

Annual Report of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Finland 2020

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Annual Report of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Finland 2020

OSH Administration in Finland, 2021

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Cover photo by Anu Pynnönen

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Management's review

2020 was the first year of operation of the new four-year Occupational Safety and Health Administration period. During the four-year period 2020-2023, the vision of occupational safety and health enforcement is to strengthen safe, healthy and fair work through diverse means, while reacting to changes in the operating environment and boldly developing the activities.

The new four-year enforcement period was apparent at the Regional State Administrative Agencies' Occupational Safety and Health Divisions as a national transition to a phenomenon-based supervision and significant investments as well as the development of supervision content and other division objectives.

Despite regional competence, the implementation of national measures are considered important in the development of occupational safety and health enforcement to ensure the coherence of operations and efficient use of resources.

Key development projects during the four-year period include the Vuokko project, which will develop interaction with customers, areas related to the development of communication, and the more efficient utilisation of methods that support enforcement.

2020 was a very exceptional year for all of us. The outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic was reflected in OSH enforcement as increased customer contacts and information needs. We were also involved in various ways in supporting measures at workplaces to prevent the spread of the epidemic.

The epidemic caused the suspension of non-critical workplace inspections and the rapid introduction of new operating methods. Many development measures were implemented in a fast-track manner during the spring and, for example, occupational safety and health inspections started to be carried out in a virtual manner.



STM/ITO

Raimo Antila

*Director-General
The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health
Department of Work and Gender Equality*

As the status of the virus eased and the availability of protective equipment improved, it was also possible, taking into account regional situations, to continue workplace inspections.

The personnel of the OSH Divisions have demonstrated excellent adaptability in a difficult situation, and I would therefore like to thank each employee for their contribution to maintaining the functional capacity of OSH enforcement and continuing the development of operations also in this exceptional situation.

Unfortunately, exceptional conditions were not exclusive to last year, but will continue in 2021. It will be possible though to utilise the gained experiences efficiently in the planning and development of operations.

In 2021, the possibilities for reorganising permit, supervision and steering tasks in the administrative branch of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will also be assessed. OSH enforcement will be assessed as part of the work of the working group appointed to look into the matter, and the group is expected to draw up guidelines for the future.

OSH enforcement organisation and direction

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is responsible for the steering of the Regional State Administrative Agency's Divisions of Occupational Safety and Health. The activities are based on a four-year framework plan, which creates a national framework for the content of enforcement and the development of the activities.

The OSH Divisions act as the competent OSH authorities in their regions. However, continuous national cooperation is carried out in the planning and development of operations.

National planning and development ensure the coherence of operations and the most efficient use of available resources.

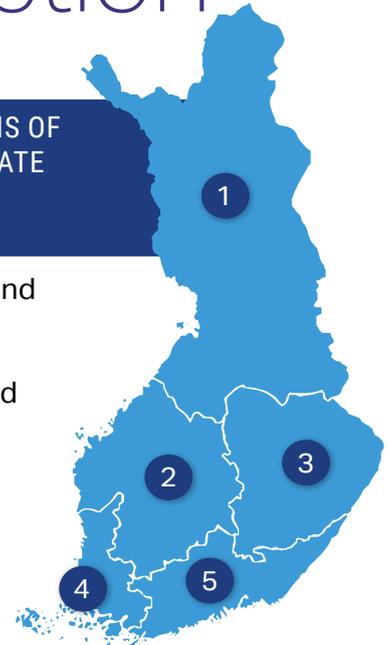
During the ongoing four-year period 2020-2023, the vision for occupational safety and health enforcement is to strengthen safe, healthy and fair work through versatile means, while reacting to changes in the operating environment and boldly developing the activities. Healthy work was selected as the slogan.

The promotion of the strategic objectives of the four-year period is agreed on by means of annual performance agreements. The activities of the Occupational Safety and Health Divisions are continuously developed, and the aim is also to increase rapid response to emerging phenomena in the steering of the activities.

The slogan of the current four-year period is **Healthy work.**

THE OSH DIVISIONS OF THE REGIONAL STATE ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCIES:

- 1 | Northern Finland
- 2 | Western and Inland Finland
- 3 | Eastern Finland
- 4 | Southwestern Finland
- 5 | Southern Finland



Occupational safety and health committees and advisory committee

The tripartite cooperation related to OSH enforcement is carried out with the employer and employee organisations in regional occupational safety and health committees and the national advisory committee.

The purpose of the regional OSH committees is to support and develop OSH enforcement and act as a link between the OSH Divisions, regional OSH actors and labour market organisations. OSH committees discuss significant occupational safety and health development, planning and monitoring projects in their area, general occupational safety and health policies and performance targets as well as the allocation of resources.

The OSH committees process the same matters that the regional OSH committees do, but from a national viewpoint. Its tasks also include the processing of drafting work for significant legislation issues relating to occupational safety and health.

Duties of occupational safety and health authorities in 2020

In its activities, the OSH authority implements working environment and well-being at work policies drawn up on the basis of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health's strategy:

- We will respond to future challenges concerning occupational safety and health.
- Our objectives are safe and healthy working conditions.
- We promote functional capacity, work ability and employability.

Towards phenomenon-based enforcement

In order to meet the needs of changing working life, we selected phenomenon-based enforcement as the starting point for the current four-year period.

Working conditions, fragmented working life and workload are the phenomena that OSH Enforcement is currently focusing on.

Our aim is to influence the safety management practices and working conditions of workplaces so as to minimise accidents at work, occupational diseases, psychosocial stress, physical strain and retirements on disability pension.

A second aim is to ensure better compliance

with the terms and conditions of the employment relationship and to reduce the grey economy.

In the monitoring of working conditions, we pay particular attention to the prevention of occupational accidents, to chemical and biological factors and physical workload.

New forms of work related to the phenomenon of a fragmented working life, such as the platform economy and light entrepreneurship, also challenge the traditional idea of the employer's and employee's roles in occupational safety and health enforcement.

In order to implement effective enforcement, the identification of legislative problems that are essential for the enforcement of the minimum conditions of employment has been selected as one of the performance targets.

Workload is a significant phenomenon, as work is constantly changing and health problems caused by work are increasingly related to psychosocial workload factors. The cognitive requirements of working life are also increasing, and many tasks require will continue to require more and more information processing capabilities.

In some sectors, automation and digitalisation will reduce the number of tasks performed and increase the number of tasks requiring expertise.



Impacts of the coronavirus year

In March 2020, the Occupational Safety and Health Divisions, like the rest of society, had to adapt their activities to the restrictions and exceptional conditions caused by coronavirus:

- Field enforcement was limited to the minimum necessary with regard to life and health.
- The resources freed up from enforcement were directed to tasks supporting enforcement.
- The resources for customer advice were increased to meet the increased demand.
- Up-to-date information was produced for employees and employers.
- Travel between regions was terminated.
- National meetings, such as training events, were organised online.

In March, employees in the OSH Divisions moved to remote work in accordance with the Government's obligation to work remotely. The transition was completed successfully thanks to current technology. For some, the change from the traditional work community to the virtual work community was enormous, while other staff members had already done a lot of remote work.

The remote work order was discontinued in August 2020, but in practice the majority of the work was carried out remotely in accordance with the recommendation until the end of the year.

Restricting field enforcement forced the reform of the enforcement procedures. The Divisions of Occupational Safety and Health prepared instructions for safe work together with occupational health care. Activities did not immediately comply with these instructions as planned, as the availability of face masks was poor. In June, however, it was possible to initiate enforcement in accordance with the safety instructions.

