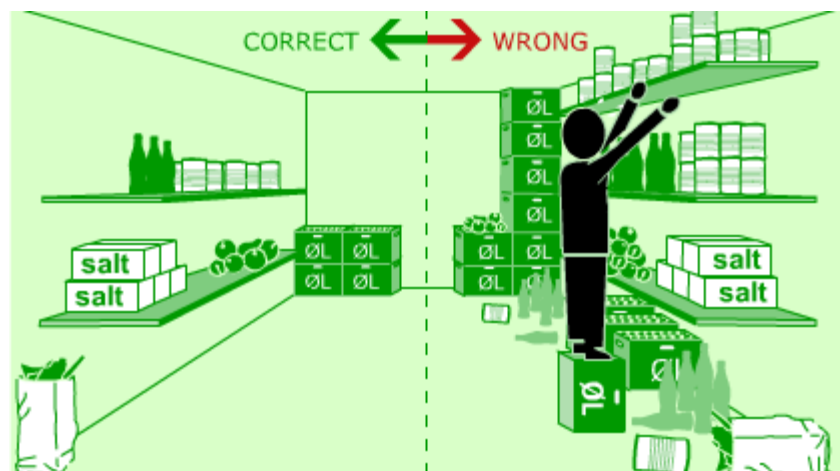
You can also try to rethink the whole work routine: Is it possible to simplify it or make it more efficient so that individual objects do not have to be moved very often, or too far away or too high up?

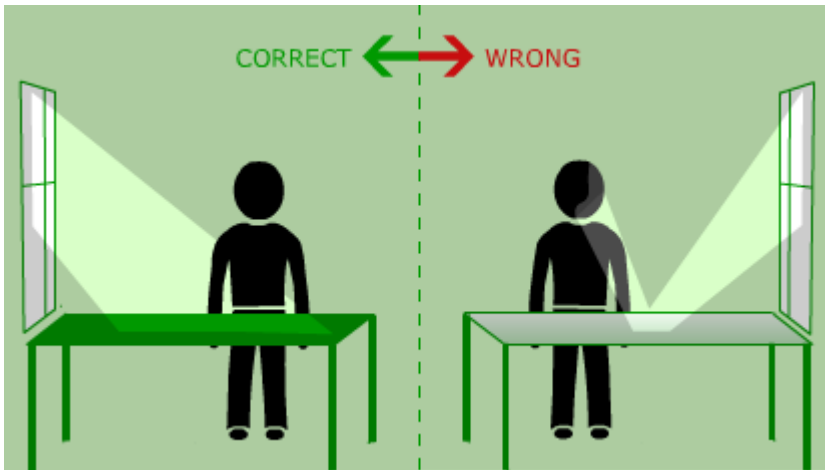


Working Environment Act

Section 42. The workplace shall be in such condition that is safe and healthy.

(2). Approved norms and standards which are of importance to safety and health shall be complied with.

