

# Annual Report of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Finland 2023



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## **Annual Report of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Finland 2023**

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# Management's review

“We value our clients, we cultivate know-how, we care about well-being and we are fair.”

These are the values defined by the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Divisions last autumn.

In my opinion, the values are an excellent portrayal of the aspects that we should build our operations on now and in the future. They serve as a strong foundation for OSH enforcement.

**For OSH Administration, 2023 was successful** in terms of reaching set objectives. Performance targets were achieved, and even exceeded in several areas. As our objectives had been set from the perspective of the impact of our activities, we can be sure that the safety and health of workplaces has improved and that the activities of the OSH authority have promoted fairness at workplaces.

The OSH Administration plans its activities with a framework plan covering one government term. The latest four-year period, 2020–2023, came to a conclusion this year. In that sense, the success in last year's objectives reflects a successful four-year period. There was especial progress in the visibility of the impact of OSH enforcement, encompassing all stages from the planning of enforcement to implementation. Inspections, communications and other influencing have been developed as the mutually supportive elements of a whole.

OSH enforcement was developed in many ways. For customers, one visible aspect was the launch of an e-service that streamlines processes for customers as well as the OSH authority. The work to improve the impact of enforcement is also ongoing, and we have identified opportunities in aspects such as multi-authority activities and in utilising information better.

**In 2023**, we planned a framework for the activities for the next four-year period 2024–2027. We



Riitta Grönroos

## Raimo Antila

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

will continue our success of the previous period in line with our vision of “Healthy work”.

In the coming years, our operations will be challenged by the tight financial situation of the OSH authority, which is why there has to be a special focus on the planning and use of resources.

We are also anticipating a structural update in the future. The reform of the regional state administration has started in accordance with the Government Programme, and for us, this means the preparation of a new national agency for licensing and supervision. The aim is to launch operations at the beginning of 2026. I believe that the OSH Administration will be ready for the new national agency when it is launched, since activities have been planned and enforcement projects have been carried out in a uniform manner for several years now.

My best thanks to the staff for their success in 2023!

# OSH supervision organisation and steering

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health is responsible for steering the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Divisions of Regional State Administrative Agencies. The activities are based on a four-year framework plan, which creates a national framework for the content of supervision and the development of the activities.

The OSH Divisions act as the competent OSH authorities in their regions. Continuous national cooperation is carried out in the planning and development of operations. This national approach ensures the coherence of operations and the most efficient use of available resources.

2023 was the last year of operations of the four-year period 2020–2023. The vision for OSH supervision is to strengthen safe, healthy and fair work through a broad range of means, while reacting to changes in the operating environment and boldly developing the activities. The slogan ‘Healthy work’ describes the vision.

The strategic goals serve as a basis for the objectives for the four-year period as well as for the annual operational performance targets. During 2020–2023, there was an emphasis on reforming and developing operations. Continuous assessment of the operating environment and effective use of information were key to planning and developing operations.

The tripartite cooperation in the field of OSH enforcement is carried out with the employer and employee organisations in regional OSH committees and in the national advisory committee.

## OSH Divisions of Regional State Administrative Agencies

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



## Targets for the four-year period were achieved

During the four-year period 2020–2023, the OSH Divisions introduced the principle of a phenomenon-based approach in the targeting of enforcement. The approach was developed year by year, with particular attention on promoting the effectiveness and impact of enforcement and the diversification of methods.

Other influencing – stakeholder work and communications – became established alongside enforcement. Other influencing reaches tens of thousands of participants per year. In addition, the Tyosuojelu.fi website has approximately 1.4 million users each year.

The concept of continuous development was a carrying theme in the four-year period in all the activities of the OSH authority. Over these years, there was an effort to ensure that the OSH authority can offer more functional digital tools for customers and employees alike. Development was also targeted at the national management system. The results of this work are already clearly visible. Peer learning between personnel groups was also important.

# Duties of OSH authorities in 2023

The OSH authority supervises compliance with OSH regulations. OSH inspections are the most important method of supervision. OSH supervision is carried out on the basis of the plans prepared by the OSH authorities or at the initiative of the customers.

We also issue advice and guidelines concerning occupational safety and health and the terms and conditions of employment relationships.

Our duties include investigating the causes of serious occupational accidents, occupational diseases and work-related illnesses and to take measures to prevent them. We also carry out

Special attention was paid to other means of influence.

inspections to ensure that the machines, tools, personal protective equipment and other technical equipment used in work meet the requirements set for them.

We also process applications for permits and notifications of work for which legislation imposes restrictions or notification obligations.

We support the effectiveness of supervision by other means of influence, such as multi-channel communications and virtual events.

## The year of the OSH administration in a nutshell

About  
**24,500**  
OSH inspections

About  
**19,700**  
sites inspected

About  
**51,300**  
obligations issued to employers

More than  
**900**  
investigated serious occupational accidents

More than  
**1,200**  
investigation requests or statements to the police or the prosecutor

About  
**900**  
permits processed

More than  
**44,100**  
notifications received

About  
**36,000**  
customer contacts

About  
**1.4 million**  
Tyosuojelu.fi website users

## National phenomenon-based enforcement

In 2023, after several exceptional years, the occupational safety and health authority was able to carry out supervision at workplaces in full scale. Occupational safety and health enforcement was primarily carried out nationally with a phenomenon-based approach in work and employment. Priority in phenomenon-based supervision was on working conditions, fragmented working life and psychosocial workload.

Inspections were prioritised on a risk basis, using information collected from a variety of different sources and observations made during previous inspections. The target level for inspection volume was exceeded. Customer demand was also successfully met in target timeframes.

