



Preventing occupational hazards in the private security sector

(manned guarding and surveillance services)

European training manual.



This manual has been produced by the Centre de Sociologie de la Santé (1) of the Université Libre de Bruxelles, through European Community financing.

Project team

Lorenzo Munar Suard, Guy Lebeer (project manager), Centre for Health Sociology, Université Libre de Bruxelles.

Project partners

	for UNI-Europa :	For CoESS :
Germany	Ver.di	B.D.W.S
Belgium	CSC-AS / CG-FGTB/SETCa	APEG - BVBO
Spain	FEAD-CC.OO / FeS-UGT	APROSER
Ireland	SIPTU	Security Federation Ireland
Italy	FILCAMS-CGIL/FISASCAT-CISL	ASSVIGILANZA
Sweden	Svenska Transportarbetareförbundet	ALMEGA

Photos

UNI-Europa and CoESS

Formatting and design

Nathalie da Costa Maya, Centre de Diffusion de la Culture Sanitaire a.s.b.l. (2)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people for their interest and openness in providing information, data, documents and insight into a complex situation: workers and their representatives (prevention representatives, grass roots representatives and permanent representatives at local and national levels); employers and their representatives; risk prevention consultants and/or health and safety managers at company level.

We would also like to thank the six companies who were willing to be involved in this project:

COBELGUARD (Belgium)
GROUP 4 FALCK (Belgium)
PROSEGUR (Spain)
SEGURISA (Spain)
BERGSLAGENS BEVAKNING AB (Sweden)
SECURITAS (Sweden)

We would like to take this opportunity to stress how useful the publications of the following institutions were in producing this manual: the INRS (Institut National de Recherche et de Sécurité - France (3)), the I.N.S.H.T. (Instituto Nacional de Seguridad e Higiene en el Trabajo - Spain (4)), the HSE (Health and Safety Executive – United Kingdom), the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, and also all the documents, brochures and manuals provided by companies and unions as part of this project.

Legal deposit : D/2004/9113/2

(1) Centre for Health Sociology

(2) Centre for Dissemination of Health Culture (a non-profit organisation)

(3) National Institute for Research and Safety - France

(4) National Institute for Health and Safety at Work - Spain

Contents

■ SOCIAL DIALOGUE	5
GENERAL INTRODUCTION	5
■ PREVENTION AND PROTECTION AT WORK : RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS	6
■ THE PRIVATE SECURITY SECTOR	10
A sector characterized by service relationships and service provision	12
A highly competitive sector	12
A sector characterized by "flexibility"	13
A sector which is still undervalued	13
■ RISKS AND RISK FACTORS IN PRIVATE SECURITY	14
1. RISKS RESULTING FROM THE GENERAL SITUATION	16
Security company operations within the client company	16
2. SPECIFIC RISKS RELATED TO SECURITY ACTIVITIES	17
A. Violence at work (physical attack, bullying and sexual harassment)	17
B. Risks posed by dogs	21
C. Handling weapons	22
D. Risks related to exposure to radiation	23
E. Risk factors related to work organization	24
F. The physical workload	27
G. The psychosocial workload	31
H. Specific risks facing female security personnel	37
3. RISKS RELATED TO THE POST HELD	38
A. Safety risks	38
1. Risk of falls, slips and trips	39
2. Risk of collisions, bumps and jamming	40
3. Risk of road accidents	41
4. Risk of electrical accidents	42
5. Risk of fire	43
B. Risks related to the working environment	44
1. Physical hazards	45
Noise	45
Unsuitable levels of ventilation, humidity and temperature	46
Insufficient or unsuitable lighting	47
2. Biological hazards	48
3. Chemical hazards	49
■ EMERGENCY FIRST AID	50
■ GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY IN COMPANIES	52
■ EUROPEAN DIRECTIVES	56
USEFUL ADDRESSES	58



**Social
dialogue**

**General
introduction**

Social dialogue

Preventing occupational hazards is one of the important issues on the agenda of the social partners in this sector. This concern is also borne out by the fact that this item is often mentioned in joint publications and declarations:

“In certain functions of the private security sector, there are considerable occupational hazards to be reckoned with. The minimum health and safety standards for private security guards must at least be applied in all companies in the sector in order to ensure the maximum possible prevention of occupational hazards. These standards should be regularly revised in consultation with social partners and competent authorities, in order to guarantee the health and safety of security personnel”.

Code of conduct and ethics for the private security sector

The safety of employees

“Preventing occupational hazards is one of the most important aspects of the organization of work in the private security sector. Training is essential in this area, as is the development of techniques and procedures which guarantee, to the greatest extent possible, the safety of workers exposed to dangerous situations (...)”.

Minimizing the risks

“All workers in the sector must be given appropriate training in the best practices in the field of health and safety; this reduces the risks to which they are exposed and allows them to carry out more efficiently their mission of protecting people and property”.

The issues and results of European social dialogue in the private security sector

The social partners in the private security sector at European level felt that it was extremely important to have a basic training tool for health and safety, which is common to all EU countries and which complements the *European Vocational Training Manual for Basic Guarding*.

General introduction

This manual is the result of a study involving several European countries. It is the outcome of research carried out in close co-operation with social partners in the private security sector, which was intended to determine the nature of occupational hazards in the sector. This study involved questioning the main players in the sector: employers, workers, prevention representatives and consultants, etc. This manual contains essential information for understanding the risks you face in doing your job and the methods for preventing them or dealing with their consequences.

Focusing on risks and risk factors might give a negative impression of the private security sector, or rather, an impression which is more negative than the actual reality. This is why we feel it useful to point out that work can also be a source of wellbeing and empowerment.

This manual is common to all the countries of the European Union and is therefore based on the minimum requirements set out in the European laws known as “directives”, which all member states must respect. This means that, on certain points, the laws in your country may provide for additional measures, but, whatever the case may be, the requirements in this manual must be observed (1).

In this manual we will be referring to “security guards”. This term, though, does not express the same idea in the different countries of the European Union. We have based ourselves on the definition of security guard given in the European Vocational Training Manual for Basic Guarding.

“Any person who is paid a wage, fee or salary to perform one or more of the of the following functions:

- Prevention or detection of intrusion, unauthorized entry or activity, vandalism or trespassing on private property.
- Prevention or detection of theft, loss, embezzlement, misappropriation or concealment of merchandise, money, bonds, stocks, notes, valuables documents or papers.
- Protection of individuals from bodily harm.
- Adherence to, and enforcement of, established company rules, regulations, measures, policies and practices related to crime reduction.
- The reporting and apprehension of violators.
- Reporting on incidents and calls”.

This manual has been compiled by the Centre de Sociologie de la Santé (C.S.S.) of the Université Libre de Bruxelles. The project has been carried out with the collaboration and under the supervision of social dialogue partners from the private security sector (CoESS, employers and UNI-Europa, trade unions) and the Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs from the European Commission.

(1) For each of the points raised the reader will find a reference to the relevant European directives, which is indicated by this symbol:





Prevention and protection at work

Rights and obligations

The adverse effects that work can have on health have serious consequences in terms of human and economic cost, not just for workers and their families but also for companies and society as a whole. To deal with these effects the European Union has developed a legal framework to prevent risks and promote health and safety at work.

European legislation obliges companies to implement social policy focused on human beings as individuals in order to improve the wellbeing of workers as they do their jobs. The cornerstone of all requirements in the area of risk prevention in the workplace is something called

the framework directive. This directive provides a reference basis for a series of specific directives which cover all the risks related to health and safety in the workplace. Among other things, it sets forth the obligations of employers and workers with a view to improving health and safety in the workplace.

■ PREVENTION AND PROTECTION AT WORK: RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- THE EMPLOYER
- THE WORKERS
- THE CLIENT (PRINCIPAL)

THE EMPLOYER

The employer is obliged to guarantee the health and safety of workers in all aspects related to the job and nothing can relieve the employer of this responsibility.

As part of these responsibilities, the employer must take the necessary precautions to protect the health and safety of workers, including action to prevent occupational hazards, informing and training staff, and setting up the necessary organizational structure and means to achieve these aims. The employer must modify these measures to take into account changes in circumstances and must try to improve existing situations.

GENERAL OBLIGATIONS OF EMPLOYERS

- 1 Preventing risks.**
- 2 Evaluating the risks which cannot be prevented.**
- 3 Combating risks at source.**
- 4 Adapting work to the individual**
 - Making sure that the structure of jobs, organization, the choice of equipment, substances and procedures alleviate the monotony of the job to be carried out with a view to reducing ill effects on health.
- 5 Taking into account technical developments** (e.g. ergonomic machinery, tools and appliances).
- 6 Replacing what is hazardous by what is not hazardous, or by what is less hazardous.**
- 7 Planning risk prevention** by taking into account technology, organization of work, working conditions, social relationships and the influence of factors related to the working environment.
- 8 Giving collective protective measures** priority over individual protective measures.
- 9 Giving appropriate instructions** to workers to guarantee their health and safety at work.

THE DIFFERENT OBLIGATIONS OF YOUR EMPLOYER

Your employer must :

- A** Conduct a risk evaluation for health and safety at work.
- B** Determine what protection measures are to be taken and, if necessary, what kind of protective equipment is to be used.
- C** Maintain a register of accidents at work which have led to a period of incapacity for work of longer than three working days.
- D** Draw up reports on accidents at work suffered by the firm's workers.



THE WORKERS

On your side, too, you have a great responsibility in terms of protecting your health and safety, as well as that of your co-workers and other people involved in your activities and professional tasks. So, you should take care of yourself and of others in accordance with the training and instructions you have received from your employer. It is important for you to collaborate actively in your company's health and safety policy.

The framework directive covers other general principles concerning the information, consultation and participation of workers, training workers and their representatives, medical supervision and general guidelines for implementing these principles (see pages 52 to 55).

THE CLIENT (THE PRINCIPAL)

The client must take appropriate measures so that employers of workers from any external security undertakings engaged in work in his or her company receive, in accordance with national laws and/or practices, adequate information concerning health and safety risks and concerning protective and preventive measures and actions for both the company and/or establishment in general and every kind of post and/or position in said undertaking.

The client must ensure that workers from security firms engaged in work in his or her company and/or establishment have in fact received appropriate instructions regarding health and safety risks during their activities with the client company.

WORKERS' OBLIGATIONS

You must :

- A** **Correctly use** machinery, appliances, tools, transport equipment, etc.
- B** **Correctly use** personal protective equipment supplied to you.
- C** **Not remove the safety devices** for specific machinery and installations and you must use them correctly.
- D** **Report** immediately to your employer and/or supervisors **about any work situation posing a serious and immediate danger** to health and safety and about any shortcomings in protection arrangements.
- E** **Perform all tasks set forth by safety regulations** and cooperate with the employer to ensure a working environment and conditions that do not pose any risks in terms of health and safety.

COOPERATION AND CONSULTATION BETWEEN EMPLOYERS (client – guarding services company)

When workers of several companies are operating in the same workplace, employers must :

- A** Co-operate in implementing health, safety and occupational hygiene provisions, taking into account the nature of the activities.
- B** Co-ordinate their actions in matters of protection from, and prevention of, occupational hazards.
- C** Inform each other of these risks.
- D** Inform their respective workers and/or workers' representatives of these risks.



The private security sector

The reasons for expansion in the private security sector are well known: an increase in a feeling of insecurity in society as a whole, resulting in a demand for security on the part of companies, public institutions and private individuals, and, above all, the process of outsourcing security operations which were previously performed by the public sector or public administration. At the same time as this process of expansion, efforts have been made to professionalize the sector further and there has been greater concern about improving working conditions, particularly in the area of occupational hazard prevention. Any improvements made to health and safety require action at three levels.

1 – At sector level. At this level, it is important to take into account all of the elements that make up the social, economic, legal, etc. context in which the private security activity is developing. These include, in no particular order, those to do with the job and working time, access to the profession within the sector, competition between clients (principals) and security companies, training and information for security personnel in risk prevention, presence of trade unions in companies and at sector level, etc.

2 – At company level in the broad sense of the term, i.e. as a network incorporating workers of different status

from different organizations.

At this level, it is a question of considering, amongst other things, risk prevention mechanisms and company policy in the areas of risk prevention, human resources management, training, conflict management, communication, etc.