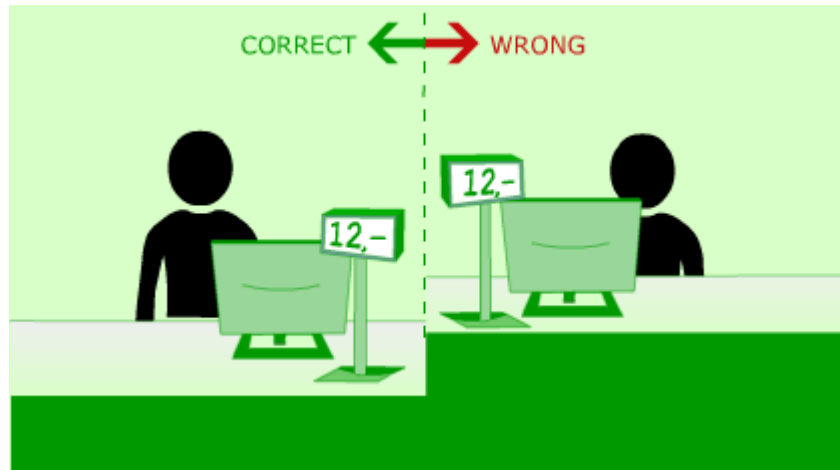




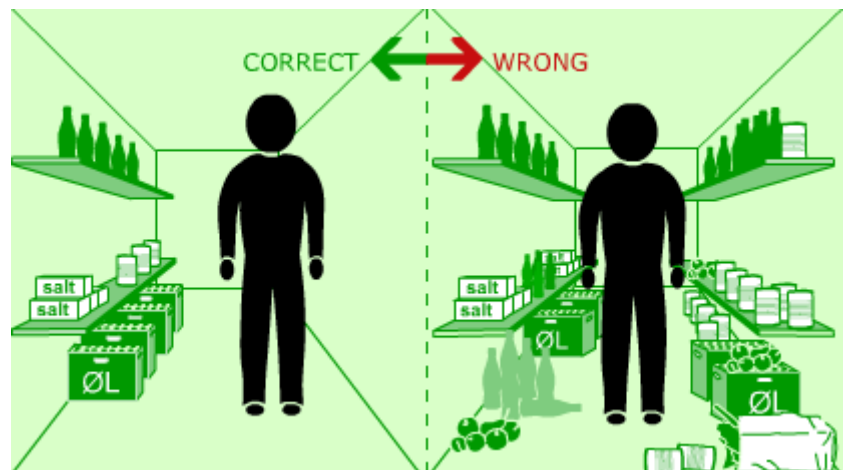
For instance, you can reduce the risk of industrial injuries occurring when moving or lifting by putting up shelves so that the employee will not have to lift an object for too long a distance or too high up. In some places, tools/aids might be used, such as trolleys while at other places, it might be appropriate to acquire lifting trolleys for sacks and other heavy objects or to instal a goods lift.

It is important that the lighting is correct at your workplace. There must be sufficient lighting in the workroom and you must also ensure that the employee is not impeded by reflections from e.g. steel tables, refrigerators or similar.

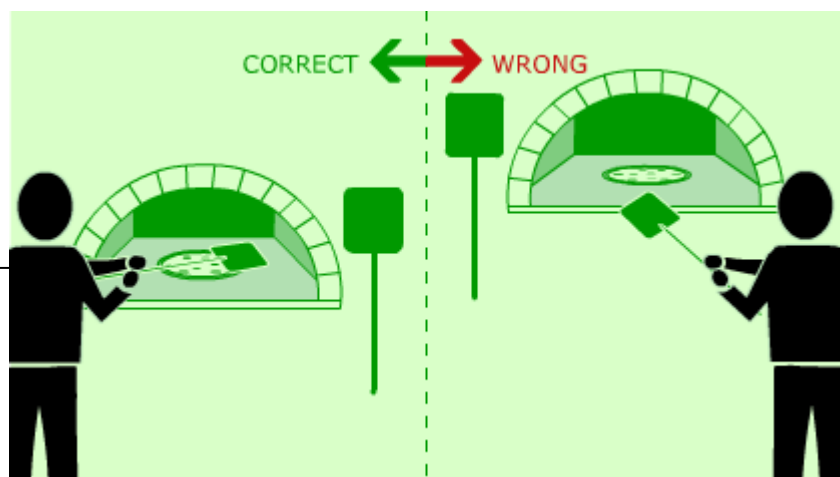
It is also important that your employees have a good working position. This may, for instance, include an adaptable/adjustable desk for the individual employee.



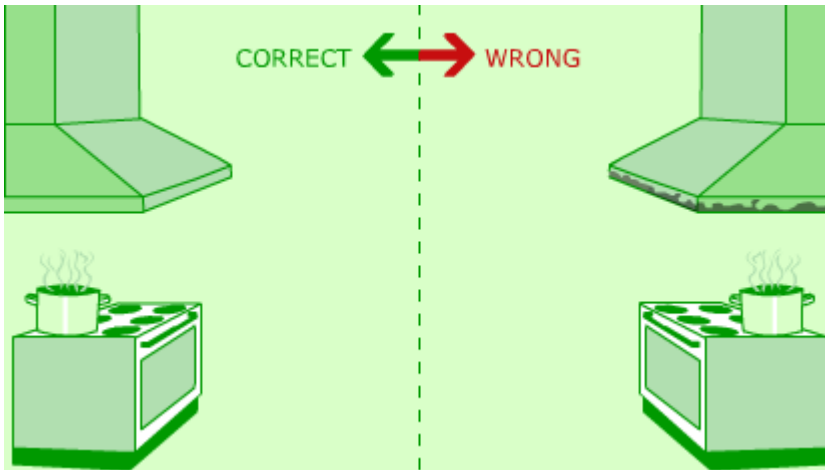
The layout is also important, and you need to consider every one of your employees when you arrange the workplace. For instance, you must think about sufficient space to work in a sensible working position.



You must also consider the height of your employees.



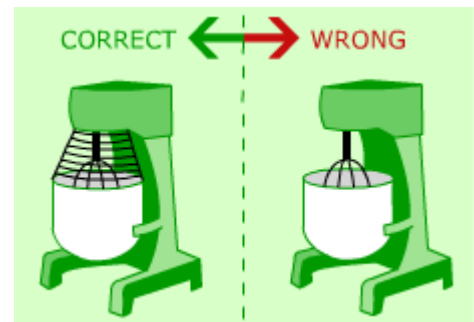
If for instance a short person is employed, you must consider that he/she should have the ability to work without becoming unnecessarily strained.