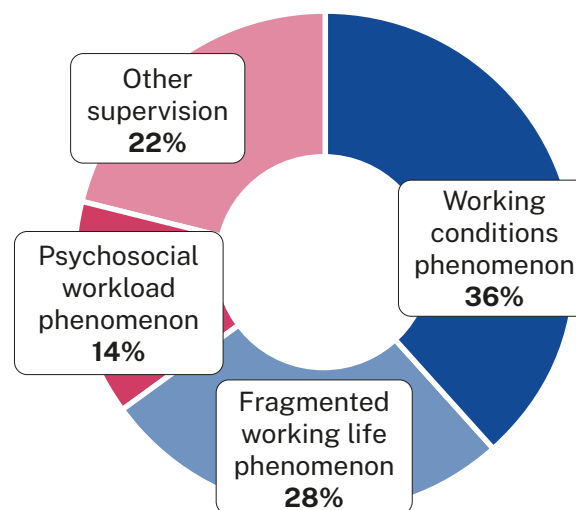
Although the COVID-19 pandemic had receded, Finland was affected by global security and economic challenges. The impacts of the economic downturn were felt in many areas and there was a particularly sharp fall in construction. The increase in light entrepreneurship was also reflected in occupational safety and health enforcement.

Other influencing was used as an integral part of occupational safety and health enforcement. Workplace safety was supported with measures such as multi-channel communications, webinars, fairs and other events.

Throughout the entire four-year period, efforts were made to develop the national scope of the activities. Peer learning in Occupational Safety and Health Divisions continued. Peer learning generated a huge amount of good practices, development ideas and insights.

Effectiveness of the activities was improved in many areas.

### Breakdown of supervision: supervision by phenomenon and other supervision



Janne Varonen

## Phenomenon: Working conditions

In 2023, working conditions were supervised with some 9,300 inspections. Almost all inspections were carried out on site at workplaces. Supervision was focused on risk-based prevention of occupational accidents and the management of chemical and biological agents and physical workload.

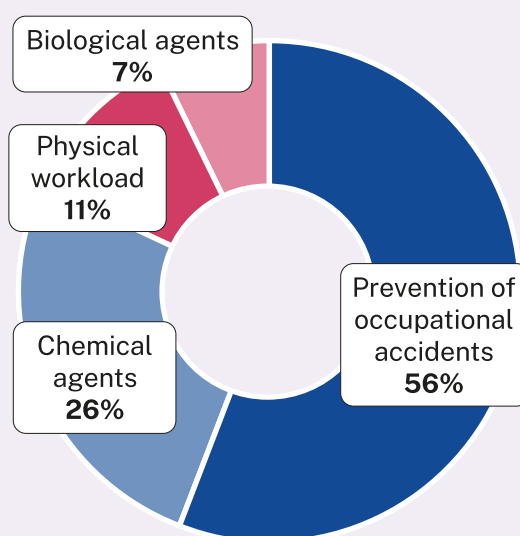
Workplace inspections play a key role in the supervision of working conditions. Enforcement was supported with versatile communications.

### Inspections of the working conditions phenomenon

**Prevention of occupational accidents:** General accident management practices and accident hazards specific to individual workplaces were reviewed during inspections. Some inspections focused particularly on the accident risks of machinery and other tools, while some focused on the risks of falling. The targeting of the supervision was successful, and inspections and subsequently imposed obligations were focused on workplaces with working conditions that posed a risk of accidents. However, achieving a lasting impact is challenging, as many employers have been given similar obligations before.

**Chemical agents:** Chemical exposure and cancer hazards were combated with the supervision of procedures related to chemical agents at workplaces. Inspections were effective in influencing workplace practices. Follow-up inspections revealed that some employers had taken significant steps to reduce exposure. However, some employers had not complied with the imposed obligations, so follow-up inspections will be necessary in the future as well.

**Physical workload:** The focus in the supervision was on workplaces with the highest levels of harmful musculoskeletal strain and subsequent diseases. Supervision was also directed at large operators in the construction sector. Inspections produced more information on the risks of physical workload and their management. The highest



number of deficiencies were observed in the identification and assessment of hazards.

**Biological agents:** The supervision of biological agents was targeted with a risk-based approach at workplaces with biological agents present. Biological agents were also assessed in connection with indoor climate control and occupational disease investigations. A large number of deficiencies were observed. The identification of biological hazards had been completely neglected or had been conducted inadequately in almost two thirds of the workplaces inspected. Workplace surveys by occupational health care professionals were missing or inadequate in about half of the inspections carried out. Follow-up inspections revealed that, after being provided information on the risks posed by biological agents, employers clarified their practices and launched measures such as the identification of risks.

## Special attention on the risks posed by mineral dust

In 2023, the OSH authority paid particular attention to chemical agents that expose people to work-related diseases.

Work-related diseases account for the majority of work-related deaths in Europe. Mineral dust, especially asbestos, are the most significant exposure agents that cause work-related diseases.

More than 1,000 inspections were carried out for supervising the risk of cancer, with a special focus on the management of risks posed by respiratory crystalline silicon dioxide (alveolar quartz), asbestos and diesel exhaust gases.

The inspections had a significant impact on communicating information related to the management of cancer risk at workplaces.

In addition, imposed obligations led to improvements such as better management of hazards arising from chemical agents and improvements in the planning and implementation of dust control while more employees started using personal protective equipment.

Most work-related deaths are caused by exposure agents.

## Avian influenza required a rapid response

The OSH authority supervised the management of risks posed by biological agents in a wide range of sectors. There was a particular focus on avian influenza, which spread to fur farms in summer 2023.

Avian influenza required a rapid response from the supervisory authorities. The OSH authority, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare, the Finnish Food Authority and Regional State Administrative Agencies' provincial veterinarians carried out exceptionally extensive cooperation and inspections at fur farms where avian influenza was suspected or detected. OSH enforcement paid attention to the protection of employees in sampling and the euthanasia of animals at fur farms. The inter-authority cooperation and the exchange of information went well. The cooperation enabled ensuring the targeting and timeliness of inspections, for example.



Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee (SLIC)



## Phenomenon: Fragmented working life

Some 6,400 inspections were carried out on the phenomenon of fragmented working life. The aim of the supervision was to reduce worker exploitation and conflicts at work and to combat grey economy.

Supervision was targeted at employment relationship matters, use of foreign labour, compliance with social legislation in road traffic, temporary agency work, and compliance with contract liability legislation. The focus is on new

forms of work and the protection of the rights of persons in a weak labour market position.