In the autumn, the second wave of the epidemic was different in different regions, and instead of centralised instructions, a regional operating model was introduced. The measures and restrictions necessary for the specific situation in each region were defined.



Anu Pynnönen

Due to the sudden transition to remote work and the significant limitation of inspection activities, the use of resources in the divisions was challenging. The objectives for OSH supervision in the workplace were not met. On the other hand, more resources could also be used to develop and maintain the skills of staff.

A significant contribution was made to the steering the focus of enforcement and for the planning of supervision projects. The results of the work will not be evident until the coronavirus epidemic has eased. In addition, significant investments were made in the maintenance of the Tyosuojelu.fi website, which is the OSH authority's most important communication channel.

Taking into account the changed working environment and the priority objective of maintaining functional capacity in all possible situations, the use of resources in Divisions of Occupational Safety and Health was at an excellent level despite the challenge.



Phenomenon: Working conditions

In Finland, occupational safety and health have been steadily developed in the long term. However, development work to reduce occupational accidents, occupational diseases, work-related illnesses and harmful strain must continue.

The monitoring of working conditions focused on physical, chemical and biological factors, physical stress, machine and equipment safety and the safety of the working environment.

The management of accident prevention, chemical agents, biological agents and physical strain was selected as key phenomena for 2020–2023.

Due to the coronavirus epidemic, alternative methods for carrying out inspections were planned.

In most cases, inspections related to documents and occupational safety management systems can be carried out online.

However, actual observation of working conditions is not feasible in a remote manner, so working conditions should, as a rule, be monitored by visiting the workplace.

Safe and healthy working conditions promote efficiency of work and helps to prevent accidents and illnesses.

Personal protective equipment enforced in cooperation between different authorities

Due to the spread of coronavirus, the need for personal protective equipment increased exponentially in spring 2020. At first, the availability of protective equipment was poor, and problems were also found in their quality.

The monitoring of protective equipment was intensified, while efforts were being made to improve the market access of protective equipment critical to the epidemic. The supervision of protective equipment was carried as a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Regional State Administrative Agencies' Occupational Safety and Health Divisions, Customs, Fimea and Tukes.

In the enforcement process of protective equipment, Customs takes care of customs clearance and the measures taken in connection with it and, on the basis of a risk assessment, provides the competent market surveillance authorities with information on items arriving in Finland from outside the EU. Market surveillance of RPE for professional use is carried out by the Regional State Administrative Agencies' Divisions of Occupational Safety and Health.

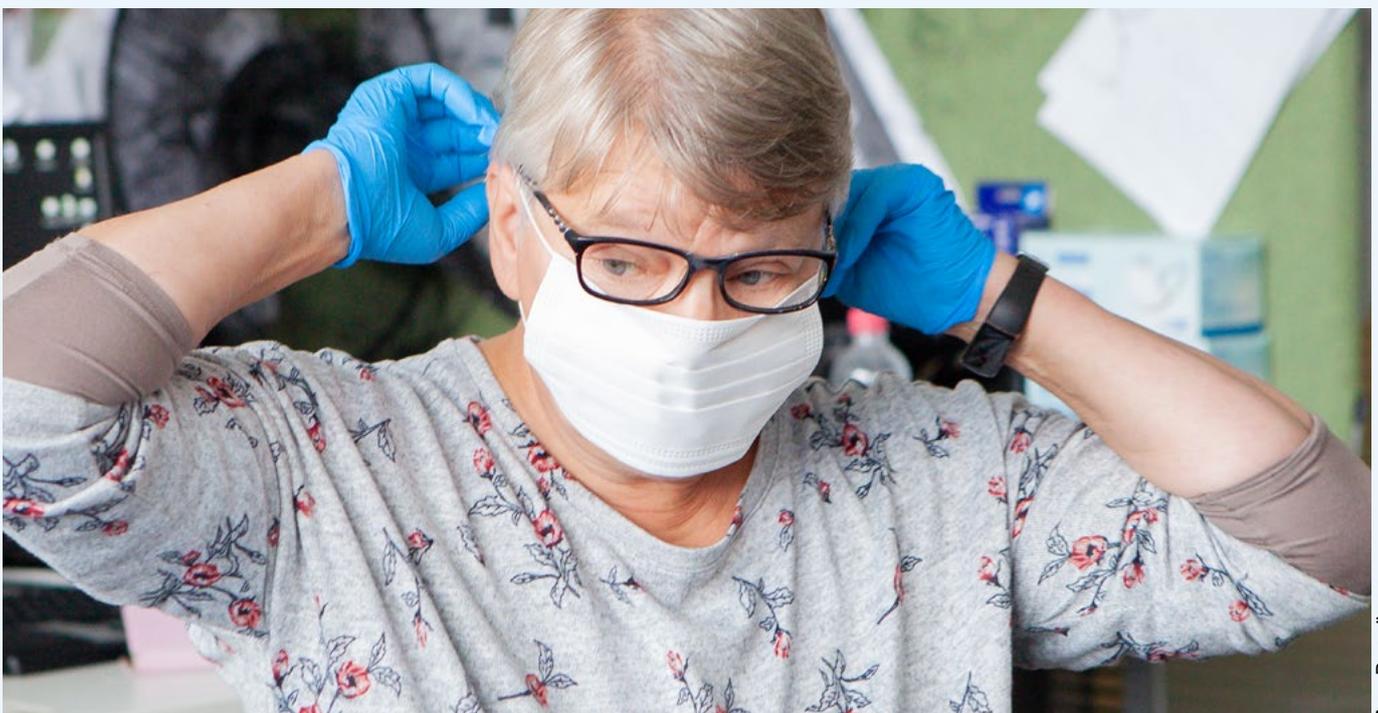
Inspectors specialising in protective equipment from the Divisions of Occupational Safety and Health inspected the documents of the imported batches, such as type-examination certificates, declarations of conformity and test reports, as well as images of products and packaging.

With the help of these documents, the inspectors assessed the marketability of the products and made a decision on the conformity of the protective equipment batches.

From March to December 2020, a total of around 500 consignments of protective equipment were evaluated. There were a large number of ambiguities in the protective equipment that were evaluated and in their information. However, following further clarifications provided by importers, most of the protective equipment could be released to the market.

Approximately 5% of the cases resulted in a temporary prohibition, sometimes the importer also took voluntary action to withdraw the protective equipment from the market.

If the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health confirmed the Regional State Administrative Agency's prohibition decision, the protective equipment was returned to the sender or the batch of protective equipment was destroyed.





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Phenomenon: Fragmented working life

Fragmented working life as a phenomenon of OSH Enforcement is complex. This entity includes supervision of foreign labour, monitoring of contractor liability, new forms of work and ensuring the rights of those in a weak labour market position.

In these matters, the OSH authority aims to influence society's actors in various ways with effective supervision and multi-channel communication.

Effective practices, such as negligence fees, have been developed for the enforcement of the Act on the Contractor's Obligations and Liability when Work is Contracted Out and the foreign labour force in relation to the competence of the occupational safety and health authority.

However, the change in the field challenges the continuous development of operating methods, such as enforcement outside office hours, cooperation between authorities and increasing the exchange of information.