It is also important that your employees do not strain their respiratory passages.

For instance, the ventilation system must be kept clean so that frying odours can be removed.

Please ensure that your machines are shielded and secured properly. It is your responsibility that the workplace is arranged with appropriate consideration for safety and health.



Fortunately you are not expected to invent all the good solutions to working environment problems yourself. Irrespective of whether the problem is slippery floors, reaching distances, how much can be lifted or how desks should be adjusted, you can obtain many good ideas from professional consultants in the field of safety and health at work.

In the sector-oriented working environment directories of the Danish WEA, you can obtain good advice about the arrangement of the workplace, e.g. about the inclusive workplace, adjustable desks, lighting and the correct heights.

NB! Remember that a good working position is an advantage to the individual employee as well as the place of business. Good arrangement of the workplace is an important prerequisite for the individual employee to perform optimally.

**Link**

Read more about the arrangement of the workplace in the following documents at the website of the Danish WEA: www.arbejdstilsynet.dk. Under the menu "Regulations" you will find the guides from the Danish WEA about "Workplace arrangements".

There's information here about:

- Workrooms at permanent workplaces.
- Artificial lighting.
- Fixtures at permanent workplaces.

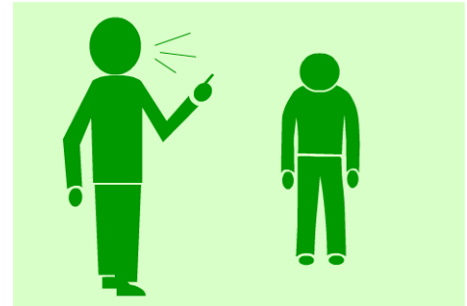


The psychological working environment

In the same way as the layout of a workstation is important to the health of employees, work pressure and organisation of work as well as social support all influence the psychological working environment.

A bad psychological working environment often leads to increased sickness absence, frequent staff changes, a lack of collegial backing, disputes, uncommitted employees, reduced productivity, and a bad image to the outside world.

For the individual employee, psychological strains at work may cause fatigue, headaches, lack of energy, sleeping difficulties, anxiety, nervousness, irritability, etc. A person who is exposed to over-exertion for a longer period of time may become chronically stressed, burned-out, suffer from depression, a change in personality, stomach ulcers and cardiovascular diseases. This may result in increased sickness absence, an escalation of quarrels among employees, an increased number of (unexplained) industrial accidents, and increased alcohol or medicinal consumption. Also employees may suffer in their private lives due to poor psychological working environment - for instance, sexual problems or marital crises may occur, and possibly also aggression, violence and divorce.



Some of the stress-inducing situations for employees at restaurants, food outlets and food wholesale businesses include:

- time pressure and a high work rate where there are many customers;
- conflicting requirements on, for instance, speed and high level of customer service;
- lack of support opportunities from colleagues;
- lack of influence on how to perform work;
- violence or threats from difficult or dissatisfied customers.

These are some of the factors that you need to be aware of in order to ensure a good psychological working environment for your employees. This means that there should be a reasonable balance between customer demands, service and work rate.

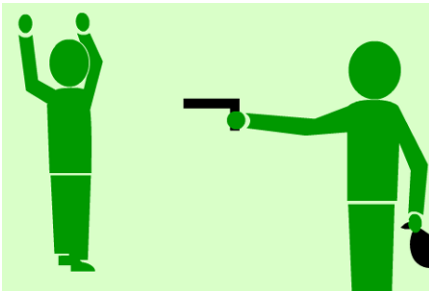
NB! Well-being and productivity go hand in hand: If your employees are not feeling well at the workplace, they are not going to give their best.



Time pressure, work rate and social support

Be aware of and inform your employees about what kind of customer service is required, and make sure that the required staff is present so that they are able to offer the desired customer service and quality. Avoid unclear or conflicting requirements, as well as longer periods of high time pressure. You may, for instance, introduce self-service counters if there are regular longer periods of time with many customers in relation to the number of employees. Make sure that you regularly talk to your employees about work, and ensure that regular meetings are held. Remember also to commend your employees when they have performed particularly well.

Violence and threats of violence



At some workplaces there is an increased risk of violence from customers, and this induces an extreme psychological strain on the employees. If this is the case at your place of business, you must evaluate the risk.

You and your employees may, for instance, further examine the layout of the workplace, location and customers, and you can discuss the actual risk of violence and threats. You should draw up guidelines together with your employees on how to prevent and deal with violence, threats and robbery. Make sure that all

employees know the precautions as laid down in agreements, so that everyone knows how to react if there is a robbery, or if they are exposed to violence or threats of violence.