3 – At the level of organizational restrictions imposed in the workplace itself. How is the team managed? What is the working atmosphere like? How much independence do the workers enjoy? Does the client fulfil his or her responsibilities in terms of health and safety in the workplace? etc.

Given that this manual is intended above all for company workers, risk prevention representatives and security managers, it focuses on the company or business itself and the different kinds of assignments. However, it is essential to keep in mind the wider context of the private security sector. We would also like to stress certain general sector characteristics which have an effect on the health and safety of workers and which require preventive measures to be adopted throughout the sector. Such measures require, on the one hand, prior dialogue in companies or between the sector's social partners, and, on the other, action at institutional and political levels.

■ THE PRIVATE SECURITY SECTOR

- A sector characterized by service relationships and service provision
- A highly competitive sector
- A sector characterized by "flexibility"
- A sector which is still undervalued



A SECTOR CHARACTERIZED BY SERVICE RELATIONSHIPS AND SERVICE PROVISION

The private security sector is characterized by subcontracting. Today, an increasing number of companies tend to subcontract security activities. The nature of this service relationship is definitive in analysing risk prevention problems. Involving the client in risk prevention policy is essential if occupational hazards are to be tackled. From this perspective, any measure intended to oblige clients to assume responsibilities in terms of risk prevention should be encouraged.

A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE SECTOR

Competition in the sector is known to be very tough. Contracts for private security services are often awarded to the cheapest offer ('the lowest bid') rather than to the best offer ('the best bid'), i.e. the one guaranteeing a high quality service and good working conditions, as well as compliance with collective agreements, labour laws and obligations and responsibilities in terms of risk prevention and health at work. The unfair competition which is becoming apparent during the awarding of contracts damages the image of the sector (amateurism, illegal practices, etc.) and has a negative impact on the health and safety of workers. It is formally condemned by the social partners, who have published a manual (1) on awarding contracts in order to prevent it from happening.

(1) *Choosing the best quality/price ratio. A manual for public authorities awarding contracts for guarding services, CoESS - UNI-Europa 1999* (www.securebestvalue.org).



A SECTOR CHARACTERIZED BY "FLEXIBILITY"

The private security sector is characterized by the flexible way in which the work is organized. This kind of organization was adopted in order to provide 24-hour a day, 7-day a week services and to meet the varied requests made by sector clients. This flexibility can be observed at different levels:

- Flexibility in the number of employees, which is linked to the ability of companies to vary the number of workers they employ depending on fluctuations in demand
- Flexibility in working time (such as non-standard forms of working time, night and weekend shifts, overtime, stand-by)
- Flexibility in terms of the tasks to be performed by workers, who have to be able at all times to adapt to the needs of companies and clients in order to comply with varied and unpredictable demands. Companies increasingly rely on their workers showing initiative.

Thus, whether it is because of the working hours, the type of contract or the type of service that is required of the workers, it is clear that the sector is a highly flexible one. This has a major impact on the biological and social rhythms and family situations of private security guards and leads to considerable mental and emotional strain.

A SECTOR WHICH IS STILL UNDervalUED

Guarding companies in general and security guards in particular help to make public places secure and contribute to the creation of a safer society so that public and private freedoms can be enjoyed without constraints. This contribution, though, is not always fully appreciated. This under-valuing of the sector reflects a certain degree of ignorance and lack of recognition of the work carried out by security companies and their staff, which can have negative implications for the image of the sector and therefore for the professional identity of its workers. For the sector to receive the recognition it deserves, initiatives could be taken to raise awareness of the social role played by private security and thus project a better image of the sector.



Risks and risk factors in private security

In compiling this manual, we decided to restrict ourselves to setting out risks [*] neutrally without attempting to classify them in terms of seriousness. The aim of the manual here is to:

- inform you (and raise your awareness) about the risks you run in doing your job
- help you to identify the hazards which you are exposed to
- inform you about preventive measures to be adopted
- inform you about the consequences and negative effects on health and safety if these risks become realities.

The list of risks in this manual does not include all the risks which exist. Other risks may well be determined as a result of the risk assessment procedures which your company must carry out regularly. The framework directive makes risk assessment a necessary tool for ensuring the safety and protecting the health of workers. It must be structured and implemented in such a way as to help employers to determine what hazards exist and evaluate the risks associated with these hazards in order to decide which measures to adopt to protect the health and guarantee the safety of their employees.

The aim of prevention is not just to prevent accidents but also any factor harmful to health resulting from work.

We chose to divide security-related risks into three broad categories:

- 1. Risks resulting from the general situation**
- 2. Specific risks related to security activities**
- 3. Risks related to the post held.**

We chose to use a very general way to present the risks. Based on the three categories mentioned above, for each one we have specified whether the risk concerns all types of security guards or certain specific activities.

Risks are always presented, without exception, in the same way. Firstly, there is a brief introduction about the nature of the risk. Then there is an analysis of the risk factors involved and a presentation

of risk prevention measures to be adopted by the actor involved: client, employer or worker. Finally, there is an explanation of what effect it would have if the risk became a reality.

The risks are, in theory, dealt with on an equal footing: none is given more importance than another even if some of them concern only a very limited number of guards or represent a low accident or health risk.

Some risks are only briefly described whilst more attention is devoted to others because of their greater complexity.

[*] Definition. Risk can be defined as the probability (potentiality) of a certain level of damage, taking into account exposure to a risk factor and the probability of damage occurring during the exposure period.

■ RISKS AND RISK FACTORS IN PRIVATE SECURITY

1. RISKS RESULTING FROM THE GENERAL SITUATION	16
2. SPECIFIC RISKS RELATED TO SECURITY ACTIVITIES	17
A. Violence at work (physical attack, bullying, sexual harassment)	17
B. Risks posed by dogs	21
C. Handling weapons	22
D. Risks related to exposure to radiation	23
E. Risk factors related to work organization	24
F. The physical workload	27
G. The psychosocial workload	31
H. Specific risks facing female security personnel	37
3. RISKS RELATED TO THE POST HELD	38
A. Safety risks	38
1. Risk of falls, slips and trips	39
2. Risk of collisions, bumps and jamming	40
3. Risk of road accidents	41
4. Risk of electrical accidents	42
5. Risk of fire	43
B. Risks related to the working environment	44
1. Physical hazards	45
2. Biological hazards	48
3. Chemical hazards	49

1. Risks resulting from the general situation

By risks resulting from the general situation, we mean the risks linked to the context in which security activity is carried out. Hence, the reference sphere is the sector, its main actors (security company, client) and the relationships between them.

Here we are taking into account the risks associated with the operations of the security company carried out within the client company (the principal).

SECURITY COMPANY OPERATIONS WITHIN THE CLIENT COMPANY

These are mainly interference risks, additional risks on top of those risks inherent in the activity of each company and they are due to the installations, equipment and activities of various companies in the same workplace.

When workers from different companies are involved in the same working envi-

ronment, working relationships become more complex and may complicate the coordination of activities. This may result in disorganization, with everything this entails in terms of accidents and confusion concerning the tasks to be executed, etc. In these kinds of circumstances, efforts must therefore be made at com-

pany level in order to share information and to reach an agreement on respective duties and responsibilities.



RISK FACTORS

This interference risk ensues from a lack of knowledge at two levels:

- lack of knowledge of one company regarding the risks of the other company
- lack of knowledge related to joint activity and joint operations.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer and the client must :

- Cooperate in implementing health, safety and occupational hygiene provisions.
- Coordinate their actions in matters of protection from, and prevention of, occupational hazards.
- Inform each other of these risks.
- Inform their respective workers and/or workers' representatives of these risks.

You must :

- Take care of yourself and of others in accordance with the training and instructions you have received from your employer and/or from the client.
- Collaborate actively in the health and safety policy in your company.

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

The interference risk is basically an accident risk linked to the operations of the security company carried out within the client company. However, it also constitutes a possible factor of uncertainty, tension and stress for security guards to the extent that they find themselves in working situations/contexts in which they have no knowledge of the risks resulting from these situations, of the preventive measures to be adopted, or of the responsibilities of the people they deal with.



2. Specific risks related to security activities

By the term “risks specific to security activities”, what we mean are those risks that are often called “inherent risks” or risks specifically linked to the activity and/or organization of work in companies. Given the diversity of security activity and services, some of the risks mentioned affect all private security staff, while others only affect a few highly specific posts.

Risks which are specific to security activities are divided into the following categories :

- A. Violence at work.
- B. Risks posed by dogs.
- C. Handling weapons.
- D. Exposure to radiation.
- E. Risk factors related to work organization.
- F. The physical workload.
- G. The psychosocial workload.
- H. Specific risks facing female security personnel.

A. VIOLENCE AT WORK

Violence in the workplace may come in many guises:

- verbal violence: insults, threats
- physical violence: being struck or being injured
- by weapons or by giving the impression of being armed
- discrimination on the grounds of race, skin colour, ethnic origin, sex, religion or sexual orientation
- sexual harassment
- bullying
- ...

RISK OF PHYSICAL ATTACK

For obvious reasons, there is a high risk of physical aggression in the sector, even if it is difficult to assess how probable or dangerous this risk is in advance. Indeed, there is a wide range of situations in which acts of physical aggression are committed against security guards. The magnitude of the problem is confirmed by several studies which list security personnel as being among the occupational groups most likely to be exposed to acts of physical aggression.

These attacks constitute an occupational hazard and thus affect all security guards. However, some jobs are said to be more exposed to physical violence than others, for instance, those that involve contact with the public: surveillance of shopping centres, or areas with a high through-flow of people (underground stations, railway stations, etc.), detection of shoplifting, etc.

RISK FACTORS

- Some characteristics of the workplace: isolated, very busy (communication hubs, shopping centres), without a security system, etc.
- Possibilities for immediate or very quick communication with other people (colleagues, police, your company, etc.).
- The nature of the job or post: lone working, night/day shifts, contact with the public, etc.
- The assailant(s) (delinquents, clients, service users, etc.): number, physical features, the fact that they may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, the level of aggressiveness and violence, whether or not they are armed, etc.
- The security guard: training and experience in dealing with these kinds of situations, his/her reactions, excess/lack of confidence, etc.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Take into account all existing security measures (coded doors, bolting entries, etc.).
- Ensure that quick communication is possible if a problem arises (telephone, radio, alarm buttons, etc.).
- Keep the number of lone workers to a minimum and, if this proves impossible, make sure that the employee has a means of constant contact with the central office.
- Train staff in handling conflict situations: training in the early detection of potential assailants (identifying patterns of behaviour and signs of a possible attack), conflict management training (learning how to deal with difficult situations involving clients and service users, and learning how to cope with the tension related to such situations with a view to controlling any emotional reactions).

Your employer ought to consider :

- Not leaving a guard who has been a victim of, or witness to, a violent act alone in the period following the incident and, if necessary, providing them with psychological help.
- Training some workers in listening and providing support to staff members who have been physically attacked.

...

You must :

- Follow the instructions and training you have been given.
 - Not expose yourself to danger recklessly. Act cautiously.
 - Assess the situation properly before taking action and above all avoid playing down the risks of any action taken.
 - Communicate as quickly as possible the correct and accurate nature of any situation. (location, circumstance, etc.) which is out of the ordinary or potentially dangerous.
 - Make sure that your communication equipment is always in good working order and within easy reach.
- ...

EFFECTS ON VICTIMS

The nature and seriousness of injuries can vary considerably depending on the nature of the attack:

- Light injuries: superficial lesions, blows and light traumas (bruises, scratches, etc.).
- Serious injuries: serious traumas and injuries requiring surgery or resulting in possible loss of life.
- Death.

In addition to these injuries, physical attacks may also have other negative effects on workers' health:

- reduced psychological wellbeing and increased risk of psychological problems
- cognitive effects, such as concentration problems
- low self-esteem
- lack of job satisfaction and motivation
- feelings of fear
- post-traumatic stress.



RISK OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment refers to *“the situation in which unwanted behaviour with a sexual connotation, expressed physically, verbally or non-verbally, occurs with an aim or effect which is harmful to the personal dignity of an individual and, more specifically, creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or insulting environment.”*

Companies are becoming increasingly aware of sexual harassment in the workplace.

There is a prevalent belief which does not correspond to reality: that victims of sexual harassment are always women. It is true that sexual harassment is a phenomenon which predominantly affects women, but men can also be victims of this kind of harassment.