In the areas of the platform economy and self-employment, a significant breakthrough was made during the reporting year, as the legal employment relationship of food couriers was clarified as a result of enforcement by the OSH authority. In the future, the supervision of these types of phenomena and cooperation between the authorities will become clearer.

The reform of the Working Hours Act in 2020 was significant in terms of communications. In particular, the focus was on issues related to the interpretation and supervision of the new Act.

In 2020, rights to information were used systematically for the first time in monitoring the minimum conditions of employment.

Official data utilised in the monitoring of the contractor's liability

In 2020, nearly 800 inspections concerning the supervision of contractor liability were carried out. The focus of supervision was on construction, industry, logistics, cleaning and real estate.

The coronavirus epidemic proved to be a challenge for enforcement. For this reason, in addition to inspections, other means of exerting influence were also utilised in the monitoring of contractor liability. For example, a large number of companies were reached through online events.

During the reporting year, the emphasis of contractor liability enforcement was on the utilisation of official information in both the selection of control sites and in individual supervision cases. Data that were used especially extensively included the contract and employee data from construction work and the Compliance Reports of the Grey Economy Information Unit which the OSH authority receives from the Finnish Tax Administration.

The utilisation of official data made it possible for enforcement to be focused more accurately.

Issues monitored during inspections included compliance with the obligation to check when using temporary agency work or subcontracting for some 2,700 contractual partners. Written advice was issued more than 1,200 times during inspections. Foreign contractors received the highest number of written advice per inspection. An abundance of written advice was also issued during company inspections in the construction sector and inspections of industrial companies.

The imposing of a negligence fee was most often considered for foreign contractors and during company inspections in the construction sector. The most common reason was neglecting the obligation to check. Signs of underpayment and under-pricing also led to the consideration of a negligence fee.

The obligations laid down in the Act on the Contractor's Obligations and Liability when Work is Contracted Out are better known in the construction sector than in other sectors. Even so there were still shortcomings in compliance with the minimum requirements laid down in the Act, particularly in long subcontracting chains.

It was also found that the number of foreign private traders in subcontracting chains had increased somewhat. The means of supervision are not always sufficient to ascertain whether it is real trader or a so-called missing trader. A missing trader can circumvent employer obligations, and the person working does not even always know themselves that they are an entrepreneur.



The use of foreign and posted workers was supervised through document checks

The OSH authority supervises employers using foreign labour, as well as the undertakings that post workers from abroad to Finland and the posting undertakings' contractors.

During the reporting year, the coronavirus epidemic affected the implementation of inspections, and the number of document checks increased.

The greatest number of shortcomings observed during the enforcement of foreign labour were in:

- ensuring a foreign worker's right to work and keeping information on the right to work available at the workplace;
- drafting of shift lists and keeping of working time records
- compliance with the generally applicable collective agreement and in the compensation of overtime
- employee lists and personal identifiers at construction sites.

The OSH authority received 7,500 notifications from posting undertakings. The greatest shortcomings in the activities of posting undertakings were observed in the keeping of working time records and in the key terms of work. The greatest number of shortcomings leading to the consideration of negligence fees were encountered in the submission of notifications before starting work and in keeping information available for the duration of a posting. The imposing of a negligence fee was considered in around 30 cases.

The most deficiencies in the activities of companies using posted workers in Finland, i.e. contractors, were found in the obligation to ensure that the posting undertaking had submitted a notification on the posting of workers.

The OSH Division of the Regional State Administrative Agency for Southwestern Finland provides general guidance by e-mail on the legislation applicable to the posting of workers.



Phenomenon: Workload

Work is constantly changing and health problems caused by work are increasingly related to psychosocial workload factors.

The supervision of psychosocial workload focuses in particular on work arrangements and the management of workload factors caused by the work content and the social functioning of the work community at work and workplaces.

In 2020, workload was monitored during nearly 850 inspections. Some of the inspections were carried out by examining documents.

The monitoring of psychosocial workload factors was also carried out as virtual inspections. According to feedback, virtual inspections were well received at workplaces. Inspectors also felt that the virtual inspections were effective, but to get direct interaction at workplaces on-site inspections are still considered necessary.

During inspections, inspectors made sure that employers had identified psychosocial workload factors in their workplace and assessed the hazards arising from these.

Some of the inspections focused more deeply on the management of psychosocial workload factors in the workplace and their significance to workers' health.

The most important development needs observed at workplaces were related to the identification and assessment of work hazards and the occupational health care workplace survey.

Employers were instructed on how to prevent, reduce and manage workload at work.

Enforcement also supported cooperation between workplaces and occupational health care and ensured that occupational health care expertise was utilised in identifying and managing workload.

The coronavirus epidemic threw the working world into disarray. The social impacts of the epidemic



changed the management, organisation and performance of work. A connection was identified between the changes and workload.

Many workplaces transitioned quickly to remote work and introduced new forms of work. The increase in remote work blurred the lines between work and private life.

The coronavirus epidemic further increased workload in some sectors, such as the social and health sectors, education sectors and services sectors. Work-related exposure caused concern and fear about the safety of both employees and their families and friends.

In other tasks, work-related workload even decreased as work-related travel, among other things, was discontinued.

Despite the challenging time, the OSH authority was able to raise awareness on the psychosocial workload caused by work at workplaces.



Anu Pynnönen

Other enforcement

In 2020, the OSH Divisions were on their way from sector-based inspection activities to sector-independent phenomenon-based supervision.

Supervision during the early part of the year was carried out using projects from the previous year. At the end of the year, the process progressively moved towards national supervision of phenomena. In 2020, 3,440 inspections of national phenomenon projects were carried out. A total of 11,150 sector-specific inspections were carried out.

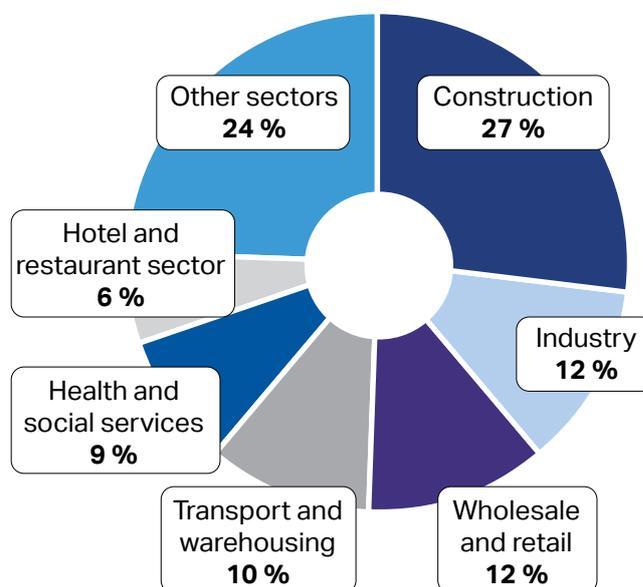
Enforcement data from previous years and information resources from partners were used to give focus enforcement activities.

When examined by sector, enforcement focused predominantly on the construction sector in 2020.

Certain supervised sectors (shipping and agriculture) are reported separately in the annual report, as required by the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The monitoring of drivers' driving times and rest periods is reported as required by the European Union.

Occupational safety and health inspections by sector



Significant themes of enforcement based on customer contact include equality and the prohibition of discrimination, as well as harassment and inappropriate treatment. These topics give rise to widespread social debate, which is why supervisory information on these is collected separately.