The instructions must naturally be repeated when hiring new employees.

Problems with the psychological working environment may be more difficult to see than the physical working environment. However, the results of efforts are immediately visible in terms of the employees, their effectiveness and earnings.

Link

The Danish WEA has prepared a number of guides that you might be able to use when working on the psychological working environment at your place of business. The documents can be seen on the website of the Danish WEA; www.arbejdstilsynet.dk. You can find AT-guides, information material, working environment directories and WA checklists under the menus called "Regulations" and "information".

There is information here about:

- Mapping the psychological working environment
- Bullying and sexual harassment
- Stress
- Risk of violence in connection with the performance of work



Children and young person's work



Children and young persons employed in the food sector are injured at their workplace much more often than older employees - especially at the beginning of their employment period.

Children and young persons' bodies may, to a much higher extent, be strained from hard labour. Accordingly, you should be aware that many children and young persons are afraid to tell their employers that there are jobs that they are not up to or are uncertain about. Also, they do not always know their own limitations.

Children and young persons may also be particularly exposed because they often have difficulty seeing the dangers that a job might imply. Generally, they do not have much practical work experience, and they rarely have a good knowledge about the business.

Finally, many young persons want to show that they do not fear working, and they want to make a good impression, and therefore they often overestimate their own abilities.

Limited tasks

Young persons from 13 to 15 years of age, who are attending compulsory education, are only allowed to do light cleaning, receive goods, do packing, separating and counting of goods and empty packaging, e.g. cardboard boxes.

In addition, the following rules on young person's work with machinery and technical equipment apply:

Waste/cardboard press

- Young persons, who have reached the age of 15, and who are not attending compulsory education, are permitted to put waste into the press and do the pressing. The press must be completely shielded so that there is no risk of getting stuck or falling into the press.
- Young persons may *not* make the press ready for use or switch on the power (on the main power switch). They are not permitted to empty, maintain or clean the press.

Returned-bottle machines and separation facilities

- Young persons, who have reached the age of 15, and who are not attending compulsory education, are permitted to work at a returned-bottle machine and belt.

Deep fat fryer

- Young persons under the age of 18 are not permitted to work at places where they may come into contact with extreme temperatures. Young persons are therefore never allowed to empty a deep fat fryer or filter hot oil.



- Young persons, who have reached the age of 15, and who are not attending compulsory education, are only permitted to work near a deep fat fryer if the layout is regarded as sufficiently safe. In this regard, it is important that the deep fat fryer is secured so that the floor is not slippery, that there is good space, that the proper fire-fighting equipment (fire blanket) is located right next to the deep fat fryer, and that the employees know how to use this equipment.

Slicing machines, electric knives and mixers

- Young persons under the age of 18 may not use unprotected slicing machines, electric knives and mixers.

Physical strain

Young persons under the age of 18 may not be exposed to physical strain harmful to their health or development.

Lifting goods

- Generally, young persons under the age of 18 may not lift or carry anything weighing more than 12 kilos.
- If there are good lifting conditions, a young person may lift up to 25 kilos at the time. Good lifting conditions means that the lifting takes place between mid-thigh and elbow height, and that the lift is in front of or close to the body; that the grip on the load is firm and good, and that the foothold is stable.
- Make sure that young persons are able to work in good working positions. Avoid e.g. heavy forward bending or having to make severe twists of the back.
- Avoid having young persons carry heavy loads and ensure that suitable technical equipment/aids are available to them. Use for instance trolleys or sack barrows when the load weighs more than 12 kilos.

Pushing and pulling

- In case of pushing and pulling of customer trolleys, technical equipment/aids etc., young persons may not be subject to higher strains than those mentioned above. It is recommended that young persons do not e.g. pull or push more than ten customer trolleys at a time on a horizontal and even floor. On more uneven floors, rising terrain or poorly maintained wheels on customer trolleys, it is recommended that this number be lowered.

Limited working hours

Generally, young persons under the age of 18 are not permitted to work more than eight hours per day and 40 hours per week. If the daily working hours exceed 4½ hours, young persons must have a break of at least 30 minutes.

Young persons under the age of 18 may not work in the time period between 8:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. At bakeries and in the agricultural sector work is, however, permitted to start at 4:00 a.m. Furthermore, young persons, who have reached the age of 15, and who are not attending compulsory education, are allowed to work at shops and service stations until 10:00 p.m., and at restaurants, hotels, take-aways etc. until 12:00 p.m.



Young persons employed at shops etc. are required to work with a person over the age of 18 in the time period between 6:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. on weekdays, and between 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. on Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays.

Young persons who are 13 to 15 years of age and still attending compulsory education may only work two hours on school days and seven hours on other days than school days. Their weekly work hours may not exceed 12 hours in weeks with school days, and may not exceed 35 hours in other weeks than school weeks. They must have a coherent rest period of at least 14 hours per 24 hours.