Furthermore, a range of studies carried out into sexual harassment in EU countries all tend to show that sexual harassment is more common in professions where a single gender dominates (whether it be men or women) than it is in those where there is a balanced proportion of men and women. As the security sector is a typically male sector, sexual harassment could well turn out to be a considerable risk for female security guards.

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

On a psychological level, sexual harassment may result in stress, anxiety, depression, a state of nervousness, feelings of despair, impotence, anger, etc. The physical effects of sexual harassment involve sleeping and eating disorders, headaches, nausea, high blood pressure - in fact, all the symptoms commonly associated with stress.

RISK OF BULLYING

Bullying in the workplace is taken to mean *“abnormal, repeated behaviour directed against a worker or group of workers which results in a risk to health and safety, (...) which may manifest itself through verbal as well as physical aggression, but also through more subtle acts, such as underrating an employee’s work or isolating the individual socially.”* (1).

As far as bullying in the workplace is concerned, there are two very frequently encountered excesses that must be prevented:

1. Interpreting every conflict in the workplace between co-workers, between a staff member and his or her superior, between a guard and the client, etc. as an act of bullying...

There are numerous definitions of bullying but all of them contain three dimensions that serve to distinguish bullying from any other type of violence in the workplace:

- the repeated and sustained nature of the acts
- the impact, which is always negative, devastating and destructive, on the person targeted
- the perpetrator’s (or perpetrators’) wish to cause harm.

Some attitudes and types of behaviour (such as authoritarian attitudes and shouting, etc.) do not constitute bullying if their root cause is not spite or if they are not regularly repeated. However, given that they can also poison the atmosphere at work, they are also to be prohibited. Moreover, these kinds of attitudes can easily develop into bullying.

This distinction is important because the fact of being considered as being bullied or not has very different implications in terms of the law and how the victim is dealt with.

2. Only analysing potential cases of bullying in individual terms, in terms of incompatibilities between people or groups of people.

It is perfectly possible that a disagreement or misunderstanding between people is at the origin of the bullying but more often than not its cause is rooted in other circumstances. Numerous studies have demonstrated that there is a correlation between bullying and certain organizational features specific to the company in question. The risk factors which can lead to bullying could include:

- possible areas of doubt regarding tasks to be performed in a work set-up based on flexibility
- bad working atmosphere, conflicts between co-workers without measures being taken to remedy the situation

- confusion/conflicts in terms of hierarchic responsibilities
- authoritarian management style
- dehumanised management and social relations
- bad relationship between management and workers
- failings in staff management policies
- ...

It should be remembered that whatever the cause of bullying, it is up to the company to find a solution. On no account should it refrain from acting.

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

Bullying, amongst other effects on health, may result in stress, depression, loss of self-esteem, feelings of guilt, phobias, sleep and eating disorders, etc. The consequences of these conditions can range from depression to suicide and include addiction to pharmaceutical drugs.

(1) European Agency for Health and Safety in the Workplace, *Bullying at work*, Factsheet 23.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR BULLYING AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Your employer must:

- Send a clear message to potential perpetrators and victims: violence, in whatever form, will not be accepted or tolerated.
- Specify the obligations of the hierarchy in preventing possible situations of this kind
- Investigate the facts quickly and impartially.
- Make sure that complaints do not lead to reprisals.
- Maintain the anonymity of both victims and perpetrators.
- Inform and train workers regarding the risks and preventive measures to be adopted.
- ...

Your employer ought to consider:

- Appointing one or more trustworthy people to provide “front line” contact in dealing with, and providing support for, the victims.
- Setting up mechanisms to deal with victims and to reintegrate them in the workplace.

You must:

- Communicate immediately that you find a situation or type of behaviour unacceptable.
- Not let problems develop.
- Speak openly about the problem with the colleagues that you work with.
- Maintain a critical distance (do not try to find reasons to justify the way you are being treated).
- Inform the personnel or human resources manager/ the prevention representative.
- If you are not the only person involved, request that your company’s managers carry out an inquiry and take steps to find a solution.
- ...



B. RISKS POSED BY DOGS

Using dogs can represent a health hazard for dog handlers.

The use of dogs entails risks of accidents (bites, etc.) as well as biological risks linked to exposure to biological agents, i.e. microorganisms that may cause infec-

tions, allergies or poisoning. These microorganisms may penetrate the human body through a wound or mucous membranes, or following an animal bite. They may also be inhaled or swallowed.

The risks resulting from the use of dogs are peculiar to the sector and mainly affect dog handlers, as well as security guards that are part of teams that use dogs.

RISK FACTORS

- The dog: badly trained, too aggressive, sick, unpredictable behaviour.
- Bad dog handling: several dog handlers for one and the same dog, different command patterns depending on the individual's role, poor living conditions, food and monitoring of the health of the animal (vaccinations, regular medical check-ups).
- The dog-handler: untrained or poorly trained as a dog handler, lack of compliance with basic hygiene regulations, lack of care for the dog, aggressive or unsuitable behaviour towards the dog.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Make sure that dog handlers have done the compulsory training and have the necessary certificates.
- Ensure that the dogs are properly trained.
- Replace dogs that are no longer suitable (either because they have become too aggressive or because their performance is below par).
- Ensure the dogs are housed and fed properly (clean and well-kept kennels).
- Ensure that all the vaccination and hygiene requirements are met.
- Make sure that if dogs are to be used by several dog handlers, measures are taken to ensure that only one set of common commands is used with the dog.
- ...

You must :

- Follow the instructions and training you have been given.
- Respect the regulations on using leashes and muzzles.
- Protect any wounds or injuries you have to prevent microorganisms from penetrating your body.
- Respect basic hygiene conditions: no eating, drinking or smoking without washing your hands first.
- Take good care of the dog and behave properly with it.
- Inform your employer about any incidences of unpredictable behaviour or any other factor concerning the dog which could endanger your health or safety or that of others.
- ...

NATURE OF INJURIES

Dogs can cause slight injuries such as lesions, light traumas (scratches, bruises) and serious injuries such as bites, etc. They may also cause diseases as a result of infections and allergies caused by bacteria, fungi, acarids and/or viruses.

C. HANDLING WEAPONS

National legislation regulating the carrying of weapons differs widely from country to country. In some countries private security guards are not allowed to carry firearms. In other countries where this is permitted, there is a whole raft of provisions to be complied with regarding gun permits and training in the use and storage of arms. In general, the use of firearms is limited to certain activities/jobs (principally for cash in transit, the surveillance of military installations or facilities of importance to national security, or to the protection of individuals, i.e. bodyguards).

Gun-related accidents may be the result of the firearm accidentally going off, ricochets of bullets and exposure to bullet fragments and other substances, particularly during shooting practice. Accidents are quite rare and often result from negligence or a lack of training. However, they can cause death.

This risk is peculiar to the sector and mainly affects bodyguard activities and static surveillance of certain specific sites.

RISK FACTORS

- The weapon: in poor condition (damaged, in poor working order), poorly maintained, etc.
- Ammunition: in poor condition (past usage date, damaged, etc.).
- Unsuitable shooting booths.
- The environment: inadequate climatic and environmental conditions, uneven floor, unstable supporting surface, etc.
- Incorrect carrying of firearms: unsuitable holster, unsecured weapon, etc.
- incorrect storage conditions: unsuitable temperature and humidity levels, storage of arms together with ammunition, lack of security, etc.
- The security guard: bad/lack of training, reckless behaviour, use of firearms while under the influence of alcohol, drugs or medication, non-use or misuse of personal protective equipment, etc.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Provide you with good-quality firearms and make sure that they are always kept in good condition.
- Ensure that firearm maintenance is carried out by specialized personnel.
- Store the weapons in suitable locations.
- Train you in the use of firearms.
- Provide you with the necessary personal protective equipment (safety eyewear and earplugs) when doing shooting practice.
- Make sure that you do periodical psychotechnical tests and regular shooting practice.
- ...

You must :

- Use the weapon in accordance with the instructions and training you have been given.
- Handle the weapon very carefully and responsibly.
- Communicate any anomaly (or poor functioning) in your weapon or ammunition.
- Make sure that your weapon is kept in good condition and working order.
- Comply with rules on storing weapons.
- Only use and handle a weapon when you are in the correct psychological and physical condition for doing so.
- Prevent your weapon from being handled by other people (the case of theft, for example).
- ...

NATURE OF INJURIES

The nature and seriousness of accidents can vary:

- Light injuries: superficial lesions, grazing, burns, etc.
- Serious injuries: serious wounds, damage to internal organs, etc.
- Death.



WARNING SIGNS



Laser beam



Radioactive material

D. RISKS RELATED TO EXPOSURE TO RADIATION

The use of equipment which generates radiation or working in areas close to radiation sources entails a risk of tissue being destroyed and/or irreversible effects on health. The risk level varies according to the dose of radiation absorbed.

This risk is specific to certain jobs where X-ray machines are used: access control (airports, public buildings, etc.), or the screening of mail, packages, suitcases, etc. However, it also affects guards who, during their rounds in hospitals, nuclear power plants, etc. may enter monitored or secure areas. [*]

[*] Definition.

Secure area : area subject to special regulations intended to provide protection from radiation and to limit radioactive contamination. Access to these areas is regulated.

Monitored areas : area subject to suitable surveillance in order to provide protection from radiation.

RISK FACTORS

- Scanners - X-ray devices: faulty devices, inappropriate use.
- Certain highly specific workplaces, e.g. in hospitals (radiology, nuclear medicine departments), nuclear power plants, etc.
- The security guard: a member of staff who is not trained in the use of X-ray machines and/or is not familiar with the risks he or she is running; or is not aware of the dangers involved in entering monitored/secure areas, nor the preventive measures to be adopted.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Train you to use X-ray machines and inform you of the risks and preventive measures to be taken.
- Ensure that these types of machines are only operated by trained personnel.
- Place the instruction manual as well as any documentation relating to the use of the machine in close proximity to it.
- Have the sources monitored (to prevent leaks).
- Use type-approved machines (marked CE) or make sure that the machines being used comply with European regulations.
- Make sure that the equipment goes through its periodical technical inspection.
- ...

The client must :

- Inform you and your employer about any radiation sources at the place of work, about the risks associated with them and the preventive measures to be adopted.

You must :

- Avoid putting your hands into the radiation tunnel.
- Communicate any anomaly in the functioning of the machine to your superiors.
- When on duty in the radiological area you must observe the appropriate precautions and measures.
- Respect the warning signs situated in monitored/secure areas.
- Observe the indications given when moving about monitored/secure areas.
- ...

NATURE OF INJURIES

The effects of radiation can be hereditary (i.e. they may be passed on to your children and to subsequent generations). Over a certain radiation threshold, there may be short-term effects relating to cell lesions: the tissue most vulnerable to radiation is reproductive tissue (radiation can lead to temporary or permanent sterility), tissue involved in the forming of blood cells (spleen, bone marrow, etc.), the crystalline lens in the eye and the skin. Unexpected effects may also occur within a group of individuals with identical exposure levels without it being possible to identify a threshold; these involve cancers and certain genetic anomalies (mutations).



E. RISK FACTORS RELATED TO WORK ORGANIZATION

This involves health and safety hazards resulting from the way work is organized, whether at company or job level.

- The dual hierarchy
- Lone working
- Work schedules
- Human resources management
- Training and information in risk prevention
- Working time.

THE DUAL HIERARCHY

Private security guards are in a rather special situation because they carry out their work at the client's premises. As such they must respect a sort of dual hierarchy: on the one hand, they have to meet the professional demands made on them by their employer and, on the other, they have to meet the demands of their clients. In principle, the duties and obligations of those involved (the client, the employer, the security guard) are clearly delineated. However, in the field, the subcontracting relationship may result in each party's roles, duties and responsibilities becoming blurred. This can lead to tension and may cause considerable stress for security guards.

The employer ought to consider:

- Clarifying the roles, obligations and responsibilities of the employer, the client and the worker
- Improving communication, strengthening the presence and social support of the company for its workers.

LONE WORKING

Although lone working is not prohibited under the European directives, it should in principle be subject to a prior risk assessment. If in the course of the risk assessment, it transpires that the security guard's health and safety cannot be guaranteed, lone working should be avoided. If, conversely, the assessment reveals that it is possible, the security guard must be given all the necessary guarantees that he or she will be able to do the job in safety and without health hazards.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Make sure that lone workers can get in touch with someone quickly.
- Guarantee regular supervision.
- Inform the worker about the risks he or she may have to face.
- Make sure that workers are properly trained so that they can react satisfactorily to unforeseen circumstances.
- Ensure that consultation with the client company takes place at the time of the risk assessment so that all the risks involved in lone working are clearly identified.