Based on legislation and the powers available to the OSH authorities, effective action can be taken to supervise the use of foreign labour and compliance with the Act on the Contractor's Obligations and Liability. The amendment to the Act on Occupational Safety and Health Enforcement, which entered into force in June 2023, introduced tools for addressing underpayment.

### Inspections on the phenomenon of fragmented working life

#### Supervision of the use of foreign labour and supervision related to the posting of workers:

Enforcement was targeted at the supervision of the minimum terms of employment of foreign workers. In addition, supervision focused on employers having ensured foreign employees' right to work in Finland. Over 300 of the inspections were carried out in companies that post workers to Finland or act as contractors of posting companies in Finland.

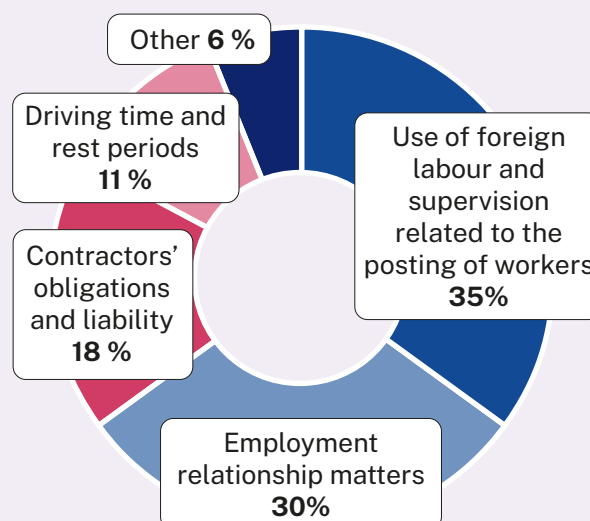
#### Supervision of employment relationship matters:

Enforcement ensured that workplaces complied with the provisions of the applicable universally binding collective agreement, especially in pay. In addition, attention was paid to the legality of the terms of employment and the record of working hours. Deficiencies were observed especially at small and unestablished workplaces. Particular attention was paid to the employment relationships of young workers.

**Supervision of contractors' obligations and liability:** The Act on the Contractor's Obligations and Liability when Work is Contracted Out obliges contractors to check that their contracting partners have fulfilled their legal obligations. Inspections of contractors' obligations and liability were used to supervise compliance with

the obligation to check in subcontracting and temporary agency work contracts. Information obtained from other authorities was actively used in selecting the targets of supervision and to support the inspections.

**Driving time and rest period supervision:** Compliance with social legislation in road transport was comprehensively supervised in companies of different sizes in the transport sector. The purpose of supervision is to ensure road safety, the protection of professional transport workers and fair competition within the European Union. As in previous years, a large number of shortcomings were observed in compliance with driving and rest times.



## Eyes on the supervision of underpayment

In 2023, pay was increasingly included in the supervision of the minimum terms of employment. At the beginning of June, the occupational safety and health authority's range of methods was supplemented with the option to issue an improvement notice in cases of underpayment that were greater than minor. At the same time, the occupational safety and health authority became obliged to notify the police of suspected cases of fraud and extortion in employment.

In late 2023, nearly 500 inspections revealed deficiencies in compliance with the pay provisions of the applicable universally binding collective agreement. The supervision of pay will be further intensified in the coming years.

Light entrepreneurship has increased and become more relevant in OSH enforcement.

The Tyosuojelu.fi website was updated with a separate page on the characteristics of an employment relationship.

In addition, a flyer on light entrepreneurship was prepared in ten languages, and a podcast episode was also released on the subject.



Tyosuojelua puhekielellä -podcast

Jakso  
14

## Palkkainfo: yleisökysymykset

Tyosuojelu.fi  
Työsuojeluhallinnon verkkopalvelu



The Palkkainfo webinar on pay information was held in October 2023. OSH lawyers Tia Keltto and Aki Eriksson addressed audience questions from the webinar in the Tyosuojelua puhekielellä podcast ("Occupational safety and health in plain words").

## Shortcomings revealed in pay of foreign labour

In 2023, the OSH authority carried out more than 2,200 inspections of companies using foreign labour. There were many shortcomings in the minimum terms of employment, such as pay and compliance with working hours. Deficiencies in pay were observed in almost half of the inspections in which the issue was assessed. In many cases, the basic pay or increments were too low, or no increments had been paid. A large number of deficiencies were also identified in the record of working hours.

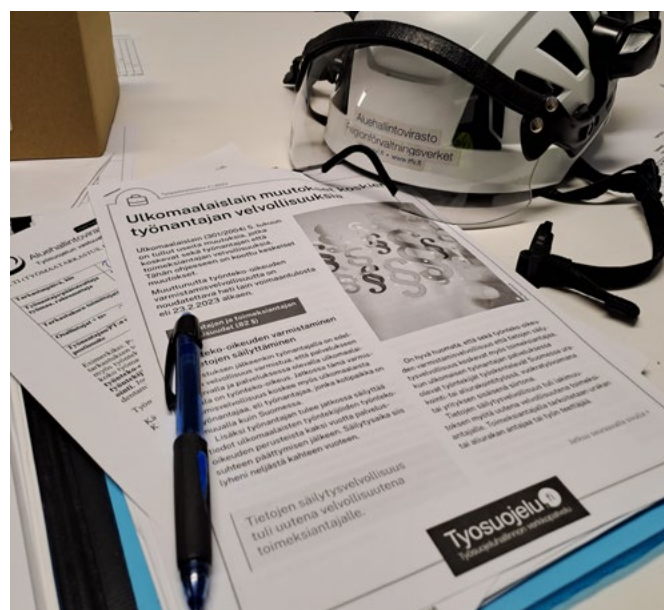
The inspections also assessed whether employers had verified their foreign employees' right to work in Finland. Around one-in-ten of the inspections concerning the right to work involved at least one foreign employee who did not have the right to work in Finland.

The so-called Berry Act was now within the scope of enforcement for the third year. Non-compliance with the Berry Act was observed in practically all inspections carried out at wild berry pickers' bases, and the number of imposed obligations was considerable.