If young persons under the age of 18 are full-time employed at your place of business for more than three months, as the employer, you are obligated to inform the municipality about the employment relationship in order to obtain educational guidance of the young person.

Link

Several other rules apply in relation to the tasks that children and young persons are allowed to perform and the working hours they may have. You can read more about the rules on young persons' work at the website of the Danish WEA, www.arbejdstilsynet.dk and at the website of BAR Handel, www.barhandel.dk.

BAR Handel is the safety sector council for the retail trade area.

At the website of the Danish WEA under the menu "Regulations" you can find guides from the Danish WEA about the work of young persons who are attending compulsory education and those who are not attending compulsory education, and the Executive Order on young persons' work. In annex 1, annex 4 and annex 6, there is a list of tasks that young persons under the age of 18 are not allowed to perform.



Notification of occupational accidents

If one of your employees is injured during working hours and has to stay off work for more than the day of the injury, as the employer, you are required to report the accident to the Danish WEA. The notification must take place as quickly as possible and not later than nine days after the first day where the employee did not show up for work because of the industrial injury.

You can report the industrial injury by using an electronic system (EASY) or by using special forms that you can obtain from the Danish WEA or the National Board of Industrial Injuries. Both institutions are entitled to demand more information about the duration of the period of absence.

If your place of business has more than ten employees you must remember that the safety organisation or safety representative at the place of business must always have access to the notification submitted. The injured party must also have a copy.

Link

The electronic notification system of the National Board of Industrial Injuries, EASY:
<https://easy.ask.dk> (in Danish).

The National Board of Industrial Injuries: <http://www.ask.dk/>.

Industrial injuries insurance

Industrial injuries insurance is compulsory. As an employer, you are therefore obliged to have an insurance that cover all your employees. All your employees must be insured at work, irrespective of whether they are paid or unpaid.

If you are the owner of the company you and your spouse are not obliged to have industrial injuries insurance, but it is a good idea to also take out industrial injuries insurance for you and your spouse if he/she helps around the place of business.

Link

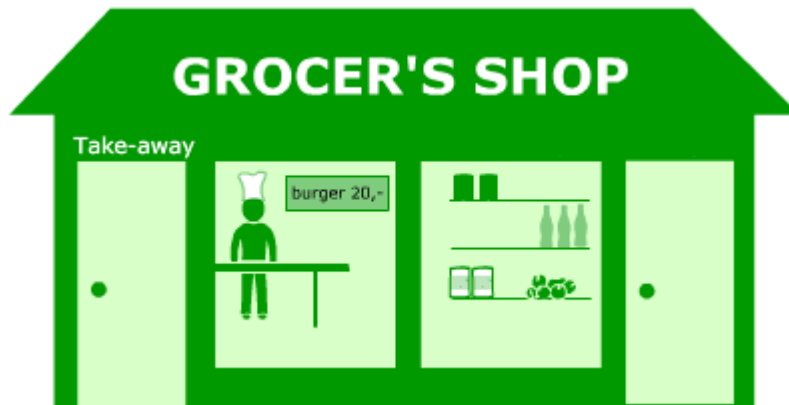
The website of the Danish Insurance Information Service has information about compulsory industrial injuries insurance:

<http://www.forsikringsoplysningen.dk>.



Case: John's grocer's shop and take-away

John owns a small grocer's shop where there is also a take-away with various fast food dishes. The shop is divided into two rooms with their own entrance. The shop sells groceries such as milk, soft drinks, fruit, vegetables, flowers, magazines, newspapers, candy and tobacco. At the take-away you can buy pizza, sandwiches, chips, soft drinks, etc. The shop and the take-away is open from 10:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. Almost every day fresh supplies are brought from the vegetable market just before opening hours, whereas other goods are delivered at fixed days by different



suppliers.

The staff includes:

- John who is 45 years and owner of the shop.
- Peter who is 39 years, co-owner and works primarily at the take-away.
- Bent who is 57 years old and employed at the shop.
- Lene who is 48 years old and part-time employed at the take-away.
- Karin who is 39 years old, married to John, employed at the shop and also four months pregnant.
- Markus who is 14 years old and assistant; he goes to school.

Work is done in shifts of 2 to 3 employees at the time without much regard to the fact that the workday is often more than 12 hours' long. However, Markus, who is 14 years old, only works from 4:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. Lene works from 4:30 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. as substitute for Peter at the take-away.

Is Markus allowed to work four hours every day after school?