■ ...

You must :

- Be able to notify somebody else rapidly (your company, the client company, the police).
- Make sure that your communication equipment is always in good working order and within easy reach.
- Inform your supervisor about anything which might entail a danger for health and safety.

■ ...

HAZARDS OF LONE WORKING

- Attacks.
- Accidents or sickness which might require immediate help to be administered.
- Inability to react correctly in emergency situations, unforeseen circumstances and cases of physical attack.



WORK SCHEDULES

In a sector like the security sector which is based on flexibility it is sometimes difficult (in certain jobs / activities) to provide work schedules several months or weeks in advance. This problem is exacerbated by absenteeism and other unknown organizational factors or unforeseen circumstances.

Employers ought to try to devise and implement work schedule management mechanisms which allow security staff to organize their private lives better and/or to make arrangements for changes in duty rosters sufficiently in advance.

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Human resources management and organizational culture may vary greatly from one country to the next, or from one company to the next (e.g. small- and medium-sized companies vs. multinational corporations). There is, however, a common characteristic: communication between private security staff and their hierarchy superiors is often limited. The lack of direct contact may have implications on the quality of the communication process and on the transfer of information and it could also increase the guard's feeling of isolation.

The employer ought to consider:

- Promoting a management style which takes more account of the opinions and complaints of workers so that they feel integrated and part of the company
- Encouraging the kind of social contact and support which workers so often request in the inspectors and supervisors (intermediate hierarchy) since these people have more contact with workers.

TRAINING AND INFORMATION IN RISK PREVENTION

The lack of information about existing risks at your place of work and a lack of information necessary for carrying out your job can be the cause of accidents at work and occupational illness, both for you and for others.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Inform you about the risks.
- Inform you about protective and preventive measures and activities concerning both the establishment where you are going to work and the job or function which you are going to have.
- Provide you with sufficient suitable information for your health and safety.
- Provide training which is specifically geared towards the job you are to do or the function you are to carry out.
- Provide you with training when:
 - you are hired
 - your functions adapt or change
 - changes occur in the equipment you work with
 - new technologies are introduced.

You must :

- As far as you are able, take care of your own health and safety in addition to that of people involved in your actions or your professional tasks, in accordance with the training and instructions you have received from your employer.

WORKING TIME

Time spent at work in the private security sector is atypical: night and weekend work, shift work[*], long working days and heavy weekly, monthly or overtime workloads.

The following are some of the effects of working hours on workers' health:

Eating disorders, sleeping disorders and fatigue

A human being's biological functions follow a cycle of approximately twenty-four hours. This cycle is called the circadian cycle or the biorhythm. Shift work and night work are the cause of a whole series of harmful effects as both imply a lag in the cycle:

- Changes in eating patterns; different mealtimes, often with a drop in the quality of the food - cold meals (sandwiches), fast eating, or not eating at regular times, etc. All of these result in a nutritional imbalance, digestive disorders and increased occurrence of obesity
- Alterations to sleeping patterns: disturbed sleeping patterns, drop in the quality of sleep (noise, lights), and the number of hours' sleep is often reduced
- A reduction in recuperation time, which results in the individual being tired more often
- Difficulties in remaining awake on the job, which results in an increased risk of committing mistakes and thus becoming the victim/cause of accidents.

[*] Definition.

Shift work : any method of organizing team work in which the workers take over successively from one another in the same activity following a specific pattern, including shift rotation, which can be continuous or not. This means that a worker must do shifts at different times over a specific period of days or weeks.

The social and psychological consequences of difficulties in reconciling private life with professional life

Shift work and night work also have an impact on a security guard's family and social life. Their life becomes out-of-step and follows a different rhythm from that of their family and friends: mealtimes and leisure time do not coincide with that of their close relatives.

There are many psychological and social consequences of this desynchronized lifestyle: e.g. stress, gradual isolation, irritability, marital problems (high incidence of divorce) and family-related problems, difficulties in assuming family responsibilities, etc.

Moreover, night work is often associated with a risk of alcohol abuse and smoking as well as with mental health problems, notably depression.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

The employer ought to consider :

- Giving you your work schedules for the coming months/weeks sufficiently in advance so as to enable you to organize your leisure time (activities, social relations, etc.) or get ready for your new rota.
- Observing sleep cycles as much as possible when organizing duty rosters.
- Promoting alternatives to rotating shifts.
- Promoting contingency schemes in order to cope with unexpected duties so as to avoid having to call on workers on their days off or during their breaks.
- Making it easier for security staff to have a balanced diet, hot meals and enough time to eat.
- Organizing work so as to make it easier for staff to reconcile their family life with their professional life.
- Organizing work schedules taking into account the problems related to night work or shift work (increasing rest periods between working days or shift changes).
- Providing health monitoring in order to detect lack of adaptation in workers to night work or shift work.
- ...

You ought to consider :

- Having as regular a sleep pattern as possible.
- Creating the right atmosphere for sleep (no noise or light).
- Avoiding medicine/stimulants (coffee, alcohol, etc.) which can affect sleep patterns.
- Having regular mealtimes.
- Avoiding large meals just before going to bed.
- Trying not to have cold meals or fast food too often (sandwiches, etc.).
- Trying not to restrict your social and family life too much.
- Doing regular exercise.
- ...

HEALTH ASSESSMENT AND TRANSFERRING NIGHT SHIFT WORKERS TO DAY SHIFTS

According to directive 93/104/CEE on certain aspects of working time arrangements, member states are to take the necessary measures so that :

- Night workers can have a free health check before being put on night shift and at regular intervals afterwards.
- Night workers suffering from recognised health problems associated with working at night can be transferred, whenever possible, to suitable day shift work.

This health check is subject to medical confidentiality criteria.

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTECTION

According to directive 93/104/CEE on certain aspects of working time arrangements, member states are to take the necessary measures so that :

- Night workers and shift workers enjoy health and safety protection which is adapted to the kind of work they do.
- Appropriate services or means of protection and prevention in health and safety of night workers and shift workers are equivalent to those applicable to other workers and are available at any time.



F. THE PHYSICAL WORKLOAD

These risks are general risks which affect all security guards, irrespective of the kind of job they do.

The risk factors related to the physical workload are primarily linked to:

- A. Moving from place to place
- B. Shift work, night work
- C. Forced or unsuitable working postures

Working postures often bring about physical fatigue and/or bodily harm: injuries and lesions (resulting from being stuck, crushed or bumping into objects), fractures and especially back pain, and pains and discomfort in lower limbs (legs, feet).

A. MOVING FROM PLACE TO PLACE

Moving around, especially on foot, as part of surveillance rounds may also constitute a significant physical strain, particularly in view of the distances to be covered, the features of the site to be inspected, and the time allotted for rounds and breaks.

B. SHIFT WORK AND NIGHT WORK

To the extent that shift work and night work have an impact on breaks, eating patterns and sleeping patterns, they also, directly or indirectly, determine the physical workload of the job (see pages 25-26).

C. POSTURE AT WORK

As far as working postures are concerned, those which cause the greatest problems are:

- seated posture
- a normal standing posture
- postures involved in the physical handling of loads.

Generally, guards tend to change posture regularly but in some jobs they spend most of their day in the same position – either standing or sitting.

Seated postures

Seated postures are the most frequent ones in activities involving observing screens or monitors as is the case in security control centres, alarm control centres and certain access control posts. These activities involve not only ergonomic risk, but also risks for the sight and mental workload problems.

RISK FACTORS

- The size of the work area: too small, not enough space for your legs, etc.
- Unsuitable basic working equipment (chair, table, footrest, hand-rests).
- Work organization: the tasks to be done, the time allotted for each of them, resting times, etc., are all elements which may determine the frequency and duration of certain working postures.
- General and/or specific lighting (work lamps) which does not provide enough light or a suitable contrast between the screen being used and the environment.
- The security guard: bad working habits (not adjusting equipment to his or her body features, etc.), bad posture habits (slightly bent back, working with the hands on different surfaces, twisting the torso sideways, etc.).

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Train you and inform you of the risks related to posture involved in seated jobs.
- Provide you with a good quality screen (which can be tilted and swivelled; the image on the screen should be stable and should not flicker or be unstable in any other way; the screen should not cause reflections or reverberations which might irritate the user).
- Provide you with an adjustable keyboard with a matt surface and sufficiently contrasted and legible keys.
- Provide you with a stable chair guaranteeing the necessary mobility for the job at hand, with adjustable seat height.
- Ensure there is enough space to allow changes in position and a certain freedom of movement.
- Arrange the work area so that sources of light (windows, transparent screens, etc.) do not directly blind the user and cause the least possible amount of reflection on the screen.
- ...

You must :

- Reduce the risk of bad posture habits.
- Improve your level of comfort by making sure there is enough space for your legs.
- Make sure that the work surface you are using is at the right height.
- Ensure that the screen is perpendicular to the windows.
- Arrange the items to be operated and/or used within an accessible workspace.
- Ensure that the top of the screen is at eye level.
- Keep the screen clean.
- Take regular breaks with a change in activity/posture if possible.
- Do exercises during breaks in order to enhance blood circulation.
- ...

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

Prolonged periods of working while sitting down may cause muscular pain in the upper part of the back, the shoulders, arms, etc. This can be linked to a bad position in front of screens or monitors and can also lead to awkward movements, trapped nerves, etc.

This kind of seated working environment is often linked to problems relating to sedentary work (lower back pains, blood circulation disorders in the legs) and to obesity. However, it can also cause eyestrain and other sight problems because often the work is carried out in front of monitoring screens.



Standing postures

Standing postures are frequent in access control and static surveillance activities. Standing is a natural posture for humans and so, in theory, does not pose any specific health problems. However, systematically

working in an upright position for considerable lengths of time may result in health problems for the workers in question.

RISK FACTORS

- Work organization (break times, number of breaks, tasks to be performed, etc.).
- The worker: bad posture habits, etc.
- The floor covering: e.g. metal or cement floors.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Train you and inform you of the risks related to posture involved in working standing up.
- Ensure that workers have adequate rest periods.
- ...

You must :

- Change posture frequently in order not to spend a long time in the same position.
- Not remain in a given position too long without moving.
- Ensure you have good working posture by observing the natural shape of the spine:
 - lean back slightly
 - head raised, with the neck straight
 - abdomen slightly in, not tensed, with the abdominal muscles slightly contracted.
- Do exercises during breaks in order to enhance blood circulation.
- Wear adequate footwear (shoes that do not modify the shape of the foot in any way, which keep the heel in place, allow the toes to move freely, and are comfortable, etc.).
- ...

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

The fact of regularly working standing up may result in painful feet, swelling of the legs, varicose veins, lower back pains, stiffness in the neck and shoulder muscles and joints, a general muscular fatigue as well as other health problems. It may even bring about a long-term degeneration of the tendons and ligaments.

Manual handling of loads

According to the European directive which sets the minimum health and safety requirements for manual handling of loads “*manual handling of loads means any activity involving transporting or supporting a load by one or several workers...*”.

These are general risks which involve all types of activity but particularly affect surveillance rounds.

When making his or her rounds, the guard should check and make sure that the facilities and equipment are in good working order in order to prevent any accidents at work. They should also make sure that passageways and floors are clear and free from obstacles. As part of this activity a guard may have to move and/or lift loads. The risks associated with manual handling of loads are mainly to do with the back.

RISK FACTORS

- The nature of the load: too heavy, too big, cumbersome, difficult to grasp, unstable, etc.
- The physical effort required: excessive effort requiring a twisting of the torso or bringing about a sudden movement of the load, etc.
- The surroundings: not enough space to move around, uneven or unstable ground surface, etc.
- The requirements of the task: excessive distances to lift, lower or move the load, involving physical efforts that put a strain on the spinal column, etc.
- The worker: a worker who is physically incapable of performing the task in question, unsuitable clothing, shoes or other personal belongings carried by the worker, etc.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Make sure that workers are properly trained and given precise information concerning the correct way to handle loads and the risks they may run if they do not perform these kinds of operations following the correct procedure.
- ...