Enforcement increasingly revealed situations where an employment relationship had been disguised as entrepreneurial work or so-called light entrepreneurship. This phenomenon was previously particularly visible in the construction and service sectors, but it has also expanded to manufacturing and the forest sector.

The task of the OSH authorities is to ensure that foreign employees have the required right to work and that they are paid at least the minimum wage and the required increments. The aim is also to prevent work-related exploitation through communication and close stakeholder cooperation.

Inter-authority cooperation makes the supervision more effective. In 2023, more than 500 joint inspections were carried out. Data from other authorities was used in hundreds of inspections.



Janne Varonen

## More negligence fees to posting companies

About 330 inspections were carried out in companies that post workers to Finland or act as contracting partners of posting companies in Finland. There was also a pilot to supervise road transport subcontractors who post drivers to Finland. Most of the inspections were carried out in construction and manufacturing.

Posting employers were given the most written advice on deficiencies observed in their reporting obligation. A large number of non-conformances were also observed in pay, working time records and the terms of employment.

For certain non-compliances, the OSH authority may impose a negligence fee on the posting company. The amount of negligence fees was significantly higher than in previous years: a total of EUR 340,000 imposed in 70 cases. The highest number of negligence fees was imposed for failing to comply with the reporting obligation.

The Occupational Safety and Health Division of the Regional State Administrative Agency for Southwestern Finland acts as the contact authority for posted workers in Finland. In 2023, the contact authority responded to customers' contacts 386 times.



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## Light entrepreneurship was visible in the supervision of contractor liability

In 2023, nearly 1,400 inspections concerning contractor liability were carried out. Information obtained from other authorities was actively used in selecting targets of supervision and to support the inspections: 36% of the targets were selected with this information. Some 170 joint inspections were carried out with other authorities, which is more than in previous years.

So-called light entrepreneurship was also more clearly visible in the supervision than before. More negligence fees than before were imposed on contractors who used light entrepreneurs as contracting partners.

The impact of the supervision was assessed by analysing its geographical coverage, the utilisation of authority information, the inspection of new and previously uninspected companies, and the change impacts of previous inspections.

The assessment indicated that the supervision is impactful and that previously inspected contractors have clearly changed their operating methods. A more extensive review revealed that contractors tend to comply with their obligation to check better than before, and awareness of the obligations laid down in the Act on the Contractor's Obligations and Liability when Work is Contracted Out has increased.

## Room for improvement in compliance with driving and rest times

The provisions on driving times and rest periods are the same across the EU and the EEA. In Finland, transport companies are supervised in cooperation by several authorities. The OSH Divisions are responsible for supervising companies, while the police, customs and border guard authorities are responsible for roadside supervision. Supervision results are reported to the EU.

In 2023, the OSH authority inspected a total of 589 road passenger and freight transport companies across Finland. The number of inspected drivers was 4,651 and the total number of inspected driving days was about 321,000.

Three out of four inspected companies were found to have committed driving and rest time violations. Most of these concerned drivers' rest periods. Serious misuse of tachographs was found in almost half of all inspected companies.

Based on these violations, OSH inspectors provided the transport companies with official guidance. The most significant violations of social legislation applying to road transport were also reported to the police and the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom. There has been no improvement in the overall number of negligence cases in recent years.

## Phenomenon: Psychosocial workload

Some 3,400 inspections were carried out on the phenomenon of psychosocial workload.

Psychosocial workload occurs in all sectors. For example, the cognitive requirements of work have increased, which may pose challenges to employees' information processing ability.

Harmful psychosocial stress caused by work is a significant risk to employees' health,

coping at work and workplace safety. Sickness absences for mental health reasons grew to record levels in Finland in 2023.

In 2023, occupational safety and health enforcement and other influencing were targeted broadly at different sectors. Employers were guided to identify, reduce, manage and prevent harmful psychosocial workload.

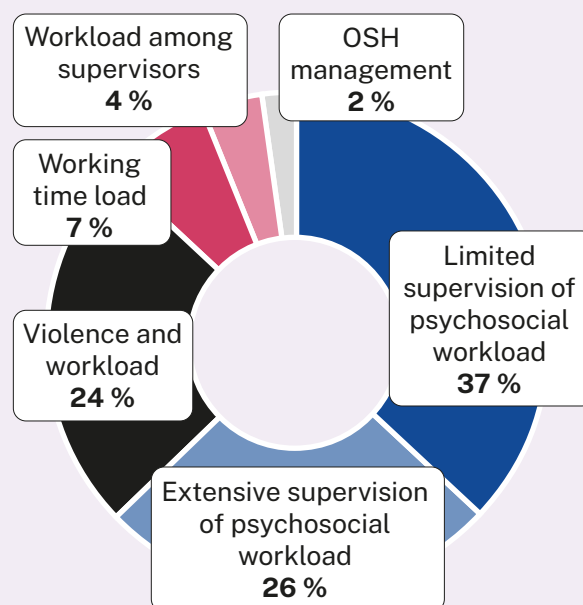
### Inspections on the phenomenon of psychosocial workload

**Limited enforcement:** The focus was on identifying psychosocial workload factors and assessing the risks arising from them. The most deficiencies were observed in the identification and assessment of work hazards, the workplace survey conducted by occupational health care, and the provision of occupational health care services.

**Extensive enforcement:** The focus was on identifying psychosocial workload factors, assessing the risks arising from them, and reducing them. The most deficiencies were observed in the identification and assessment of work hazards, psychosocial workload and the workplace survey conducted by occupational health care.

**Violence and workload:** Inspections were targeted at sectors such as health and social services, commerce, accommodation and catering and public administration. The most deficiencies were observed in the management of the threat of violence, the workplace survey conducted by occupational health care and the identification and assessment of work hazards.

**Working time load:** Workplaces with shift work, periodic work or night work, for example, were targeted. The aim was to ensure that psychosocial workload factors related to working hours are identified at workplaces and that employers



are able to manage and reduce the workload caused by these factors. The most deficiencies were observed in the identification and assessment of work-related hazards and in the workplace survey conducted by occupational health care.