Construction sector monitored with common agendas

Approximately 3,900 inspections were carried out in the construction sector, which was more than a quarter of all inspections. The majority of work site inspections were carried out in a traditional manner without prior notification in accordance with the established general practice, but due to the coronavirus epidemic, the virus sites at the work sites was confirmed at the latest just before the inspection started in order to ensure the occupational safety of inspectors. Document inspections were also adopted as an inspection method in the construction sector.

The construction sector was mostly enforced using common national agendas as in previous years. Common agendas were used for the supervision of asbestos work, new and renovation construction, earthworks, blasting and excavation work, tower cranes and roof and detached house work sites.

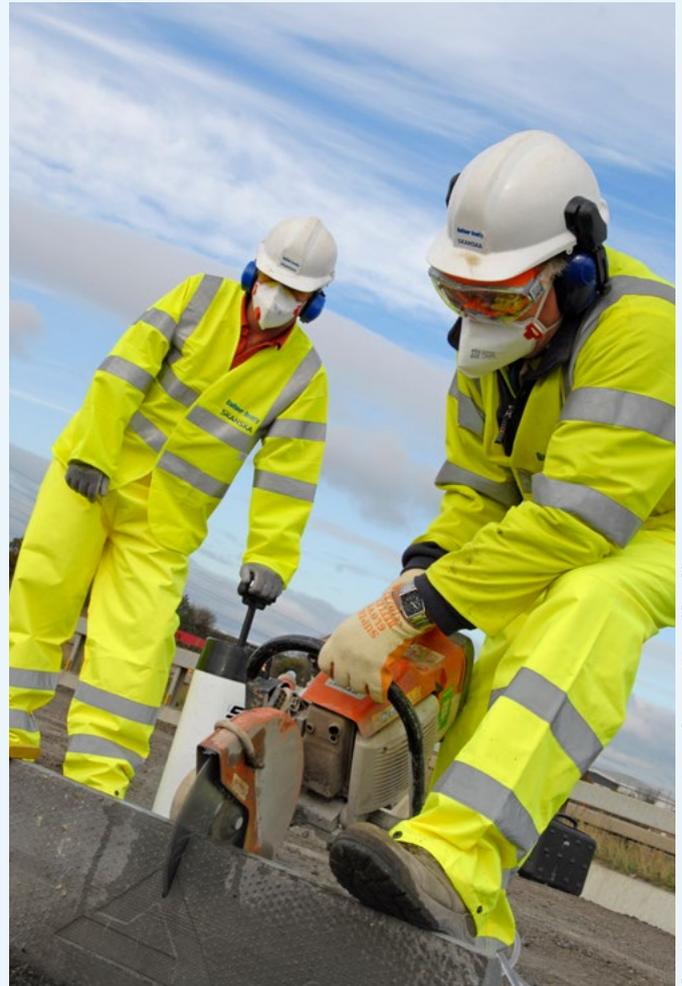
The highest number of written advice were issued on:

- personal protective equipment used in construction work (934)
- protection against falls from heights (441)
- construction site access routes (360)
- machinery and equipment (352)
- dust control plan (301).

The highest number of improvement notices were issued on:

- protection against falls from heights (442)
- construction site access routes (128)
- machinery and equipment (112)
- scaffolding (94)
- medical examinations in the context of work that presents a special risk of illness (76).

In addition, 52 temporary prohibition notices were issued in the construction sector. The inspector may issue a temporary prohibition notice in cases where the inspector observes an immediate and serious risk to life or health. The greatest number of such situations were observed in the failure to protect employees against falls.



Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee (SLIC)

The OSH authority prepared a slide show for construction sector actors, which contains information on the monitoring of the exposure of quartz dust and instructions and interpretation of the relevant legislation by the OSH authority.

The prevention of cancer risks in the construction sector was also enforced in 2020, when the Government Decree on the Prevention of Work-Related Cancer Risks entered into force at the beginning of 2020.

The OSH authority received many contacts from construction sector actors regarding the prevention of dust containing quartz. Information was provided on the topic on the Tyosuojelu.fi website and during virtual information events.

Quartz dust is one of the key carcinogenic factors in the construction sector.

Shipping

A total of 153 inspections were carried out to monitor shipping. 65 inspections were carried out on Finnish foreign shipping vessels in accordance with the ILO Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) 2006 for the purpose of granting, inspecting and renewing maritime certificates of competency. In addition, 46 other inspections were carried out on Finnish vessels. Many of these checks were document checks to monitor the working time and rest periods of seafarers.

23 inspections were carried out in cooperation by numerous authorities on the transport and temporary storage of dangerous goods in port environments. The Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom chaired the inspections. Finland reports inspection data annually to the IMO, an international organisation that manages maritime safety under the auspices of the UN.

In addition, 19 inspections were carried out in port environments, targeting the activities of port owners and stowage companies.

Agriculture and forestry

A total of 205 agricultural enforcement inspections were carried out at 175 enforcement sites. Approximately one third (68) of agricultural inspections were inspections of foreigners. A total of 408 pieces of written advice and 66 improvement notices were issued on the basis of these inspections.

11 accidents were investigated in the agriculture sector. Serious accidents were caused by incidents such as falls and tripping, shortcomings in the use of personal protective equipment and animal behaviour.

A total of 8 occupational disease reports or suspicions were recorded. The cases were mainly rashes and respiratory tract symptoms due to chemical and dust exposure.

A total of 134 other primary production inspections (forestry and timber harvesting, fishing and aquaculture) were carried out and there were 116 sites that were inspected.



Driving time and rest period enforcement

The OSH authority is responsible for enforcing compliance with the European Driving Time and Rest Period Regulation and Government Decree on tachograph charts by companies carrying out transports within the scope of these regulations. The data of the digital tachograph and driver card are checked during driving time and rest period inspections. In addition, the record sheets of the analogue tachograph will be checked for the selected time period.

In 2020, attention was paid to the use of tachographs, compliance with driving time and rest period regulations and the recording, storage and disclosure of tachograph data.

The coronavirus epidemic also affected the implementation of driving time and rest period enforcement. As of March 2020, driving time and rest period monitoring has, as a rule, been implemented remotely. Due to the coronavirus, the European Commission relaxed the provisions on daily and weekly rest periods, daily and weekly driving times and daily breaks between 27 March and 31 May 2020, which contributed to the challenges in enforcement.

Driving times and rest periods were monitored during approximately 770 inspections, during which nearly 263,000 driver working days were inspected.

Generally speaking, there were still shortcomings in compliance with driving times and rest periods: Corrections needed to be made at around 45% of inspected sites. With regard to provisions concerning driving time and rest periods, the largest number of corrections were needed in compliance with rest periods and daily breaks.

Errors in the use of tachographs were observed during 55% of inspections. Issues that came up in particular were missing tachograph company cards, errors in the time group selector operation and driving the vehicle without an appropriate driver card. On the other hand, the recording, storage and disclosure of tachograph data to the supervisory authority was in order for about 75% of the inspected sites.



Discrimination and non-discrimination

The OSH authority enforces the prohibition of discrimination in the workplace in accordance with the provisions of the Non-discrimination Act as well as the employer's obligation to promote equality. OSH enforcement includes measures taken on the basis of client communications and workplace inspections carried out at the authorities' initiative.

In 2020, the OSH authority received approximately 600 customer contacts concerning discrimination in the workplace. Generally, callers wanted advice or wanted an expert opinion on whether or not their experiences constituted discrimination.

Those experiencing discrimination received guidance and advice from the OSH authority on how to handle the matter with their employer, other guidance on their matter and instructions on making a possible enforcement request.