You must :

- Keep your back straight, bend from the knees and use your legs to take the strain.
- Stand with your legs slightly apart.
- Hold the object firmly, in both hands.
- Pick up the object with your arms stretched downwards, as close as possible to your body.
- Avoid turning your body when lifting, carrying and putting down objects.
- Move your feet to turn.
- ...

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

Manual handling of loads may constitute a risk of injury and, in some circumstances, occupational illnesses resulting from physical strain, being crushed, bumps and bad posture. They are very often at the origin of back problems or pains.

G. THE PSYCHOSOCIAL WORKLOAD

The psychosocial workload is a general concept comprising several facets. In this manual we shall focus primarily on:

1. Motivation and satisfaction at work
2. Occupational stress
3. Mental workload
4. Emotional workload

1. MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION AT WORK

Job satisfaction and motivation are related to the fulfilment of a number of psychosocial criteria:

Criteria unrelated to the task being performed

The fulfilment of criteria like job security, favourable working conditions, equitable pay, etc. can enhance workers' feelings of job satisfaction. On the other hand, factors like lack of job security, difficult working conditions, pay that is considered to be insufficient and which requires individuals to do overtime in order to have what they consider to be decent income, limited promotion possibilities, difficulties in reconciling work with family commitments, etc. are all elements that can contribute to dissatisfaction and to a general negative feeling at work.

Criteria related to the task being performed

In order for workers to feel motivated, fulfilling the criteria above is a necessary precondition but it is not enough in itself. It is equally necessary for workers to be given the opportunity to learn, to improve their professional skills and to take initiatives at work. Whilst these conditions do exist for some jobs or activities within the sector, it is far from being the case for others, such as those in which workers feel that they are doing a monotonous, routine job which is neither stimulating nor rewarding. This can lead to demotivation.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Ensure that collective agreements and workers' economic and social rights are respected.

The employer ought to consider :

- Improving workers' prospects by drawing up career plans which combine qualifications and progress in the job.
- Promoting ongoing training, especially in line with developments in security sector professions.
- Introducing changes in jobs in order to diversify tasks/activities and to ensure that they make sense to the workers.
- Promoting job rotation.
- ...

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

Job satisfaction and motivation have an impact on the workers' wellbeing and on their physical and mental health. The inverse relationship between motivation and tiredness is well known, for example. Carrying out a task without much motivation can quickly lead to symptoms of tiredness. Conversely, if motivation is high tiredness may not be felt until it has reached a high level (sometimes even bordering on exhaustion). So, the threshold for feeling tired is highly dependent on the motivation of workers and the energy they are prepared to muster. Job satisfaction and motivation can thus be powerful factors in building up health.



2. OCCUPATIONAL STRESS

There are a great number of definitions of stress. They all have one thing common though: stress is a state that is perceived as being negative and is associated with physical, mental and/or social complaints or disorders. There is also a certain amount of agreement on the causes of stress - it results from an imbalance between the demands of the job and workers' resources; in other words, they are not able to meet the demands put on them by their job.

Here we shall limit ourselves to consideration of the most commonly mentioned sources of stress in the sector.

The feeling of job insecurity

The concept of job insecurity refers to a feeling of vulnerability experienced by workers. Job insecurity, then, can be defined as the subjective feeling in private security staff caused not only by the fear of losing their job (through dismissal or the inability to reconcile their professional and private lives, etc.), but also by the fear of the loss or erosion of a series of working conditions by which the workers set great store: the possibility of moving up in the company, a degree of independence in doing the job, good working hours, having a good relationship with the client, working in a good team, etc.

Conflict in relationships at work

(with colleagues, superiors, clients or clients of the client)

Security guards carry out their work in a social working environment. They must constantly coordinate their activity with that of others. Depending on its quality, the relationship they have with superiors, colleagues and clients may or may not become a cause of stress. In order to successfully coordinate social interaction with the various parties concerned, there must be a climate of trust. But trust is not established straight away: it requires time, a certain degree of stability within the staff, and areas and moments for social interaction. As the sector is characterized by considerable staff turnover rates, there are many changes in staff teams. Some workers leave the sector, while others do not really commit themselves (they know they are only going to be there for a short period of time), replacements only stay for a short time or are inexperienced (young people, temps), and are often unaware of the risks, etc. For all these reasons, social relationships between colleagues can become a significant source of stress.

The gap between tasks assigned and tasks performed

In the private security sector, in certain activities, instructions concerning work are very precisely specified. In reality, however, the tasks assigned are subject to constant change as a result of unpredictable factors, unforeseen events and additional demands from some clients. The difference between these sets of instructions can become a source of tension for security guards.

Role ambiguity

Role ambiguity is defined as the absence of clarity regarding the individual's role in the workplace, the objectives to be reached and the extent of his/her responsibilities. Generally speaking and according to the law, the role of private security staff is above all one of prevention and dissuasion and they do not have any more rights than an ordinary citizen. However, in exercising their duties, they are often asked by the client, service users, and the general public to exceed their role and responsibilities and to act in a way that is wholly illegitimate or in a way in which they are not competent to act. This kind of ambiguity can also become a significant source of stress.

Rehiring staff

Uncertainty surrounding the reallocation of a contract can also create a great deal of insecurity. When a contract is awarded to another company, security staff often do not know whether they will be kept on by the new company (and under which conditions, etc.), or whether they will stay with their current employer (and, subsequently, what their new post will be, etc.). These tensions may be exacerbated if the uncertainty continues over a period of several months; this is a fertile breeding ground for the circulation of all manner of rumours which make the workers feel even more insecure.

Feelings of fear

(especially when facing risk of attack)

Some workers can feel afraid for a number of reasons: they are working alone; they are faced with confrontational work situations which entail risks of being assaulted or because of previous traumatic experiences which have not been entirely dealt with. It is difficult to estimate the number of guards that live with this feeling or have experienced it at some point or other in the course of their career. This feeling of fear is a constant source of anxiety for those who experience it.

Post-traumatic stress

This is stress resulting from a traumatic experience (most notably after violent episodes in the workplace). The victims of post-traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) experience symptoms of intense psychological distress and avoidance (avoiding the scene of the traumatic incident and not talking about it), irritability and loss of concentration.

Stress related to operations

Security guards go through periods of relative tranquillity which are often abruptly interrupted by periods of great psychological tension. They are often called upon to intervene without having the slightest idea of the situation they will encounter. This tension remains until they arrive on the scene and assesses the situation and the nature of the problem.

Time pressure

Some jobs/security activities require a series of time considerations to be met. These are generally dictated by the way that the work is organized and/or the client: respecting operational response times, respecting the frequency of a series of operations, etc. This kind of time pressure can also be a source of stress, particularly because unpredictable factors and unforeseen circumstances can lead to failure to comply with these kinds of requirements.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Stress is often viewed as a highly subjective, extremely complex issue and thus, very difficult to define. It must be acknowledged that this phenomenon is more complex to deal with than the so-called traditional occupational hazards - physical, chemical, electrical, etc. Nevertheless, it is possible to prevent work-related stress or to deal with it effectively.

Your employer must :

- Assess the risk of stress for each post.
- Implement a stress prevention policy.
- Prevent or neutralize work-related stress by reviewing the schedules (for instance, by avoiding excess workloads), by improving the social support structure and by adequately rewarding efforts made, etc.
- Adapt work to the individual.
- Allocate tasks appropriately according to the experience and knowledge of workers.
- Promote skills development, autonomy and participation of workers in taking decisions
- Improve vertical communication.
- ...

If you suffer from stress you must :

- Go and see the health and safety manager or representative of your company, the risk prevention representative, a GP or the company doctor responsible for medical supervision.
- Seek support (from your colleagues, your family, your managers, etc.).
- Not suffer in silence, isolate yourself, be ashamed, etc.
- Take action as soon as the first signs of stress appear (in order to avoid aggravating the problem).
- ...



THE EFFECTS OF STRESS ON HEALTH

In general, stress is linked to a higher degree of absenteeism and greater chances of accidents in workers and to a drop in their level of performance. It also affects companies: drops in productivity, deterioration in the atmosphere at work, increased staff turnover, more accidents.

Stress shows itself in different ways and to differing degrees. They are often inter-linked. Manifestations of stress can be classified in four groups according to whether they are physiological, behavioural, emotional or cognitive.

Physiological manifestations

- Heart problems
- Muscle pain
- Back problems or pains
- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Sleeping problems
- Digestion problems
- Sexual problems
- Weaknesses in the immune system
- ...

Cognitive manifestations

- Memory problems
- Concentration difficulties
- Indecisiveness
- Errors in judgement
- ...

Emotional manifestations

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Nervousness
- Depression
- Frustration
- Problems of self-esteem
- ...

Behavioural manifestations

- Heavy smoking
- Alcoholism
- Social isolation
- Family break-ups
- Dietary problems
- Absenteeism
- ...

Other sources of stress are analysed in other parts of this manual:

- The dual hierarchy (page 24)
- Excess/insufficient mental workloads (page 35)
- Working hours (pages 25-26)
- Difficulties in reconciling professional life with private life (page 26)
- Lone working (page 24)
- The nature of the physical working environment (noise, low temperatures, etc.) (pages 44 to 47)
- The physical workload (pages 27 to 30)
- Working with the public (clients, service users, etc.) (page 36)
- Bullying, sexual harassment (pages 19 to 20)
- ...

It has to be remembered that there are personal and interpersonal factors which can increase the risk of stress at work (training, financial and family situation, social isolation. etc.).

3. MENTAL WORKLOAD

Mental workload denotes all of the tensions experienced by workers which are specific to the mental demands of the job (perception and processing of information, cognitive processes involved in memorization, reasoning, problem-solving, etc.). Mental workload can vary from one type of job to another because of:

- the requirements of the task
- the physical working conditions (noise, lighting, climatic conditions, etc.) (see pages 44 to 47)
- social and organizational factors (monitoring, supervision and communication structures in the company, atmosphere at work, etc.) (see pages 24 to 26)
- ...

In terms of task requirements, information processing tasks require the following from the security guard:

- attention
- concentration. Take, for instance, security staff who have to focus their attention on screens or monitors (security centres, alarm centres, etc.) for long periods.

- coordination. Sometimes attention must be focused on several elements/people at the same time in order to be able to react quickly to something unexpected or to solve a problem. This implies converting several pieces of information into a course of action.

The mental workload of tasks to be performed also depends on other factors such as:

- the guard's responsibility vis-à-vis co-workers, the client
- duration of the activity (working hours, breaks)
- danger (possible assaults, etc.).

Within the sector, different activities/jobs require highly different kinds of mental effort. For instance, in certain access control jobs, guards have to identify dozens of individuals an hour, answer the telephone, concentrate on the surveillance monitors, take decisions quickly (without having all the necessary information), give a good impression, etc. All of these tasks involve processing of a great deal of information and triggering of cognitive processes such as reasoning, problem-solving, understanding, interpretation, etc. This can lead to mental overload.

The opposite kind of problem can also occur. There are certain night jobs where the guard has to monitor the client's premises alone; the workload is, in theory, far less demanding and, sometimes not very stimulating. This "insufficient mental workload" may have just as many negative effects on health as excess mental workload. When the activity or task requires little or no mental effort, security staff have to make an effort to remain attentive and awake and to concentrate. These situations or activities may result in drowsiness, a drop in vigilance and a reduction in the ability to react, which is a side-effect of monotony.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Train you and inform you about the risks in terms of mental workload, as well as preventive measures to be adopted.
- Analyse the demands in terms of mental workload of each post/activity as well as the physical, social and organizational conditions in which the task is performed.
- Adapt the way in which the work is done, taking your experiences and skills into account.
- Make sure that the design of workplaces and organization reduce monotony at work.
- Reshape the job content by making the activity/task more stimulating.
- Provide breaks to allow you to recover after hard periods of work.

You must :

- Act according to the information and training you have been given.
- Try, if possible, to plan and organize the work you have to avoid mental overload.

Furthermore, eating well, moderate physical exercise and resting properly can all help you to cope with the tiredness and tension that the mental workload can cause.

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

Situations of excessive or insufficient mental workload can have a negative impact on health: tension, stress, sense of monotony, mental fatigue, general tiredness, etc. Mental and nervous fatigue are generally associated with short-term absenteeism (tiredness, muscular pains, headaches, digestion problems). They can also have an effect on the worker's emotional state (irritability, sadness) and behaviour (alcohol abuse and or/smoking, aggressiveness, etc.).