**Workload among supervisors:** The identification and management of psychosocial workload among supervisors was supervised with extensive enforcement. The most deficiencies were observed in the workplace survey conducted by occupational health care and in the investigation and assessment of work-related hazards.

**OSH management:** Instead of individual workplaces, the focus was on management systems and operating practices of entire organisations.

## Supervision of workload among supervisors was well received

OSH enforcement addressed psychosocial workload among supervisors. The aim was to ensure that employers recognise the psychosocial workload factors of immediate supervisors and persons accountable for business results and that employers are able to manage and prevent that workload. It is also important to recognise the expert role of occupational health care in workload matters.

Psychosocial workload related to supervisory work is often overlooked at workplaces. Now, enforcement focused specifically on supervisors and how to manage and prevent workload among supervisors. Inspections addressed supervisory work in public administration, social and health care, commerce and construction. The enforcement was well received.

Psychosocial workload related to supervisory work is often overlooked at workplaces.

The Psychosocial Workload Factors survey has become an established part of supervision. Workplaces have also integrated the survey into their occupational safety and health processes.

## Attention on employees' personal capabilities

At the beginning of June 2023, amendments were introduced to the Occupational Safety and Health Act to specify the employer's general obligation to ensure the health and safety of employees, the employer's obligation to identify and assess the risks at work, and the employer's obligation to provide employees with instruction and guidance.

Employers must be mindful that people have different capabilities for coping at work, with possible variation at the different stages of their careers. It may be necessary to adapt work tasks and working conditions, for example as individuals grow older. One aim is to promote the coping at work of people aged 55 or over and to reduce early retirement.

Tyosuojelu.fi  
Työsuojeluhallinnon verkkopalvelu



Reminders of harmful psychosocial workload factors were posted on social media, for example as comic strips.



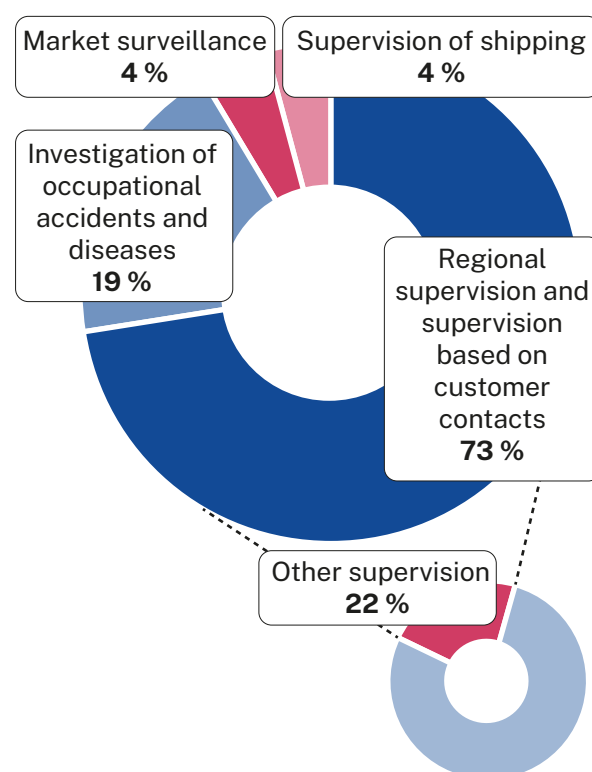
Miika Rautiainen

## Other supervision

Of all OSH enforcement, 78% was carried out with a phenomenon-based approach in national projects. Other supervision accounted for 22%.

Prompted by customer contacts, the OSH authorities carried out investigations of occupational accidents and diseases, as well as supervision of well-being at work and other customer-initiated issues.

Enforcement was also carried out outside the scope of phenomenon-based supervision, including supervision of compliance with the Non-Discrimination Act, market surveillance of machinery and personal protective equipment, supervision of shipping, and supervision prompted by the special characteristics of the regional supervisory field in individual OSH Divisions.



## Some of the discrimination against minorities remains hidden

The OSH authority supervises the promotion of non-discrimination and the prohibition of discrimination at work on the basis of customer contacts and at the initiative of authorities.

Some discrimination in employment remains hidden, as various minority groups may have a high threshold to contact the authorities and report the discrimination they experience.

The number of contacts related to discrimination against persons with disabilities or on account of sexual orientation is relatively low, which means that few inspections concerning these issues have been carried out.

In 2023, the OSH authority received some 520 contacts related to discrimination at work. In most cases, the person wanted advice on how to bring up the issue at their workplace or an expert opinion on whether or not their experiences constituted discrimination. Persons suspecting discrimination can receive guidance and advice from the OSH authority's telephone service as well as instructions for submitting a possible enforcement request.

The OSH authority processed some 170 enforcement requests related to discrimination experienced by an individual employee or job-seeker. 101 inspections were carried out on the basis of requests. In about forty of these inspections, it was found that an employer had violated the prohibition of discrimination. The highest number of obligations was issued on discrimination based on other personal characteristics, and the second highest number concerned discrimination due to a person's state of health. More than half of the obligations were related to the termination of an employment relationship.

About a thousand inspections to enforce the prohibition of occupational discrimination related to foreign employees were carried out. In most cases, discrimination based on origin,



## TYÖELÄMÄN RASISMILLE

language or nationality was observed in pay. Compared to 2022, clearly more discrimination was observed in the inspections of foreign companies posting workers to Finland.

At their own initiative, the OSH authorities supervise job advertisements and take action whenever noticing discrimination. In 2023, the OSH authorities carried out 11 inspections concerning discriminatory job advertisements.

The employee's obligation to promote non-discrimination at work was supervised in 123 inspections, some 70% of which found shortcomings.

### Other shortcomings

While enforcing the prohibition of non-discrimination, the OSH authorities also supervise compliance with other aspects of labour legislation and intervene if they notice deficiencies. Customer-initiated inspections of suspected discrimination revealed a number of other deficiencies in the activities of employers. In 2023, a total of 62 obligations were imposed for other deficiencies concerning compliance with labour legislation in connection with discrimination cases.