In 2020, the OSH authority received 202 enforcement requests for investigating suspected discrimination. A total of 141 inspections related to such suspected cases of discrimination were carried out at workplaces. The highest number of inspections were carried out due to suspected discrimination related to a person's health and age.

In inspections where the inspector found discrimination, the employer was given written advice on violating the prohibition of discrimination.

A procedural decision was made in cases where it was assessed that the matter presented in an enforcement request did not involve discrimination as referred to in the Non-Discrimination Act. There were a total of 84 of these cases.

In addition, discrimination was monitored during 430 inspections in connection with the right of foreign employees' to work. In the enforcement of foreign labour, the inspector assesses whether the employer has discriminated against the employees with regard to wage payment and other minimum terms and conditions of employment on the basis of origin, nationality or language.



The Occupational Safety and Health Administration produced video for employers to advise them on the obligation to promote equality.

The video can be viewed on the [Tyosuojelu.fi](https://tyosuojelu.fi) website (in [Finnish](#) and in [Swedish](#)).

A total of 47 pieces of written advice and 13 improvement notices were issued concerning the prohibition of discrimination.

At its own initiative, the OSH authority monitors job advertisements and takes action whenever discrimination is observed. For example, job advertisements that were discriminatory included cases in which a stairwell cleaner was required to speak fluent Finnish, a roofer's assistant was required to have Finnish citizenship, church membership was required for a special professional in funeral services and a school assistant with sign language proficiency was required to have normal hearing.

The OSH authority also enforces compliance with the obligation to promote equality in working life.

In 2020, the employer's obligation to promote equality was enforced with more than 130 inspections and the obligation to prepare an equality plan with 120 inspections. Shortcomings were observed at more than half of inspected sites. The OSH authority imposed 68 obligations to comply with the obligation to promote and 71 obligations to comply with a workplace's equality plan.

Harassment and inappropriate treatment

The supervision of harassment is carried out both at the initiative of customers and at the initiative of authorities. Customer-initiated enforcement includes inspection of employer compliance with the obligations laid down in the Occupational Safety and Health Act after receiving information on harassment at work. The OSH authority also monitors the employer's obligations related to harassment at the initiative of authorities in connection with workplace inspections. In this case, the experiences of individual employees are not discussed. Instead, the focus is on the work community as a whole.

We received about 1,800 communications related to harassment from customers in 2020. In 2020, the OSH authority received approximately 230 enforcement requests related to harassment or inappropriate treatment. A total of 125 inspections were carried out on the basis of enforcement requests.

Most common reasons for contacts:

1. The employee, employer or, for example, the occupational safety and health officer asks for instructions and advice on how to handle an issue at the workplace.

The number of contacts related to harassment and inappropriate treatment has remained at the same level for some years.

2. The employee requests enforcement measures in a case that concerns him or her.
3. The person contacting the authority gives a tip on an inspection site or requests an occupational safety and health inspection for the entire work community. In this case, the workplace inspection is carried out without revealing any information about the contact.

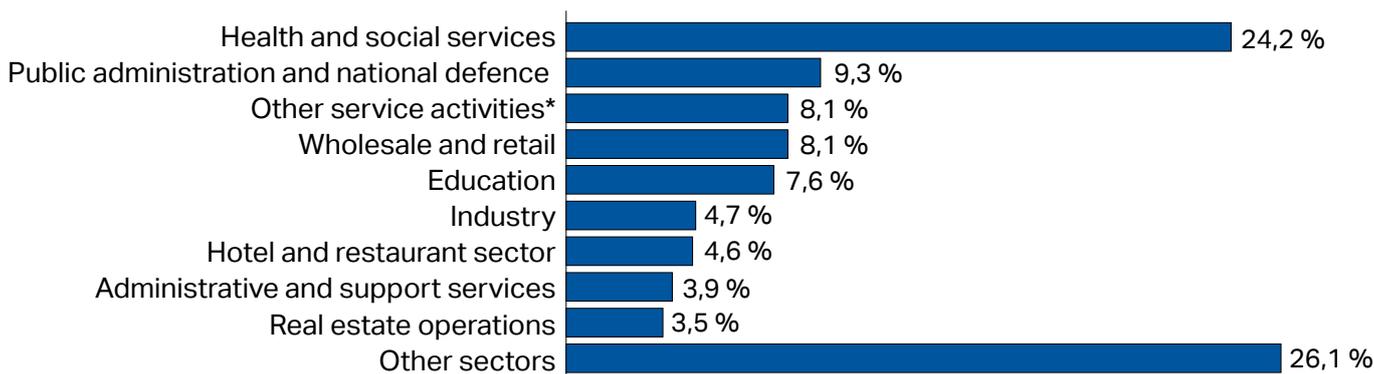
The OSH authority is often contacted for concrete advice on dealing with harassment in the workplace.

In most cases, an employee who has experienced harassment in their workplace will contact the OSH authorities. The OSH representatives and shop stewards also contact authorities quite often. Sometimes outside person also want to give tips on a poor work atmosphere or inappropriate treatment.

Contacts also comes from employer representatives, occupational health care and, for example, trade unions.

Those contacting the OSH authority most often experience harassment from the supervisor. People also experience harassment from a colleague or in the form of conflicts that impact the entire work community. Harassment manifests in very different ways. The harassment experienced by people who contacted the authority included repeated threats, intimidation, disparaging speech, continuous unjustified criticism and impeding of work, placing the person's reputation or status in question, and abuse of supervisory rights. The employee's contact often involves not only harassment but also workload.

Customer contacts by sector 2020



* Other service activities include parishes and organisational activities.

Permits and notifications

Legislation imposes restrictions on how certain kinds of work may be performed or assigned. Certain jobs and forms of work require an OSH authority's authorisation or exemption. A notification must be submitted on certain types of work before the work commences. An advance notification of construction work, an advance notification of asbestos removal work and a notification of posting of works can all be submitted via an online form.

The coronavirus epidemic was also visible in notifications: Around one hundred occupational disease notifications related to the coronavirus were submitted, and half of the notifications on the introduction of hazardous biological agents were related to the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

LICENCES PROCESSED BY THE OSH AUTHORITY

Charger's certificate	524
Exemption related to young workers	287
Exemption related to the Working Hours Act	106
Work permit for asbestos removal	99
Exemption from crane operator qualification	27

NOTIFICATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE OSH AUTHORITY

Advance notification of asbestos removal work	11,021
Notification of the posting of workers	7,581
Advance notification of construction work	5,808
Notification on using young people for dangerous work	1,758
Occupational disease report	1,449
Notice of serious occupational accident	1,257
Emergency work notification	93
Notification of the introduction of hazardous biological agents	24



Means of OSH enforcement developing

The aim of developing the activities of the OSH Divisions is to make efficient use of resources and tools to achieve maximum impact.

Occupational safety and health enforcement will be developed comprehensively in accordance with the principles of continuous improvement.

An operational planning and monitoring system related to the new phenomenon-based approach to enforcement will be the instrument for development.

The processing and refining of existing information to support enforcement and into tools will require the utilisation of digitalisation. On the other hand, digitalisation will enable the more effective and cost-efficient collection and structuring of new information.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's development projects apply new technology in services for workplaces. The projects utilise information resources that describe the health, safety and fairness of working life.