4. EMOTIONAL WORKLOAD

Emotional workload relates to the emotional reactions experienced when working in circumstances and conditions which are less than ideal or perceived as unsuitable.

In some jobs (access monitoring, surveillance of public places, etc.) the security guard's work is above all "relational work" i.e. work involving interaction with other people. In their contact with the public they have to be constantly accessible, constantly use polite language, always

project a professional image, have a pleasant and polite manner, be friendly without being too informal, efficient but not overzealous, etc.

This constant need to make "a good impression" and to "keep the right distance" with the person you are dealing with is not something which comes naturally to everyone. It can lead to tension when the guard is confronted by clients, service users and people who are abusive, aggressive and rude. He or she must keep calm (and sometimes smile) – i.e. send a contradictory double message to

the body: the first message is to prepare the body to respond to hostility and the second is to prevent it from reacting immediately.

This "relational" aspect of the job therefore requires control over the emotions (emotional behaviour skills), i.e. comprehension, assessment and management of your own emotions as well as those of others. This can entail a very significant emotional workload, which is often minimized but can have a major impact on the worker's wellbeing.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Train you in "emotional behaviour" (awareness of the role of emotions in an individual's working life, understanding and controlling your own emotional reactions on the job, adapting the way you communicate to the emotional climate specific to each situation, etc.).
- Inform you of the risks related to the emotional and relational sides of the job and the preventive measures to be adopted.
- Analyse the demands in terms of emotional workload of each job/activity as well as the physical, social and organizational conditions in which the work is done.
- Adapt the work system to you by taking your experiences and skills into account.
- Provide you with social and psychological support when you are subjected to a considerable emotional workload.
- ...

You must :

- Follow the training, information and instructions you have been given.
- ...



H. SPECIFIC RISKS FACING FEMALE SECURITY PERSONNEL

In this traditionally male sector, female security guards are in a minority. The proportion of women varies from one country to another, but rarely exceeds 20%. We thought it important to devote a separate section to them for two main reasons:

– because of a certain gender-based division in the work in the sector

Whilst women are to be found in all activities within the sector, there tends to be a higher proportion of them in places like large stores, reception areas and in jobs where superficial body searches are necessary, such as in airports. Most of these jobs require constant contact with the public. Women are therefore more at risk of physical and verbal violence, stress and problems related to the emotional side of the work.

– because they are a minority in a traditionally male sector

Both workplaces and risk prevention policies must adapt to women joining the sector. Changes in the following are of particular importance:

- Changing rooms and toilet facilities. Separate changing rooms and toilet facilities (or separate use) must be provided for men and women.
- Work clothes. Work clothes modified for pregnancy must be provided.
- Maternity care.

The fact that women are a minority in a sector which is largely male also increases the probability that they will suffer sexual harassment. Studies show that sexual harassment is more prevalent in predominantly male professions than in those where the proportion of men and women is more balanced.

It is important for the specific risks to which female guards are exposed to be taken into consideration during risk assessments and when setting company prevention policies.

MATERNITY CARE

The nature, degree and duration of exposure of pregnant workers (or those who have recently given birth, or those who are breast-feeding) to any activity likely to pose a specific physical risk (handling loads, movements and postures, moving from place to place, mental and physical tiredness) or exposure to biological and chemical substances must be evaluated by the employer in order to:

- determine any health and safety risk or any possible effect on pregnancy or breast-feeding.
- determine which measures to adopt.

If the assessment shows that there is a risk for health and safety or an effect on pregnancy or breast-feeding, the employer must take the necessary steps, through temporary modifications in the working conditions and/or work schedules of the worker concerned, to prevent exposure to the risk or risks in question. If that is not possible, the employer must make provisions for a change in post. If such a change is not possible, the worker (in accordance with national practice and legislation) must be released from work obligations for the required period of time.



3. Risks related to the post held

By risks related to the job or post held we mean risks resulting from the physical environment in which the work is carried out. Insofar as security guards often work at the client's premises, these risks are related to the activities and installations of the client. These risks are less specific to security activities, but even so they are still just as dangerous or frequent as the others mentioned. In fact, accident statistics show that risks like falls, slips, getting stuck and road accidents are very frequent in this sector.

Risks resulting from the job or post held are divided into the following categories:

A. Safety risks

B. Risks related to the working environment.

A. SAFETY RISKS

There are numerous safety-related risk factors and it is vital that security staff be well aware of them, for their own personal safety and physical wellbeing as well as those of others.

The safety-related hazards are as follows:

1. Risk of falls, slips and trips
2. Risk of collisions, bumps and jamming
3. Risk of road accidents
4. Risk of electrical accidents
5. Risk of fire

As far as the safety-related risks are concerned, there is a series of general preventive measures which apply to all circumstances and which are the responsibility of security staff:

- Inspection of the premises
- Identification of potential risks
- Implementing suitable preventive measures
- Communication of any irregularity or accident to those in charge.

1. RISK OF FALL, SLIPS AND TRIPS

A significant number of occupational accidents are related to moving around the client company's premises, either inside or outside the buildings. These are mainly falls on the same level and those from a height.

This is a general risk which mainly affects static surveillance, rounds and surveillance patrols.

WARNING SIGNS – PROHIBITION



Pedestrian access prohibited

WARNING SIGNS – DANGER



Danger of tripping



Danger of drop

INTERVENING FACTORS

- **The state of the floors:** slippery floors (as a result of cleaning products, climatic conditions), naturally slippery surfaces (tiled or marble floors), irregular or uneven surfaces (steps, pavement, sloping surface), damaged surfaces (holes, loose flagstones), etc.
- **Permanent or temporary obstacles:** cables, machines, assorted objects (boxes, tools, machines, furniture), etc.
- **Insufficient lighting** (especially in stairwells and passageways), meaning that slippery surfaces or objects causing obstructions cannot be seen.
- **Badly lit stairs**, with no ramp, too steep, with broken or slippery steps.
- **Bad or even nonexistent signposting of dangerous areas** (junctions, uneven areas, passages, etc.).
- **Unsuitable shoes** (open shoes, flat soles), shoes that are worn out or dirty.
- **Emergency situations:** when the guard has to run in the course of an operation, etc.
- **The security guard:** running without reason, doing rounds without switching on the lights because of overconfidence or familiarity with the building, taking shortcuts or using unauthorized passageways or those that are not suitable for use.

NATURE OF INJURIES

The injuries caused by falls, slips and trips may vary a great deal: fractures, wounds, sprains, contusions, etc.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Inform you about risks of slips, trips and falls at your place of work.
- Make safety shoes available, if necessary, after the risk assessment is carried out.
- ...

The client must :

- Install warning indicators (signs, floor markings, etc.) when the risk of trips and falls cannot be prevented through other measures.
- Provide sufficient lighting (especially in stairwells and passageways).
- Install and maintain measures designed to counter the risk of falls (handrails, railings).
- Inform you and/or your employer about risks of slips, trips and falls.
- ...

You must :

- Make sure that you carry out a visual inspection of work areas in order to identify the potential hazards of falls and slips.
- Check that the anti-fall fittings and protective measures are in good condition.
- Keep passageways and surfaces free from obstacles.
- Respect warning signs.
- Use the appropriate access ways.
- Use the lights in passageways.
- Use torches.
- Wear suitable shoes with anti-slip soles, if necessary, depending on the risk assessment
- Act in a level-headed fashion even in case of an emergency.
- Point out any irregularity or situation that does not comply with the relevant regulations.
- ...

2. RISK OF COLLISIONS, BUMPS AND JAMMING

Collisions, bumps and jamming involve fixed objects (idle machinery, tools, furniture, etc.), or moving objects (machines placed in passageways, vehicles, etc.).

This is a general risk which mainly affects static surveillance, rounds and surveillance patrols.

WARNING SIGNS - PROHIBITION



Maintenance vehicles prohibited

WARNING SIGNS - DANGER



Maintenance vehicles

RISK FACTORS

- Cramped working space (too small, bad arrangement of furniture, etc.).
- Passageways that are too narrow or cluttered with discarded objects or permanent fixtures (furniture).
- Sliding and automatic doors.
- Machines, motorized vehicles (poor marking of circulation areas), vehicles with no means of warning or indicating (sound, lights, etc.).
- Manual handling of loads.
- Emergency situations: when the guard has to run in the course of an operation, etc
- The security guard: running without reason, doing rounds without switching on lights because of overconfidence or familiarity with the building, taking shortcuts or using unauthorized passageways or those that are not suitable for use.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Inform you about the risks of collisions, bumps and jamming at your place of work.
- Make PPE - personal protective equipment - (safety shoes, etc.) available, if necessary, after the risk assessment is carried out.
- ...

The client must :

- Install warning indicators when the risk of collisions, bumps and getting jammed cannot be prevented through other measures.
- Provide sufficient lighting (especially in stairwells and passageways).
- Organize the circulation of people and vehicles properly.
- Inform you and/or your employer about risks of collision, bumps and getting jammed.
- ...

You must :

- Make sure that you carry out a visual inspection of work areas in order to identify the potential hazards of collisions, bumps and jamming.
- Arrange your work space in the best possible way in order to ensure sufficient freedom of movement.
- Not perform any tasks which are not your responsibility or which you have not been trained for.
- Keep passageways clear and use lights.
- Point out any irregularity or situation that does not comply with the relevant regulations.
- ...

WARNING SIGNS - OBLIGATIONS



Protective footwear must be worn



Protective headgear must be worn



Pedestrians must use this walkway



Protective gloves must be worn



Protective bodywear must be worn

NATURE OF INJURIES

The injuries resulting from collisions, bumps and getting jammed can vary greatly: fractures, wounds, sprains, contusions, etc.

3. RISK OF ROAD ACCIDENTS

Work-related road accidents include accidents while out on an assignment, i.e. when on the road because of the job, or accidents taking place on the journey from home to the workplace. Sector statistics for accidents at work show that there is a considerable risk in this area.

This is a general risk which affects all security staff going to work in a vehicle and also a specific risk in certain surveillance activities: patrols, interventions following an alarm.



RISK FACTORS

- Vehicles in a poor state of repair.
- The environment: bad weather conditions, night-time driving, poor visibility, traffic.
- The situation: time constraints or limitations.
- The driver.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Make sure that vehicles are in a good state of repair.
- Regularly service vehicles.
- Have the necessary equipment for breakdowns (warning triangles, tools for changing wheels, etc.).
- Organize staff movements properly (timetables, journey times, routes, weather conditions, etc.).
- Make allowances for unforeseen traffic conditions when drawing up work schedules.
- Check regularly on the medical suitability of security staff.
- ...

You must :

- Not drive under the effects of alcohol/drugs/medicine.
- Not drive while using the telephone or any other means of communication (except if the car is fitted with a hands-free kit).
- Observe the highway code, speed limits, signs, etc.
- ...

NATURE OF INJURIES

The nature and seriousness of any injuries may vary considerably depending on the nature of the accident.

- Light injuries: superficial lesions, light knocks and traumas.
- Serious injuries: serious traumas and wounds, etc.
- Death.

4. RISK OF ELECTRICAL ACCIDENTS

The risk of an electrical accident is often the result of faulty machinery or equipment, faulty electrical wiring or careless use. Electrical accidents can also cause other accidents, fires and/or explosions.

This is a general hazard which affects all security activities.

WARNING SIGNS – DANGER



Electrical danger

RISK FACTORS

- Damaged cables with bare conducting wire.
- Plugs or extension leads in poor condition or incorrectly used.
- Plugs or sockets without earthing terminals.
- Poorly isolated or protected machines or material.
- Use of electrical appliances or handling of live sockets that are in contact with water or with wet hands.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Inform you about the electrical risks at your place of work.
- ...

The client must :

- Make sure that the electrical system is safe.
- Inform you and/or your employer about the electrical risks at your place of work.
- ...

You must :

- Check that electrical devices are in good condition before using them.
- Check the state of cables, extension leads and plugs.
- Not unplug equipment by pulling the cable. Pull on the plug itself while holding the wall socket in the other hand.
- Never touch a switch, socket or electrical appliance with wet hands.
- Not carry out any kind of DIY work. Never attempt to repair or replace a faulty cable.
- Not overload circuits by connecting several plugs to the same socket.
- Only use sockets and plugs that are fully compatible.
- ...