## About 2,200 contacts about harassment and workload

In 2023, the OSH authorities received nearly 2,200 contacts about harassment and excessive workload. Contacts concerning sexual harassment were not separated into a different category until the end of March 2023. The OSH authority received about 40 contacts during the end of the year, so in reality, the OSH authority received more contacts about sexual harassment over the course of the entire year.

In 234 cases of suspected harassment, an employee submitted a written enforcement request, on the basis of which an inspector assessed whether supervisory measures could be taken in the matter. A few of the enforcement requests were related to sexual harassment. A total of 44 enforcement requests were submitted on harmful psychosocial workload. Many of the cases involved both harassment and work-related strain.

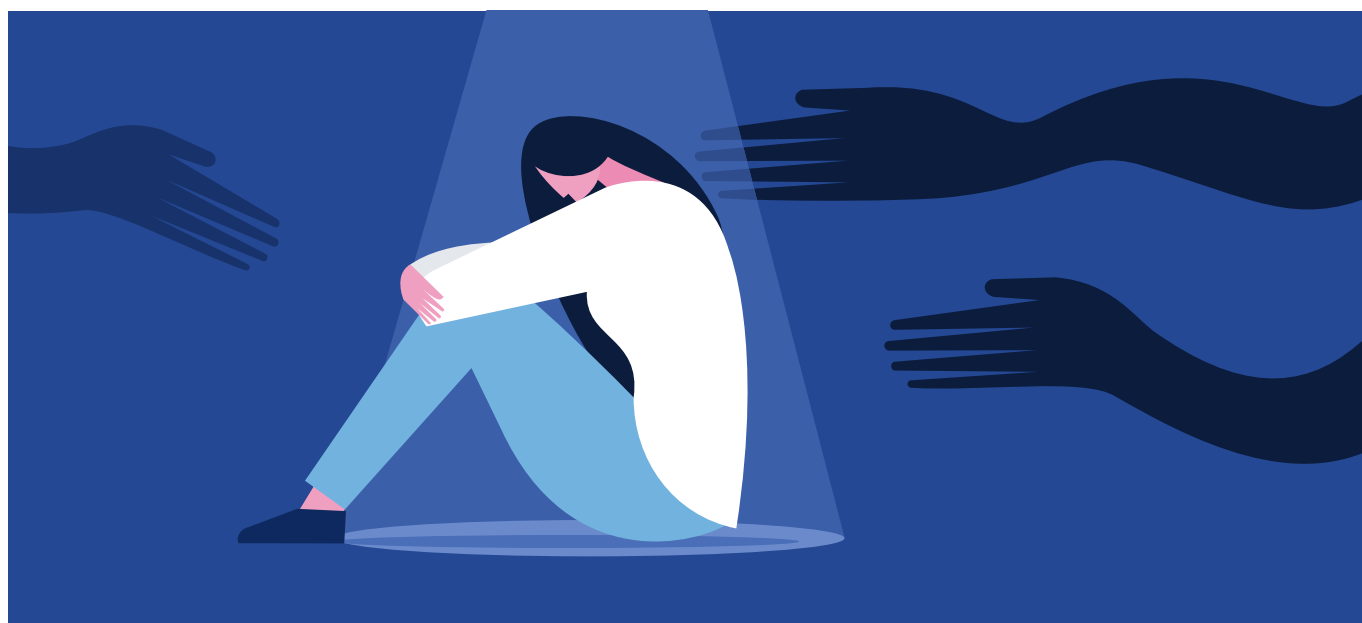
The OSH authorities carried out a total of 76 inspections on the basis of harassment-related enforcement requests. In particular, the inspectors checked whether the employer had taken measures to stop the harassment after being

informed of harassment that the employee considered a health hazard. About 40% of the inspections revealed that an employer had not complied with its obligations under the Occupational Safety and Health Act.

A total of 41 inspections were carried out on the basis of enforcement requests concerning workload-related complaints. The inspections particularly supervised whether the employer had taken measures to investigate workload factors and to avoid and reduce risk after they had been informed of workload that posed a risk to the employee's health. About 40% of the inspections revealed that the employer had not complied with its statutory obligations.

The OSH authority filed four pre-trial investigation reports related to harassment and workload concerning a suspected occupational safety offence.

The OSH authorities also supervise at their own initiative whether the employer complies with its obligations concerning harassment and the management of work-related psychosocial workload. In such cases, issues concerning individual employees are not discussed and the focus is on the work community as a whole.



## Work equipment is inspected by means of market surveillance

The OSH authorities are responsible for inspecting machinery, tools and personal protective equipment intended for professional use. The inspections are usually directed at the activities of the manufacturer, importer or seller and the aim is to ensure the safety of the equipment.

The OSH Divisions carry out comprehensive checks to ensure that products are in compliance with regulations. If necessary, the matter is transferred to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health who can order technical devices to be withdrawn from the market or restrict their release to the market.

In 2023, the OSH Divisions carried out about 240 market surveillance inspections concerning personal protective equipment and machinery.

The market surveillance of personal protective equipment addressed the equipment used typically in agriculture, forestry, hot work, laboratory work and construction. Supervision was primarily targeted at online stores. There were few

deficiencies in the inspected personal protective equipment. The greatest number of deficiencies were found in respirator masks.

The focus in the supervision of work machines was on construction machinery and type-examined machinery. The supervision of construction machinery focused on lifting equipment and hoisting tackles. For type-examined machinery, the focus was on aspects such as the safety of removable mechanical transmission devices and clamps. Supervision was also targeted at Finnish machinery manufacturers, and risk-based online supervision of machinery was carried out. The aim was to identify companies selling machinery online and, if these companies marketed machinery that posed significant risks, to ensure that the machinery was compliant and safe.

During 2023, the Department for Work and Equality of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health closed a total of 28 market surveillance cases, 16 of which prohibited the release of products to the market or for use. Two of the prohibition decisions concerned machinery and the rest concerned personal protective equipment. Some of the decisions concerned several products.