The ongoing Vuokko project develops new digital services for employers and employees for the use

of smart services, advanced information retrieval, the improvement of occupational safety and health activities at the workplace and maintenance of their own control data.

As a rule, the services will be two-way: They are based on interaction between the workplace and the occupational safety and health authority.

In spring 2020, information on customer needs and ideas for solutions were collected. Workplace representatives, stakeholders and staff worked together to come up with four different service scenarios.

The implementation plan, which was prepared on the basis of these, includes, such things as, the objectives of co-development and the piloting of selected service scenarios in a joint project of Regional State Administrative Agencies.

The plans also include cooperation with other occupational safety and health expert organisations. Joint development aims at high-quality services, tools and methods for improving the level of occupational safety and health at workplaces.

The psychosocial workload factors survey platform was automated

As part of the digitalisation of the survey processes for OSH enforcement, the psychosocial workload factors survey platform was automated. The survey was transferred to a cloud-based platform, which was connected to the occupational safety and health authority's control data system.

The reform will make it possible to conduct a larger number of surveys yearly.

This will improve the scope of enforcement and

improve the efficient use of human resources.

In the future, it will be possible to use workplace inspections to show how the workplace's own results are placed, for example, in the comparison of the sector. This will encourage workplaces to continuously improve their activities.

The new automated survey platform was carefully designed with usability and accessibility in mind. The survey platform was implemented for the use of supervision, but the possibility of extending the survey to the independent use of workplaces was also taken into account in automation.

Digital leap in occupational safety and health enforcement - virtual remote inspection

In 2020, a substantial share of occupational safety and health inspections were carried out virtually by means of remote inspections.

Due to the coronavirus epidemic, virtual inspections were, from time to time, the only possibility for the implementation of enforcement in certain areas and workplaces. Workplaces welcomed virtual inspections.

The most popular application used for virtual inspections was Teams. Skype was also used. The content of the inspection remained unchanged, and even the workplace tour could be carried out using the Teams mobile phone application.

Virtual inspections required inspectors to learn new practices. Inspectors had to learn use of the application well so they could assist workplace actors if problems were to arise. In addition, they had to learn to guide interaction online, so that all parties in the workplace were genuinely able to give their views on the issues that were discussed. Information security also had to be taken into consideration.

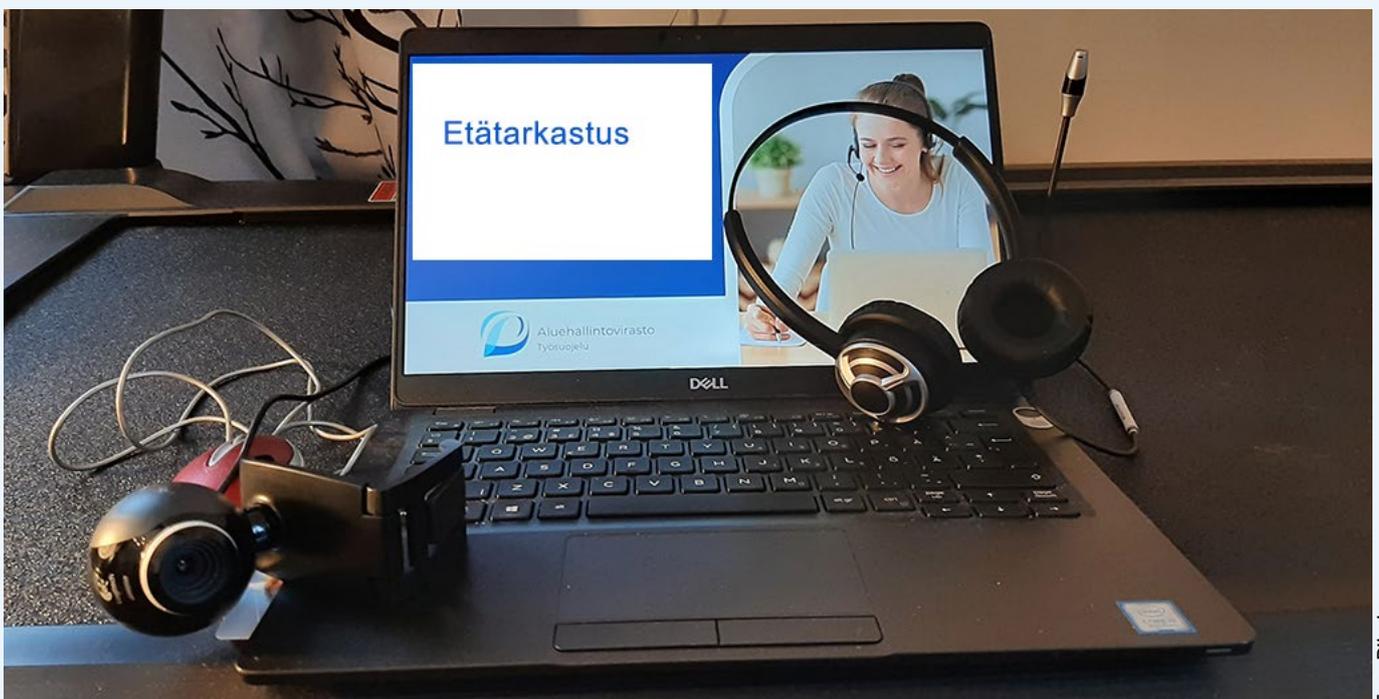
Virtual inspections were particularly well for monitoring of psychosocial stress, as the inspection of physical workspaces is not of key importance.

The Psychosocial workload factors survey can be utilised in the supervision of psychosocial workload. The survey examines the employees' experiences of psychosocial working conditions before an inspection. The summary of the responses received can be discussed during the inspection.

Even so, virtual inspections are not suited for all inspections. For example, inspections required in the investigation of an occupational accident were still carried out as on-site inspections. Other inspections requiring more extensive workplace observation were also carried out on site.

Remote inspections require inspectors to learn new skills.

Workplaces welcomed virtual inspections.



OSH authority provides advice and guidance

Advice and guidance are an important part of the work carried out by occupational safety and health authorities. The objective is to support and promote voluntary occupational safety and health efforts at workplaces.

The two most important channels for providing advice and guidance are the Tyosuojelu.fi website and the national telephone service.

Telephone service

OSH inspectors from the Divisions of Occupational Safety and Health provide advice and guidance to the callers via the telephone service. Enforcement requests concerning occupational safety are also accepted via the telephone service as needed.

The phone service serves four service lines divided by topic:

- employment matters
- general work environment issues
- construction sector work environment issues
- well-being at work-related issues focusing on inappropriate treatment, harassment, discrimination and psychosocial workload.

PHONE CALLS TO THE NATIONAL TELEPHONE SERVICE IN 2020

Employment relationship	15,152
Working environment	3,927
Construction sector	2,170
Well-being at work	3,466
Total	24,715

The telephone service received almost 25,000 calls during 2020. It was possible to answer the majority of calls even though the coronavirus temporarily increased demand by about one fifth.

More than 60% of calls dealt with questions related to employment matters. The most common questions were related to the termination of the employment contract, to wages and to layoffs. Questions related to the working environment often involved corona, asbestos, occupational safety and health cooperation, occupational health care and risk assessment. Harassment and inappropriate treatment were highlighted in particular in questions related to well-being at work.



Online services

In 2020, around 1.43 million people used the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Tyosuojelu.fi web service.

The coronavirus epidemic also had an impact on the use of the website. Web pages that contain information on layoffs and termination of employment were among the most visited, and the rights and obligations at the workplace were also of greater interest to users than previously.