The shop often looks untidy because many groceries are piled up in boxes or in the gangway. The selection of goods is much higher than can be accommodated in the size of the room, which means that customers and staff often have to zigzag their way around the groceries. Fresh groceries are put in a small storage room round the back of the shop. You often need to move the groceries around in order to get hold of what you need. There is often a draught from the open door, but if it is closed, the temperature will rise too quickly and ruin the flowers, fruit, and vegetables. Markus primarily helps around the storage room and at the shop where his task is to stock up groceries shelves. He lifts many boxes with fruit and vegetables during his workday. Often he lifts boxes on top of one another or above his shoulders in the stockroom due to insufficient space. Because of the





open door, dust and filth often swirl up in the air. In wet weather the floor becomes very slippery.

One employee works at the take-away. The door to this part of the shop is closed. Unfortunately, this means that the room is often very hot, especially because of the stone oven used for baking pizzas. The deep fat fryer is used to a large extent, but the exhaust device is rather inefficient, probably because it needs to be cleaned and adjusted. The take-away is popular and the rate of work is rather high about twice a day; at lunch time and in the evenings. The customers line up to make their orders. Sometimes the customers become impatient and complain about the slow service when only one employee is serving and baking the pizzas.

Just another ordinary Thursday...

John is at work. He just arrived back short before opening hours with vegetables, beer and water. He had to call in his wife because Peter has taken ill with a bad cough and chest pain. This is the fifth time in the course of two months.

John is troubled by back pain that will not seem to pass, and of course it did not help much that he had to unload the car by himself and carry the groceries into the stock room. He cannot expect help from his wife who has started getting quite a lot of stomach and back pain. She is four months pregnant.

The day goes by without major problems, but the morning hours are not that busy anyway. The painkillers that John has taken, did help some.

Around noon, there is a thin rush of hungry customers. Karin tries to keep up as well as possible, but she is not used to being here and she does not really know where things are. However, only a few customers complain about the waiting. Karin has tried to air the room by making a draught because she had trouble breathing in the dense frying odour, even though she had turned on the ventilation. She looks forward to being replaced by Lene because her stomach ache has worsened.

Young Markus shows up for work on time but he has caught a cold. He immediately starts moving the boxes with groceries around and stocking up shelves in the shop and in the stock room. But he is a perky boy and likes to work, and he wants to show that he can get things done.

Lene is delayed. She did not have the time to do half of the things she meant to do today. She also forgot the clean dishcloths for the take-away, which will probably upset John.

Lene hurries along through the shop and into the stock room to get fresh vegetables for the take-away. She receives a sharp comment from John about the time: "Are you aware of the time? You cannot keep doing this!"

She grabs hold of the little step ladder so that she can reach the tomatoes on top of the refrigerator - she is not that tall. But because she is too busy and feels behind on everything, she misses the last step on her way down. She falls backwards and is injured pretty badly, and she lands in such an unfortunate way that she is not able to stand up again on her own. Markus hurries along to help but when she is once again on her feet, she breaks down in tears and pain.

After half an hour, John realises that he will not get much out of Lene today. He sends her to the emergency ward, and he asks his wife to stay in the take-away for the rest of the day.

Review the working environment conditions at John's grocer's shop and take-away on the basis of the two relevant WA checklists ("Shops, supermarkets and department stores" or "Restaurants, cafés, bars etc." – documents in danish). Of course, you will not be able to



answer all the questions, as you have only been given a superficial picture of the workplace.

Try filling in the list at the back of this guide with the problems that appeared from the example. Try also to make proposals on how to solve the problems.



You may choose to compare with the answer on page



Summary and action plan

When setting up a business, it is recommended that you incorporate ideas about the working environment right from the start. Reflect upon the layout of your place of business to ensure that the physical framework is in order. You should also consider how you – as the manager - can ensure a good psychological working environment.

Workplace assessment

The Danish WEA supervises the working environment at Danish workplaces. Part of this supervision is checking that the enterprises prepare the compulsory WA.

NB! If your place of business has employees it is compulsory to prepare a written workplace assessment (WPA) together with your employees.

If accidents occur

If there is an occupational accident at your place of business, injuring one of your employees who must then stay away from work as a minimum for one day other than the day of the accident, the accident must be reported to the Danish WEA.

NB! As the employer you are obligated to report accidents to the Danish WEA as quickly as possible and no later than nine days after the first day your employees do not show up for work as a consequence of the occupational accident.



Examples of test questions

1. **Which of the following statements concerning good working positions is correct?**
 - a) The shorter the distance, the greater the strain for arms and back.
 - b) The shorter the distance of reaching, the smaller the strain for arms and back.
 - c) The longer the distance of reaching, the smaller the strain for arms and back.

2. **What do working in rooms with cold and noise, working under time pressure and working with unexpected and unpredictable situations have in common with one another?**
 - a) They can cause stress.
 - b) They can cause respiratory passage problems.
 - c) They can cause back and arm problems.