NATURE OF INJURIES

Electrical hazards can have dangerous consequences like:

- Electric shock: electrical discharge received by the body which results in a tetanization of the muscles, which may cause the victim to fall.
- Electrocution: an electric shock resulting in death as a result of cardiac arrest.
- Skin burns affecting the areas that have been in contact with the electrical current.

The seriousness of injuries is linked to other factors such as the intensity of the electrical discharge, the length of contact, the individual's capacity to react, etc.

5. RISK OF FIRE

The tasks of security staff include fire prevention and detection. Security guards are therefore supposed to have acquired a certain amount of basic knowledge about fires in the course of their training: their sources, common causes of fires, basic principles of fire and combustion, ways in which fire spreads, types of fire according to the surface burning as well as measures to be taken in order to fight fires.

Fire hazards are a general risk which affects all activities in the sector, but especially surveillance activities, rounds and patrols.

FIRE FIGHTING SIGNS



Telephone for fire fighting



Fire hose



Ladder



Fire extinguisher



Route to fire fighting material

WARNING SIGNS – DANGER



Flammable material or high temperatures



Explosive material



Combustible material

WARNING SIGNS - PROHIBITION



No smoking



Naked flames prohibited and no smoking



Do not extinguish with water

RISK FACTORS

- Combustible products and substances: accumulation of gas due to a lack of ventilation, improper storage of combustible products or materials, heat sources in close proximity to combustible products, etc.
- Poor state of electrical installations and appliances.
- Certain work areas where flammable materials, combustible substances or explosives are stored, etc.
- Overheated machines or equipment.
- Lack of maintenance of working areas and materials: full dustbins, oil or petrol on the ground, etc.
- Lack or poor state of fire-detection systems and alarms.
- Fire extinguishers which are missing, in a poor state, badly placed, lacking in number, inadequate for the combustibles that are present in the work place, poor indication of the location of extinguishers, etc.
- Cluttered staircases and exits.
- Bad (or inexistent) indication of emergency exits.
- Carelessness: presence of smokers, basic precautions not taken when carrying out certain activities (welding, drilling, etc.).
- The security guard: poor knowledge of the building, misunderstanding of fire procedures, poor training (lack of knowledge of fire extinguishers, the way they work), etc.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Inform you about fire hazards at your place of work.
- ...

The client must :

- Make sure that the electrical system is safe.
- Inform you and/or your employer about fire risks at your place of work (presence of explosive or flammable materials, etc., presence of sources of flames or sparks, etc.).
- Set up and comply with fire fighting measures (signs concerning fire fighting material or equipment and, if necessary, fire detectors and alarm systems).
- ...

You must :

- Prevent the combination of the three basic elements of fire: fuel, oxygen and heat.
- Search immediately for sources of leaks of oil or any other flammable liquid.
- Remove work clothes or any other flammable objects from heating devices and replace any missing fireguards.
- Remove any flammable objects that are placed in close proximity to a heat source and put them in a safe place.
- Respect the no-smoking signs.
- ...

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

The main dangers of fire are toxic smoke and fumes which may result in asphyxia or carbon monoxide poisoning. There is also a high risk of burns from fire. There are three degrees of burn:

- First degree burns which affect the surface of the skin: red skin, scalding, swelling.
- Second degree burns, which are characterized by blisters filled with liquid.
- Third degree burns, which involve the complete burning of the skin, which becomes dark brown, with black stripes and which is no longer painful.

Burns are an injury like any other; it is therefore necessary to make sure that a tetanus vaccination is valid or has been given.

Fires may also result in death.

B. RISKS RELATED TO THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

This category is to do with the effects of exposure to:

1. Physical hazards such as noise or cold
2. Chemical hazards such as gas and other dangerous products
3. Biological hazards such as microorganisms and cell cultures.

Most of these risks are not inherent in guarding activities but they are connected with the activities of the client company or with the nature and characteristics of its installations.

Minimum requirements for workplaces

The following requirements must be met in order to guarantee a healthy, safe working environment for security staff:

- A sufficient quantity of healthy air.
- An adequate temperature; neither too high nor too low.
- Sufficient natural light and/or mechanisms ensuring adequate artificial lighting.
- Separate changing areas or separate use of changing areas for men and women.
- Separate toilet facilities or separate use of toilet facilities for men and women.
- The presence of signs relating to safety and/or health in the workplace.
- A safe electrical system;
- Measures to fight fires and, if necessary, fire detectors and alarm systems.
- Doors that can be opened from the inside without special assistance being required.

- Mechanical doors and gates that can be operated without posing a risk of accidents.
- Sufficient artificial lighting in outdoor working areas when natural light is insufficient.
- If workers are assigned to outdoor posts, they should, as much as possible, be kitted out in such a way so as to ensure that they:
 - are protected against the elements and, if necessary, falling objects
 - are not exposed to harmful noise levels nor to harmful outdoor conditions (e.g. from gases, fumes, dust)
 - can quickly leave their post in case of danger and can be quickly rescued
 - are not likely to slip or fall.

The fact you are employees of a different company from the one you are assigned to in no way diminishes your basic rights to a working environment which takes into account the things mentioned above.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Your employer must :

- Inform you about the risks related to your place of work.
- Cooperate with the client company to make sure that you work in a well-ventilated, safe workplace with enough natural and artificial light.
- ...

The client must :

- Cooperate with your employer to guarantee your health, safety and wellbeing at your place of work.
- Ensure that you have in fact received appropriate instructions regarding health and safety risks during your activities at the company's premises.
- Ensure that technical maintenance of workplaces and their different facilities and installations is carried out and that regular maintenance checks and monitoring of the functioning of security mechanisms is done.
- Provide for or guarantee that health and/or safety at work signs are present where risks cannot be prevented or sufficiently limited using collective, protective technical means or through measures, methods and procedures of work organization.
- ...

You must :

- Respect and act according to the instructions, information and training you have been given.
- Point out any irregularity to those in charge with regard to your work environment.
- ...



1. PHYSICAL HAZARDS

Physical hazards such as noise, heat, cold, a lack of light, inadequate humidity, bad ventilation and possible exposure to radiation must also be taken into consideration in any risk assessment exercise since they are the cause of accidents, diseases and various kinds of discomfort.

Noise

Noise is a habitual factor in the workplace. Although most of the time there is no risk of loss of hearing, it can cause considerable hearing damage.

Noise is a general hazard which affects all sector activities.

WARNING SIGNS - OBLIGATIONS



Hearing protection is compulsory

RISK FACTORS

- Ambient noise in the workplace (noise of the building's installations, noise of machinery, office equipment, noise caused by human beings, crowds, etc.).
- The worker's attitude to noise: if the worker is not happy at work, he or she will be more sensitive to noise or, in any case, perceive it as a source of annoyance.
- The task: the noise will be all the more disturbing if it interferes with the job or if the job is very complex.
- Detonation of ammunition during shooting practice.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Identify the source(s) of the noise.
- Limit or reduce noise at source.
- Promote working habits and behaviour that are not noisy.
- Provide you with personal protective equipment (earplugs and/or a helmet for shooting practice, for example).
- ...

You must :

- Adopt working habits and behaviour that are not noisy.
- Use PPE (personal protective equipment) if necessary and make sure you use it correctly.
- Point out any defect or discomfort of the PPE.
- Notify those in charge about any noise irregularities in the workplace.
- ...

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

The effects of noise on human hearing depend on the noise level and on the duration of exposure. The effects of noise can be highly diverse. This is why it is difficult to predict the impact it may have on an individual or a group of people. The most common effects include physiological (headaches, loss of hearing or even deafness) or even psychological impairment (loss of concentration, nervousness).

Unsuitable levels of ventilation, humidity and temperature

Whether for inside a building or for outdoor jobs, certain minimum conditions in terms of temperature, humidity and ventilation must be observed. These conditions must be fulfilled taking into account the specific nature of the job or assignment, the level of physical activity required and the security guard's work clothing.

The risks related to unsuitable levels of temperature, humidity or ventilation are general risks which affect all activities of the sector.

RISK FACTORS

- Lack of healthy air.
- Unsuitable levels of temperature, humidity and air circulation.
- Working in bad weather conditions, when it is extremely hot or extremely cold.
- Work arrangements that do not provide protection from the cold or heat (shelter, heating, access to cold drinking water, etc.) or exposure to unsuitable temperatures for excessively long periods.
- The security guard: inappropriate work clothing, etc.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Provide, if necessary, air conditioning, ventilation and dehumidification of the air.
- Ensure that there is a sufficient supply of fresh air in enclosed work spaces.
- Protect workers operating in bad weather conditions.
- Organize the work schedule in such a way that heat stroke or hypothermia are avoided.
- Provide you with suitable work clothing: thick trousers, long-sleeved shirts and/or jacket and anorak (or the equivalent) in winter, and light trousers and short-sleeved shirt in summer.

You must :

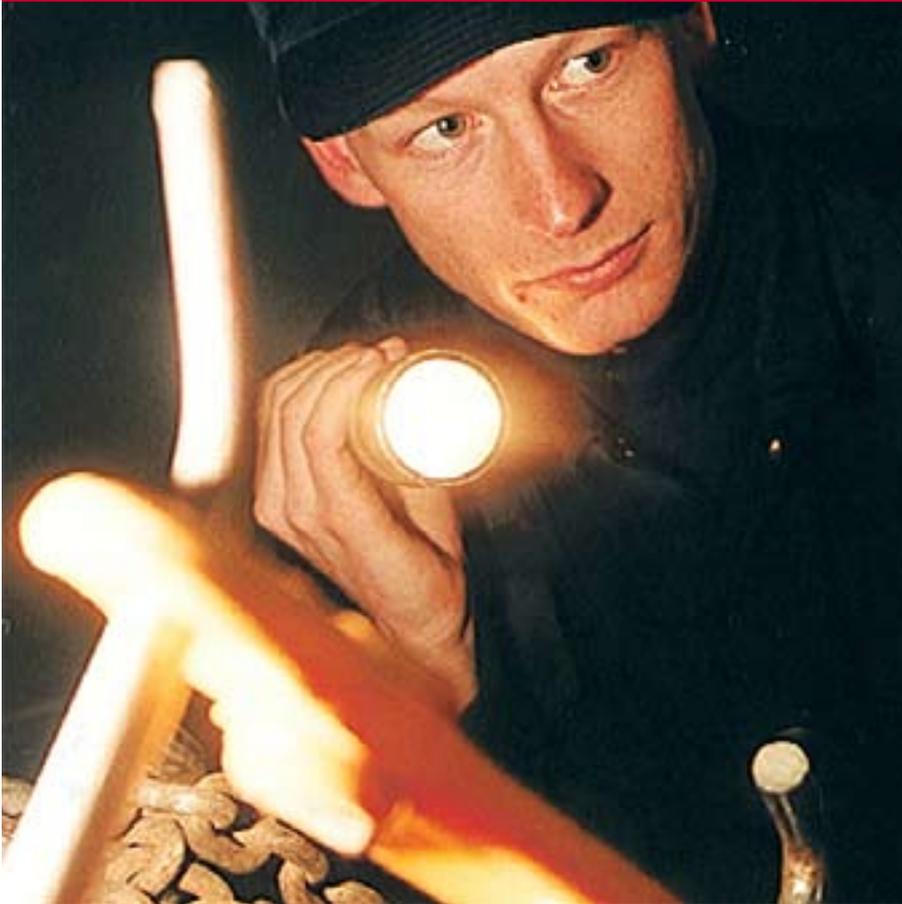
- Compensate salt loss in the body by drinking water frequently.
- Wear appropriate work clothing.
- ...

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

The unsuitable conditions we have just listed can cause a variety of annoyances and forms of discomfort: drowsiness, colds.

In an environment in which the temperature is very high, the security guard runs the risk of dehydration, sunstroke, fainting and skin or heart troubles.

In very low temperatures, the dangers facing a security guard include hypothermia, redness of the skin in the most sensitive areas of the body (fingers, toes, nose and earlobes).



Insufficient or unsuitable lighting

Being able to see properly depends on a good lighting system. Naturally, the best level of lighting depends on the type of activities and the nature of the job or assignment being carried out.

This is a general hazard which affects all security activities.

RISK FACTORS

- Lack of lighting (poor or no lighting in work areas, passageways, alleys or stairwells).
- Glaring lights (naked bulb in the field of vision, working with a screen, the sun's rays, etc.).