A list of questions frequently received by OSH authorities during the epidemic on employment relationships and occupational safety was compiled on the corona web page published in March. The site was the third most used website in 2020.

TYOSUOJELU.FI TOP 10 IN 2020

1. Layoffs	298,567
2. Home	167,105
3. Corona	125,261
4. Annual holidays	100,306
5. Study leave	97,665
6. Termination of the employment relationship	85,118
7. Notice periods	76,962
8. Additional work and overtime	68,061
9. Rights and responsibilities at work	55,323
10. Certificate of employment	55,111

website views

During the year, an extensive content review of the Tyosuojelu.fi, was carried out in which expert groups updated the texts of approximately 200 web pages. New web pages were published on, for example, remote work, work in another person's home and the safety of cableway installations. In addition, the accessibility of the website was actively developed.

In 2020, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's website was integrated into the European Commission's Single Digital Gateway (SDG). This means that parts of the website concerning working in Finland, occupational health and safety (in Finnish, Swedish and English) have been linked to the gateway. In addition, pages which cover information on posted workers in the Estonian, Lithuanian, Polish and Russian languages enabled by the European Labour Authority (ELA) are attached to the website.

The digital occupational safety and health museum was created from the digital materials of the occupational safety and health exhibition located in Hippotalo in Tampere. The museum was placed on the Tervetyo.fi website opened in summer 2020. The Digital Occupational Safety and Health Museum has a wide range of historical posters on occupational safety and health starting from the 1930s.

The website also provides background information on the "mother of Finnish occupational safety and health" Vera Hjelt. Digital orientation material for occupational safety and health has also been produced for the website.



OSH Administration newsletter

In 2020, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration began to publish a newsletter specifically aimed at occupational safety and health managers and occupational safety and health officers. The address list for the newsletter is from the Centre for Occupational Safety's register of occupational safety and health personnel, but anyone can also subscribe to the newsletter.

The newsletter is published four times a year in Finnish and Swedish.

The aim is to share information that is as useful and as practical as possible with workplaces on the activities of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the interpretation of laws and enforcement observations.

The newsletter also contains information on things such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's webinars and new publications.



The OSH Administration began organising webinars for customers

The OSH Administration launched the production of webinars for customers in autumn 2020 with two events.

The topic of the first webinar was the rights of employees in Finland. The target group was immigrants and those working with them. The event reached more than 250 participants. The second webinar in the autumn was an information event organised together with the Tax Administration and the Finnish Centre for Pensions in the construction sector, with nearly 700 participants.

Both webinars received excellent feedback from participants, and participants hoped to see more similar events in the future.

The aim is to respond to this demand by establishing the production of webinars as part of the OSH authorities' communications.

Webinars can include information on changes in legislation and how the OSH authority interprets legislation in practice.

These can also be linked to enforcement, for example by inviting workplaces to a webinar before inspections, so that they can take the necessary measures before enforcement. This aims to strengthen the impact of enforcement.

Legislation

The preparation of labour legislation is a tripartite process, carried out in cooperation with the interest groups of employers and employees. For the most part, the enforcement of labour legislation is the responsibility of the OSH Divisions of the Regional State Administrative Agencies.

National and EU legislation on occupational safety and health is drafted by the Advisory Committee on Preparation of Occupational Safety Regulations (TTN) in cooperation with labour market organisations. The Advisory Board operates in connection with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Finland also participates in the preparation of EU legislation and strategies on occupational safety and health in the Committee working in connection with the European Commission.

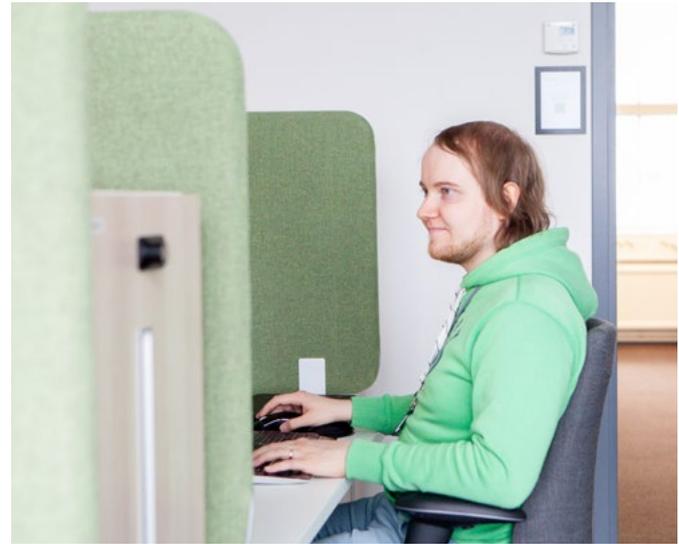
The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment drafts and develops labour legislation which comprises, for example, the Employment Contracts Act, the Working Hours Act, the Annual Holidays Act, the Non-discrimination Act, the Act on the Protection of Privacy in Working Life, the Collective Agreements Act, the Study Leave Act and the Pay Security Act, as well as legislation on cooperation within undertakings.

Drafting of bills in 2020

- The new Act on the Register of People Exposed to Carcinogenic Substances and Methods at Work entered into force on 1 September 2020. Following changes in the information and classification of cancer hazards and of chemicals on the market, the list of carcinogenic agents was also updated and aligned with the EU's classification of cancer hazards.
- The new Decree of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health on Concentrations Known to be Harmful implemented the EU Limit Values Directive. In addition, other legislative reforms were carried out related to concentrations known to be harmful and other limit values for biological and chemical agents. The decree entered into force on 1 October 2020.
- An amendment was made to the Decree on the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health on the Occupational Safety and Health Divisions of Regional State Administrative Agencies, which led to the Occupational Safety and Health Division at Regional State Administrative Agency for Southwest Finland being appointed responsibility for the national processing of emergency work notifications under the Working Hours Act. The decree entered into force on 1 October 2020.
- The protection of workers from the risk posed by biological agents was updated with two legislative amendments that entered into force on 15 November 2020:
 - The Government Decree on the Protection of Employees from Risks Caused by Biological Agents was amended by supplementing the section on the investigation and evaluation of risks. Provisions were also added on what information should be included in the list of workers exposed to biological agents contained in the Occupational Safety and Health Act. A new decree was adopted on the classification of biological agents, which contains a list of biological agents known to infect humans. The listed factors are classified in hazard classes 2, 3 and 4. A new factor added to the list was SARS-CoV-2, which was placed in hazard class 3.
- Amendments were made to the Act on Posting Workers concerning the pay provisions that apply to posted workers and the employer's obligation to compensate travel, accommodation and catering costs. The amendments entered into force on 1 December 2020.

Resources

2020 was an exceptional year in many respects. Due to the sudden transition to remote work and the significant limitation of inspection activities, the use of resources was also challenging. Due to the coronavirus epidemic, occupational safety and health inspections at workplaces decreased considerably. This freed up human resources for various development projects, staff training and planning tasks. Appropriated funding was also saved as e.g. travel costs decreased.



Anu Pynnönen

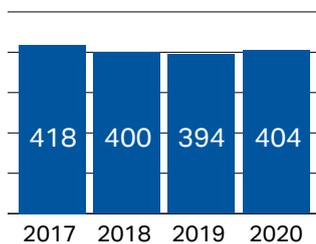
The Occupational Safety and Health Administration promoted the development of competence by drawing up competence profiles and competence levels, which aim to ensure, such things as equal treatment of personnel.