3. **When cleaning frying facilities and ovens with cleaning agents you should be particularly aware of:**
 - a) The release of toxins when trays and ovens are subsequently reheated.
 - b) That some ovens and frying facilities do not tolerate cleaning agents.
 - c) That work often takes place in particularly strenuous positions that are dangerous to the back.

4. **As the employer you are obligated to report a work-related accident if:**
 - a) The accident means that the employee has to leave work and go home and come back the next day.
 - b) The accident means that the employee is unable to work one or more days other than the day of the accident.
 - c) The accident means that the employee is unable to work for more than five days other than the day of the accident.

5. **How should I draw up a smoking policy for my place of business?**
 - a) I can make any smoking policy that I want at my place of business.
 - b) I am required to prepare a smoking policy that complies with the legislation.
 - c) As long as my employees smoke with consideration for others I do not have to draw up a smoking policy.

See the correct answers at the bottom of the last page.



More information

The working environment directories of the Danish WEA:

- No. 4: The directory on the most important working environment problems - Shops
- No. 5: The directory on the most important working environment problems – Whole sale
- No. 19: The directory on the most important working environment problems – Butchery
- No. 20: The directory on the most important working environment problems – Food and beverages
- No. 25: The directory on the most important working environment problems – Hotel and camping
- No. 26: The directory on the most important working environment problems – Cultural activities and sport
- No. 28: The directory on the most important working environment problems – Restaurants and bars

WA checklists:

- Checklist for shops, supermarkets and department stores
- Checklist for camping
- Checklist for discotheques and nightclubs
- Checklist for whole sale enterprises
- Checklist for hotel, hostels and boarding houses
- Checklist for bakeries
- Checklist for kitchens
- Checklist for radio, television and concerts
- Checklists for restaurants, cafés, bars etc.

Other information on WA:

- "Arbejdspladsvurdering – hvem, hvorfor, hvordan og hvornår?"
- "Psykisk arbejdsmiljø"

Guides and notifications from the Working Environment Authority:

The Danish WEA regularly publishes guides and notifications about various working environment problems. At the website www.at.dk you can find Executive Orders, guides and notifications from the Danish WEA in the areas of "The layout of the workplace", "Technical equipment", "Substances and fabrics", "Performance of work", "Young persons" and "Other areas" under the menu called "Regulations".

Sector safety councils

The Ministry of Employment has approved 11 sector safety councils which together cover all the sectors of the labour market.

The sector safety council of the retail area (BAR Trade) (Available in Danish):

<http://www.barhandel.dk>.

The sector safety council for service and services (BAR service) (Available in Danish):

<http://www.bar-service.dk>.





Useful links

<http://www.at.dk>

The website of the Danish Working Environment Authority where you can read and download all the rules and guides etc. about working environment.

<http://www.arbejdsmiljoviden.dk>

Knowledge center for Working Environment (in Danish)

<http://www.arbejdsmiljoforskning.dk/>

Website of the National Institute of Occupational Health. The National Institute of Occupational Health conducts research in the working environment and is an independent research institution under the Ministry of Employment. The website includes news, a calendar, publications and research projects.

<http://www.ask.dk>

The website of the National Board of Industrial Injuries provides information about notifications and treatment of cases concerning industrial injuries and work-related accidents.

<http://www.amr.dk>

The website of the Working Environment Council where you can find information about the composition and meetings of the council (in Danish).

<http://www.bm.dk>

The website of the Ministry of Employment with news, also about the working environment.

<http://europe.osha.eu.int>

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work which has been commissioned to prepare joint measures on the working environment within the EU. Here you can search for information about the working environment legislation in other EU member states.

<http://www.arbejdsmiljoeportalen.dk>

Here you can find information, assistance and guidance on how you can help create a good working environment, and solve any problems at your workplace (in Danish).

<http://www.godarbedslyst.dk>

The website of the Working Environment Council on among other things the psychological working environment (in Danish).

<http://www.forsikringsoplysningen.dk>

Description of the compulsory industrial injuries insurance.

<http://bar-service.dk>

Working Environment Council for the Service Industry

**Indicative answer to the Case: *John's grocer's shop and take- away****Question:*

Is Markus allowed to work four hours every day after school?

Answer:

No, Markus is only 14 years old and is going to school. Young people between 13 and 15 years of age who are attending compulsory education may only work two hours on school days and seven hours on other days than school days. Furthermore Markus is only allowed to work a maximum of 12 hours in weeks containing school days.

Question:

Review the working environment conditions at John's grocer's shop and take-away. Try making a list with the problems that appeared from the example. Try also to make proposals on how to solve the problems.

Answer:

You can see an example what an WA-list for John's grocer's shop and take- away might look like on the next page.