## Exercise of powers

The OSH authorities enforce compliance with OSH regulations. The most important pieces of legislation governing OSH are as follows: the Occupational Safety and Health Act, the Employment Contracts Act, the Working Hours Act, the Occupational Health Care Act and the Act on Occupational Safety and Health Enforcement and Cooperation on Occupational Safety and Health at Workplaces. The OSH authorities enforce compliance with more than a hundred regulations.

The means of supervision vary from providing incentives and advice to the use of coercive measures. The OSH inspector can issue written advice on all matters that are supervised by the OSH authorities. However, an improvement notice and any binding decision following it can only be issued in certain matters laid down by law. In 2023, OSH inspectors issued nearly 45,000 items of written advice. The number of improvement notices issued was around 6,300.

The OSH authorities may oblige the employer and other parties concerned to remove the non-compliant condition. In such cases, a binding decision is issued to the workplace and a deadline is set for implementing it. A total of 222 of these were issued during the year in review.

The OSH authorities may also issue a decision prohibiting the use of machinery, work equipment or other technical equipment, working methods or the continuation of work that would cause a health hazard. This decision is called the prohibition notice. A total of 31 such notices were issued during the year in review.

A total of 84 negligence fee decisions were issued as part of the supervision of compliance with the Act on Contractor's Obligations and Liability. A total of 70 negligence fee decisions on posted workers were issued.

In 2023, the OSH authorities submitted a total of 503 requests for investigation to the police. A total of 711 statements were issued to the police and the prosecution authorities; of these, a total of 566 concerned OSH offences or violations.

## Permits and notifications

Legislation imposes restrictions on how certain kinds of work may be performed or assigned. In some cases, it is possible for the OSH authority to grant an authorisation for certain kinds of work. In addition, the OSH authority must be notified of certain matters.

In 2023, the OSH authority processed some 900 permits and received more than 44,100 notifications.

Nearly half of the notifications were about posting workers to Finland: the OSH authority received more than 20,000 notifications from 51 different countries. The most notifications came from Estonia, Germany and Lithuania.

### Permits processed by the OSH authority

Charger's certificate	338
Exemption related to young workers	303
Exemption from crane operator qualification	125
Work permit for asbestos removal	78
Exemption related to the Working Hours Act	46
Qualification of divers carrying out construction work	1

### Notifications submitted to the OSH authority

Notification of the posting of workers	20,473
Advance notification of asbestos removal work	10,072
Advance notification of construction work	5,878
Notification on using young people for dangerous work	4,516
Occupational disease report	1,712
Notice of serious occupational accident	1,401
Advance notification of a base for pickers of natural products	50
Emergency work notification	25
Notification of the introduction of hazardous biological agents	16

# The methods of OSH supervision are developing

In 2023, the OSH authority continued to develop services aimed at customers. The possibilities of using e-services were expanded by developing new functionalities for the OSH authority's e-service. For example, employers can use the e-service to address obligations imposed by inspections. Employees can submit enforcement requests in matters concerning employment relationships, for example if they do not receive a certificate of employment. In addition, a new system was set up for the processing and registration of chargers' certificates.

Development work was also focused on improving the efficiency of the OSH authority's own activities. Impact was improved in many ways and national coherence was promoted. For example, the production of reports was automated to free up time for data analysis and knowledge management.

The evolution of digitalisation and the increase in the amount of available information facilitate the development of supervision and services.

The possibilities of using available information in supervision were improved and the identification of new sources of information was developed. By combining information produced by different parties, it is possible to form a more detailed understanding of the targets of enforcement. The knowledge base was expanded to new data-sets that enabled planning the targeting of OSH enforcement more comprehensively.

The screenshot shows the user interface of the Occupational Health and Safety e-service. At the top, there is a logo for 'Aluehallintovirasto Työsuojelu' and the text 'Occupational health and safety e-service'. Navigation links include 'Home', 'Own cases', 'Knowledge base', 'English', and 'Testifirma Oy AB'. A search bar is present with the text 'Welcome to occupational safety and health service' and 'Search...'. Below the search bar, there are several action buttons: 'Report action you have taken', 'Reply to the clarification request', 'Assess the safety of your work environment', 'More info', 'Own cases', and 'Knowledge base'. The 'More info' section contains the text: 'Website of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in Finland' and 'E-service pilot'.

*In 2023, a feature was introduced in the OSH authority's e-service to allow employers to respond to a written request for clarification related to a document inspection initiated by the authorities.*

# OSH authorities offer advice and guidance

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

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

## Tyosuojelu.fi website

In 2023, about 1.4 million people used the OSH Administration's website Tyosuojelu.fi with 4.8 million page views. As in previous years, the pages concerning employment relationship matters, such as annual leave and lay-offs, were the most visited pages of the website.

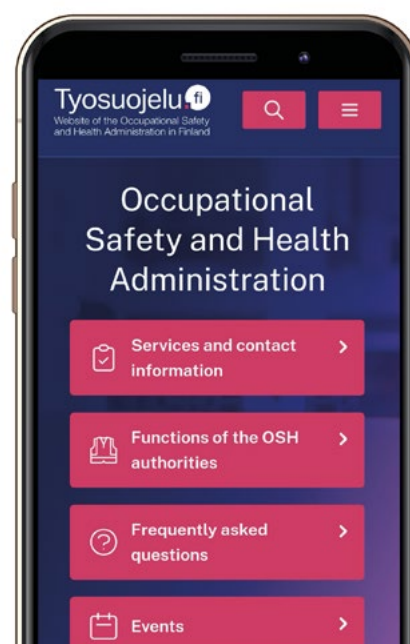
The views of the English-language pages of the website accounted for more than seven per cent of the total number of views, and the views of the Swedish-language pages made up about three per cent of the total.

## Telephone service

The experts working the telephone service are OSH inspectors who give advice and guidance to employers and employees. The telephone service is divided into four themes:

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

The telephone service answered about 17,500 calls. Some 60% of the calls concerned employment relationships.