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer/the client must :

- Ensure sufficient and adequate lighting levels in all work areas.
- Provide sufficient lighting (especially in stairwells and passageways).
- Try to use natural light as much as possible.
- Make sure lights can be separately regulated (depending on the task to be executed and the operator).
- Provide you with torches, if necessary.
- ...

You must :

- Make sure that your torches are kept in good working order.
- Turn on the lights in corridors, stairwells and passageways.
- Point out any irregularity or situation that does not comply with the relevant regulations on lighting.
- ...

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

The effects on health of bad lighting may include eye fatigue (either through the excessive use of the eye-lash muscles, or the effect of excessive contrasts on the retina, general fatigue, headaches and stress). What is more, insufficient and/or unsuitable lighting can also cause accidents.

2. BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

These hazards are related to workers being exposed to biological agents, i.e. microorganisms, cell cultures and parasites living in the human body which may cause infections, allergies or poisoning. These microorganisms can penetrate the human body through a wound, an animal bite or needle injuries. They can also be inhaled or swallowed.

This is a general risk which affects all security staff in contact with the public (access monitoring, demonstration surveillance, etc.). (See page 21 for biological risks posed by dogs).

WARNING SIGNS – DANGER



Biological hazard

RISK FACTORS

- Attackers, service users, clients, injured or sick individuals, etc. There are various situations in which security guards may be exposed to biological agents: through constant contact with sick people (in a hospital, etc.), through passing contact with a sick person - for instance as a result of a rescue, etc.
- The quality of air indoors.
- Certain work environments: food production facilities, clinical and veterinary laboratories, waste elimination facilities, water treatment plants, etc.
- The security guard: lack of knowledge of biological hazards and of the proper way of reacting in conflictive situations and particularly of the preventive measures to adopt in case of contact with blood and/or bodily fluids.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Train and inform you about the biological risks you are exposed to.
- Vaccinate you if you are exposed to biological agents, provided that there are effective vaccines available and that the risk assessment reveals that it is necessary.
- ...

You must :

- Follow the information and training you have been given.
- Thoroughly wash parts of the body that have come into contact with blood and/or bodily fluids immediately after contact has taken place.
- ...

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

There is a risk of viral and bacteriological infections such as HIV, hepatitis or tuberculosis.



3. CHEMICAL HAZARDS

The risk of being exposed to hazardous products is not inherent in the profession but it may exist in some working environments as a result of the client company's operations.

This risk seems to affect surveillance activities and rounds more than it does other activities.

There is a whole series of chemical products that can constitute a health risk. Depending on their properties, the way in which they enter the body (through inhalation, ingestion, skin and eye contact, or contact with an open wound) and the quantity absorbed, they may adversely affect the health to a lesser or greater extent.

WARNING SIGNS – DANGER



Harmful substances or irritants



Toxic substances



Corrosive substances

RISK FACTORS

- Toxic, very toxic or harmful products (depending on degree of toxicity) They can affect the body as a whole or only some organs: lungs, liver, heart, nerves, etc.
- Substances causing irritation (irritants) These can cause inflammation of the skin, mucus membranes, eyes, etc.
- Corrosive substances These can have a destructive effect on living tissues (skin, etc.)
- Poor storage conditions of substances.
- Badly ventilated spaces.
- The guard: a guard who is not informed of the risks, safety precautions and preventive measures to be taken.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Your employer must :

- Inform you of the risks relating to chemical products and the preventive measures to be implemented.
- ...

The client must :

- Inform you and/or your employer of the risks relating to chemical products at your place of work (presence of substances) and of preventive measures to be implemented if there is an accident.
- Clearly mark the presence of chemical substances.
- ...

You must :

- When you come into contact with these products: Do not smoke. Make sure that the area you are in is well ventilated and that you take the necessary hygienic steps (wash your hands, do not eat while you are using/in contact with these substances).
- In case of accident, the label on the substance container will give you useful instructions to follow.
- If the information on the label is insufficient, the safety data sheets give a considerable amount of additional information on dangers to health and the environment for specific chemical substances and also give instructions on methods of protection and emergency steps to take.
- Point out any irregularity to those in charge.
- ...

EFFECTS ON HEALTH

The effects of chemical substances on human health depend on their properties to a great extent:

- “Toxic”, “very toxic” or “harmful” products can have severe effects on the body and even cause death. Some of these products are defined as being carcinogenic and others as mutagenic since they can bring about genetic mutations which may, in turn, cause tumours or fertility problems.
- “Irritants” can cause itching, red blotches, conjunctivitis or inflammations of the respiratory tract.
- “Corrosive” substances can burn the skin and mucus membranes and sometimes cause very serious wounds that can leave scars.



**Emergency
first aid**

The employer must appoint workers to implement first aid measures. There must be enough of these workers, they must be trained and they must have enough suitable material available.

Work areas must also be equipped with first aid material. A first aid kit including bandages, plasters, scissors, dressings, compresses, head bandages, etc. must always be available.

A security guard is only authorised to provide medical care to injured people if he or she is a first aider or has been specifically trained to do so. Security staff may only provide the medical or professional care for which they have been trained.

GIVE PRECISE INFORMATION WHEN YOU CALL THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

First, give your name and where you are calling from then tell the operator the following information:

- what the emergency is (the circumstances and the type of accident)
- where the accident took place (the exact address and place of the accident)
- who has been injured (number of injured people and their condition)
- if are there any further risks (fire, hazardous substances, etc.).

WHAT GENERAL CONDUCT SHOULD BE ADOPTED WHEN AN ACCIDENT HAPPENS OR WHEN YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH AN INJURED PERSON ?

- 1 OBSERVE**
 - Assess the situation
- 2 PROTECT**
 - Prevent further accidents from happening (eliminate any risk likely to cause a new accident)
 - If the source of danger still exists, move it away from you and from the injured person. You should only move the person if this is not possible
- 3 WARN SOMEONE**
 - If you have the slightest doubt, sound the alarm or alert the emergency services (the doctor, the poison antidote service, the firemen) or the workplace first aider
- 4 PROVIDE HELP**
 - (Provide the medical or professional care for which you have been trained)
- 5 INFORM YOUR EMPLOYER**
 - All accidents must be communicated to your employer.

EMERGENCY FIRST AID

Emergency and first aid signs



First aid point



Route to a first aid point or a rescue facility



Rescue and first aid telephones



Stretcher



Safety shower



Eyebath



Route to an emergency exit



Location of exits or way to an emergency exit



Location of emergency exits



**General
organization of
health and safety**
in companies

European legislation (the framework directive) sets out (as we have seen in pages 7 to 9) the obligations of employers and workers to improve health and safety at work, but it also includes other general principles concerning:

- Protection and prevention services
- First aid, fire fighting, evacuation procedures
- Situations of serious and immediate danger
- Consultation and participation of workers
- Health and safety information for workers
- Health and safety training for workers
- Medical supervision of workers.

■ GENERAL ORGANIZATION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY IN COMPANIES

PROTECTION AND PREVENTION SERVICES

The employer must appoint one or several workers responsible for protection against and prevention of occupational hazards. There must be enough of these workers and they must have the necessary time to perform their duties. When the company does not have the necessary skills to organize protection and prevention activities, the employer must resort to external experts (individuals or services).

FIRST AID, FIRE FIGHTING, EVACUATION PROCEDURES

The employer must take all the necessary fire fighting and evacuation steps necessary, in keeping with the kind of activities and size of the company and/or premises. The employer must organize the necessary contact channels with external services, particularly in terms of first aid, emergency medical assistance, rescue procedures and fire fighting. The employer must appoint workers responsible for implementing measures on first aid, fire fighting and evacuation procedures. There must be enough of these workers, they must be trained and they must have enough suitable material available.

ORGANIZATION OF CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION OF WORKERS

On issues related to health and safety at work, the employer must:

- consult with the workers and/or their representatives
- respect their right to make suggestions
- arrange for balanced participation of workers in the measures to be taken.

Consultation/participation of workers or their health and safety representatives must be sought on:

- A** any action which might have considerable consequences for health and safety
- B** the appointment of workers responsible for protection from, and prevention of, occupational hazards and their activities in matters of protection from, and prevention of, occupational hazards
- C** the appointment of workers responsible for:
 - protection and prevention activities
 - first aid
 - fire fighting and staff evacuation procedures
- D** use and nature of information on risk assessment for health and safety at work issues
- E** the need to resort to external experts (when the company does not have the necessary in-house skills)
- F** the design and organization of health and safety training for all workers.

- NB : 1. The workers and/or their representatives have the right to request that their employer take suitable measures and the right to submit proposals to him or her in order to reduce any risk faced by workers and/or eliminate sources of risk.
2. The employer is expected to grant workers' health and safety representatives the necessary time, without loss of salary, to carry out their responsibilities using the necessary means.
3. Workers and/or their representatives can resort to the relevant competent body if they feel that the measures taken and the means used by their employer are not sufficient to guarantee their health and safety at work.

SITUATIONS OF SERIOUS AND IMMEDIATE DANGER

The employer must take the necessary measures and give instructions so that, in case of serious, immediate danger which cannot be avoided, workers may cease their activities and/or go to a safe place by immediately leaving their workplace.

Employers must make sure that any worker faced with a serious and immediate danger to his or her safety and/or that of others in a situation in which it is impossible to contact the relevant superior can take suitable steps to prevent the consequences of such a danger.

CONSULTATION AND PARTICIPATION OF WORKERS

Employers must consult you and/or your representatives and thus allow you to participate in all issues regarding health and safety in the workplace.

HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION FOR WORKERS

In order to be able to work in complete safety and/or in the right conditions for your health, you need to be properly informed. It is the employer's obligation to inform you directly (or through your representatives) about the occupational hazards related to your activity.

INFORMATION FOR WORKERS

Information provided to workers must include:

- A** Health and safety risks, but also all the measures adopted by the company to deal with these risks in each type of job, assignment or function:
- B** Measures adopted and staff members appointed:
 - for first aid
 - for fire fighting and staff evacuation procedures.

NB : The employer must provide both the worker responsible for safety issues and workers' representatives with all the information necessary for in-house risk analysis and also allow access to accident reports intended for the competent bodies.

HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING FOR WORKERS

You must receive sufficient and suitable training in health and safety which takes into account your post and role in the company's operations. The right training will allow you to prevent risks associated with the profession.

SAFETY TRAINING FOR WORKERS

Health and safety at work training will take place when:

- you are hired
- your functions adapt or change
- there are changes in the equipment you work with
- new technologies are introduced.

Furthermore, training must be adapted to changes in risks and the emergence of new risks and must be renewed at regular intervals, if necessary.

This training must:

- be free for workers and their representatives
- take place during working time, either externally or within the company (in accordance with national practice).

MEDICAL SUPERVISION OF WORKERS

According to European legislation (the framework directive), measures must be set in conformity with national legislation and/or practices to ensure appropriate supervision of the health of workers, depending on the risks relating to their

health and safety in the workplace. These measures must be such that each worker must be entitled, if he or she so wishes, to have a medical check-up at regular intervals.



**European
directives**

European directives

86/188/CEE Protecting workers against noise exposure risks while at work.

89/391/CEE Implementing measures to improve the health and safety of workers (framework directive).

89/392/CEE Approximation of member states' legislation on machines.

89/655/CEE Minimum health and safety requirements for workers using work equipment at work.

89/656/CEE Minimum health and safety requirements for workers using personal protective equipment at work.

89/686/CEE Approximation of member states' legislation on personal protective equipment.

90/269/CEE Minimum health and safety requirements for manual handling of loads where there is a risk particularly of back injury to workers.

90/270/CEE Minimum safety and health requirements for work with display screen equipment.

90/679/CEE Protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work.

92/58/CEE Minimum requirements for the provision of health and/or safety signs at work.

92/85/CEE Introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the health and safety at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding.

93/104/CEE Directive concerning certain aspects of the organization of working time.

96/29/Directive Euratom of the Council of 13 May 1996 laying down basic safety standards for the protection of the health of workers and the general public against the dangers arising from radiation.

98/24/CEE Protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work.

2002/73/CEE Principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions.

2003/88/CEE Directive concerning certain aspects of the organization of working time.



This manual was produced thanks to European Community financing.
The author is sole responsible for this publication and the contents do not necessarily
reflect the opinion of the European Commission.

September 2004