Problems	Cause of the problem	Solution
<p>ERGONOMIC WORKING ENVIROMENT - very poor</p> <p>HEAVY LIFTING - Yes</p> <p>HEAVY PULLING AND PUSHING - Yes</p> <p>STRAINING, REPETITIVE WORK - Yes</p> <p>WORKING POSITIONS - Yes</p>	<p>Johns Grocer's shop and takeaway are having big problems concerning the working environment of the store. Heavy lifting is an everyday occurrence for all employees; John fetching goods at the market down to Markus moving stuff around in the stock room. The main problem in John's Grocer's shop and takeaway comes down to too little space in the stock room resulting in having to move things around all the time. The lack of space is also an issue in the store itself and behind the counter which makes it hard for the employees to find a comfortable working position as they always have to move in and out among the inventory.</p>	<p>A possible solution to the problem might be to extend stock room capacity and make adjustments to make goods more accessible. Another solution might be to limit the assortment of goods in the store, to make them more suitable to the size of the premises.</p>
<p>PSYCHOLOGICAL WORKING ENVIROMENT - characterised by tension and arguments</p> <p>LARGE WORK LOAD AND TIME PRESSURE - Yes</p> <p>MONOTONOUS WORK - No</p> <p>LIMITED INFLUENCE ON OWN TASKS - Yes</p> <p>CONFLICTS, BULLYING/SEXUAL HARASSMENT-CHIKANE</p>	<p>The psychological working environment of John's Grocer's shop and Takeaway is not good. Part of the explanation is the general mess in the store: Employees cannot always find what they are looking for which affects interaction with the customers during peak hours like lunch and dinner. Many employees call in sick resulting in those at work having to work even faster. This creates stress and leads to many arguments and conflicts among employees as well as with customers.</p>	<p>The solution to the problem with the psychological working environment would be to improve the working environment in general resulting in fewer sick days. This might be done by improving ventilation. The stressful environment might be alleviated by cleaning out the store's inventory so that everyone knows exactly where everything is.</p>

<p>- Yes</p>		
<p>LACK OF RELEVANT INFORMATION - No CUSTOMER SERVICE (LACK OF SUPPORT FROM COLLEAGUES AND MANAGEMENT) - Yes ROBBERY (VIOLENCE AND THREATS OF VIOLENCE) - No</p>		
<p>WORK SHIFTS AND WORKING AT ODD HOURS - Yes LACK OF PREDICTABILITY IN TASKS - Yes</p>	<p>The many sick days results in working hours and shifts becoming very variable and unpredictable. The employees cannot feel certain exactly how long their shifts will be or when they might be called in, which only serves to exacerbate the problems.</p>	<p>To solve this problem it is necessary to make adjustments to the general working environment. Calling in more people during peak hours so as not to wear down one particular employee may also be necessary.</p>
<p>INDOOR CLIMATE TEMPERATURE AIR QUALITY MOIST AND FUNGUS LIGHTING</p>	<p>The store is having big problems with air quality which goes a long way in explaining the large amount of sick days and poor psychological work environment. The temperature in the stock room is too cold, because of problems with keeping the temperature down by other means. In the take-away on the other hand the temperature is far too high. Possibly because the exhaust and ventilation is poorly maintained and cleaned owing to time constraints and lack of staff. Several employees are showing signs of respiratory problems such as coughing and chest pains which might suggest fungal</p>	<p>In relation to the temperature in the stock room, one might consider stocking fewer goods or installing better ventilation. In the take-away, it is imperative that the exhaust and ventilation is maintained and cleaned properly. All in all a solution must be found in order to provide proper ventilation.</p>



	problems or something similar. Frying odors is also a concern.	
<p>RISK OF ACCIDENTS</p> <p>ACCIDENTS IN GENERAL</p> <p>- High</p> <p>MACHINES</p> <p>- No</p> <p>HANDTOOLS AND OTHER TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT</p> <p>- No</p> <p>INTERNAL TRANSPORTATION AND TRAFFIC</p> <p>- Yes</p> <p>BODY STRAIN etc.</p> <p>-Yes</p> <p>SICK LEAVE</p> <p>- Yes</p>	<p>The lack of space in the store means that the risk of accidents is relatively high, as demonstrated by the example of Lene falling down from the stepladder.</p> <p>It is difficult to move around safely because of things being stored on the floor and many goods are stored in places which are difficult to get access to without standing on ladders or moving others things first.</p>	<p>In order to avoid accidents one might rearrange and maybe even limit the amount of goods, in order to make room so the employees can move around and handle goods in a safe manner.</p> <p>Heavy goods should be moved to places below shoulder level.</p>

Answer to test questions: 1:b, 2:a, 3:a, 4:b, 5:b