The OSH Divisions participated in the joint HR partnership project of the Regional State Administrative Agencies, which resulted in various guidelines, processes and operating practices that promote productivity.

The principles and practices of coaching management were sought in the development of management and supervisors. The results of the Job Satisfaction Survey indicate that the personnel felt that supervisors and management work was effective, and the result was 3.57 (scale 1-5). Overall job satisfaction was good (3.73). Most of the personnel in the OSH Divisions felt that remote work improved their own well-being at work.

Sickness absences decreased by 36% compared to the previous year.

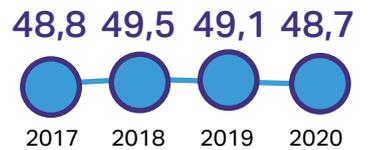
Person-years



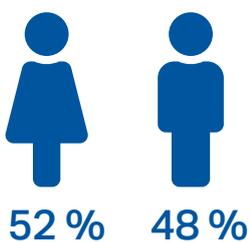
Personnel groups



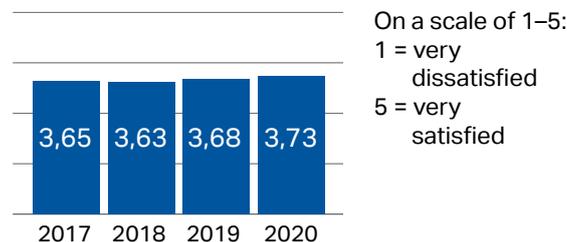
Average age



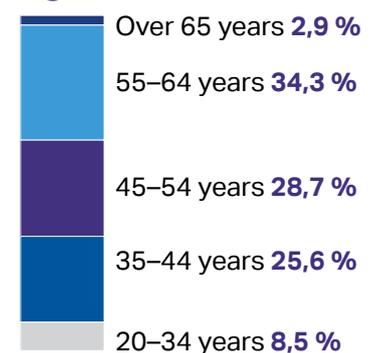
Gender distribution



Job satisfaction



Age breakdown



Cooperation between various authorities and internationalisation

Occupational safety and health authorities engage in active cooperation with other authorities. Each authority has its powers and operating fields defined by legislation, but effective operations require extensive cooperation.

Cooperation between numerous authorities includes the exchange of information, analysis activities, joint communication and joint enforcement activities. The activities are targeted, for example, at sites selected in joint analyses or those that are the sources of the most significant harm. A rapid response to coming shared challenges will require well-functioning cooperation networks and operating methods.

Cooperation between authorities is carried out, for example, in the supervision of seasonal work, in the prevention of undeclared work and human trafficking, and in the supervision of chemical legislation. Partners may include municipal construction authorities, the police and the Finnish Immigration Service.

Active cooperation between EU Member States is also becoming more common with the help of various networks, network tools and work platforms.

At the European level, cooperation will take place with actors such as the Europol police agency and the European Chemicals Agency ECHA. In 2020, Europol coordinated pilot inspections in agriculture, transport and construction. The inspections highlighted issues such as labour exploitation and human trafficking.

The European Labour Authority (ELA), which launched its activities in 2019, is an important partner. It coordinates joint inspections, conducts analyses and risk assessments on matters related to cross-border worker mobility and acts as a mediator in disputes between EU Member States.

Joint pilot inspections aiming to combat undeclared work among Member States were carried out in September 2020.



In addition to supervisory tasks, we engage in international cooperation especially with EU Member States in various development tasks, campaigns and legislative drafting. Cooperation is also active between the Nordic and Baltic countries.

Cooperation within the EU Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee (SLIC) focuses on things such as the development of OSH enforcement, the preparation of common guidelines and policies, and the organisation of OSH administration evaluations and inspector exchanges.

The coronavirus epidemic interrupted evaluations and inspector exchanges. Instead, the SLIC prepared

its position on the future EU strategy framework for health and safety at work for 2021-2027. Another important topic was the exchange of information and experiences regarding the activities of occupational safety and health authorities in combating the coronavirus epidemic.

The European Platform tackling undeclared operates as part of the European Labour Authority.

Its task is to enhance cooperation between authorities and other actors in tackling undeclared work both nationally and in cross-border activities.

Key ministries and authorities are represented in the Finnish network for tackling undeclared work.



Screenshot from the Posted worker video

Communication cooperation utilised to combat undeclared work

The European Labour Authority (ELA) organised the #EU4FairWork information campaign to tackle undeclared work. In Finland, ministries, supervisory authorities and organisations participated in the campaign. As part of the campaign, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration organised the Employee Rights in Finland webinar for immigrants and those working with them.

Finland also participated in a joint project between the Nordic and Baltic countries to combat undeclared work.

As part of the project, the countries jointly implemented a video campaign targeted at companies using posted workers. The video's core message was: "Posted workers are entitled to the same rights as other employees."

In the project, the countries also shared their experiences of effective means of communication, especially in order to combat undeclared work.

OSH enforcement in figures

	2017	2018	2019	2020
Inspections and inspected sites				
Total number of inspections	27,591	26,239	23,977	14,596
Total number of inspected sites	22,892	21,409	19,472	12,472
Inspections/inspector-person-years*	66	66	77	51
Document inspections (inspection carried out on the basis of documents)				
Number of document inspections	2,507	2,822	3,225	5,420
Workplace inspections (inspection carried out by visiting the workplace)				
Number of workplace inspections	25,084	23,417	20,752	9,176
Time used for one inspection in the workplace, average number of hours	1,4	1,4	1,4	1,3
Written advice and improvement notices				
Written advice	61,061	57,095	51,419	26,293
Improvement notices	8,108	7,400	7,225	4,110
Coercive measures				
Prohibition notices confirmed by the OSH authority	57	83	63	57
Binding decisions	266	295	178	160
Periodic penalty payments to be paid (qty)	31	37	37	31
Periodic penalty payments to be paid (EUR)	210,000	372,000	185,000	263,500
Negligence fee for contractor's obligations and liability (decisions made during the year)**	103	105	75	84
Negligence fees for contractor's obligations and liability in total (EUR, paid during the year)**	450,312	522,900	301,700	449,500
Negligence fees related to posted workers (decisions made during the year)	-	-	14	18
Negligence fees related to posted workers in total (EUR, paid during the year)	-	-	65,000	99,500
Investigation requests and statements				
Investigation requests to the police	395	333	288	371
Statements to the police/prosecutors	636	473	488	547
Service demand				
Client contacts/total service demand***	33,600	35,200	30,400	32,508
Inspections carried out based on a request	1,687	2,062	2,094	1,829
Investigation of occupational accidents and occupational diseases				
Occupational accidents investigated	939	1,048	1,183	841
Occupational diseases investigated	44	52	35	15
Employees (person-years)				
Occupational Safety and Health Divisions	418	400	394	404
Operating expenditure (EUR 1,000)				
Occupational Safety and Health Divisions	25,220	24,461	24,628	26,130

* Data for 2017 and 2018 contain the total number of person-years for the entire staff.

** Payments related to some decisions made during the year will become due only the following year.

*** The total number includes emails received by the OSH Divisions and calls answered by the telephone service.

In addition, contacts are sent directly to the inspectors, and these are not included in the total number for service demand.

Tyosuojelu.fi

Website of the Occupational Safety
and Health Administration in Finland