### Tyosuojelu.fi Top 5 in 2023

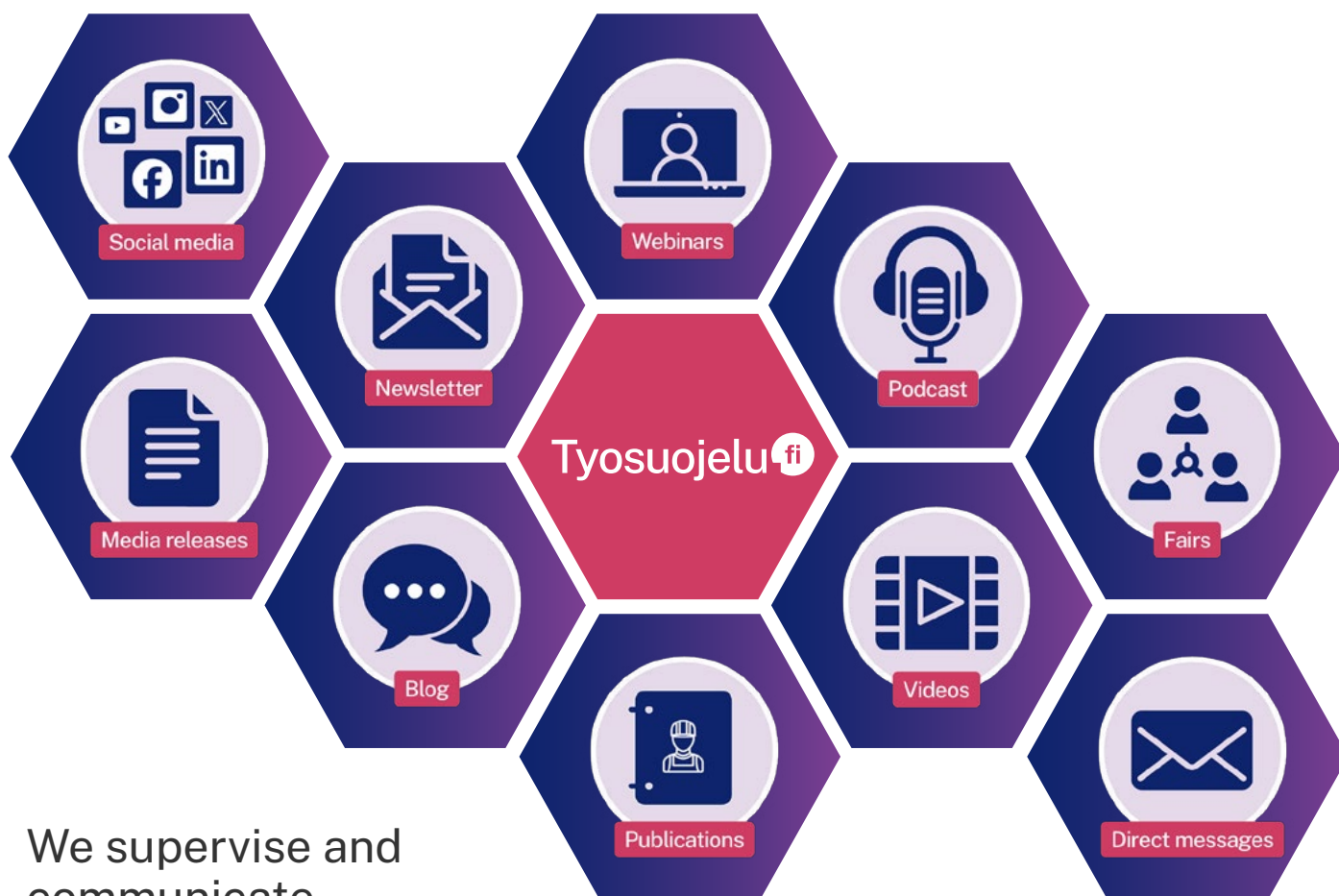
1. Home page
2. Annual holidays
3. Number of holiday days
4. Study leave
5. Layoffs

Tyosuojelu.fi is increasingly accessed with mobile devices.

### Phone calls answered by the telephone service in 2023

Employment relationship	10,395
Work environment	2,941
Construction industry	1,322
Wellbeing at work	2,452
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,531*</b>

\* Includes calls in English (421 in total) which are not broken down by subject.



## We supervise and communicate

Communication is part of the OSH authorities' other influencing. We communicate about the interpretations of laws we enforce, subsequent enforcement findings, and developments observed at workplaces. The most important task of communications is to support occupational safety and health efforts at workplaces.

The cornerstone of communication is the OSH Administration's website [Tyosuojelu.fi](https://tyosuojelu.fi), which, at the minimum, is a collection of links to practically all of our vast array of communication channels. The annual number of visitors at [Tyosuojelu.fi](https://tyosuojelu.fi) is approximately 1.4 million.

In addition to the website, we use various communication channels to reach different customer groups as comprehensively as possible. Content is produced for multiple channels; the same core message is adjusted to the needs of different target groups and posted to different channels and, if necessary, in different languages.

One of our most popular communication channels are free webinars, which we organise

around ten a year. All webinars are recorded, captioned and subtitled. They are often accompanied by a podcast episode where questions related to the theme of the webinar are further addressed. The podcast episodes are now available on YouTube and Spotify. Individual questions can also be discussed further in our telephone service.

Some communications are targeted at workplaces with direct messages. Direct messaging has been well received at workplaces, reaching over 11,500 workplaces in 2023.

In spring 2023, a MediaBarometer survey was conducted on the administrative branch of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health. According to the survey, OSH authorities' communication has improved in almost all areas. Suppliers trust the OSH authority and are interested in consulting the authority. Development targets include promoting openness and a more active approach.

# Legislation

Legislation on labour is drafted on a tripartite basis in cooperation with the organisations representing employers and employees.

Drafting and development of the legislation on working conditions is primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (for a list of legislation completed in 2023, see the bottom half of the page).

The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment is primarily responsible for the employment relationship legislation.

National and EU-specific OSH legislation is drafted in the Advisory Committee on Preparation of Occupational Safety Regulations (TTN). The committee operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

Finland also participates in the drafting of EU legislation and strategies on occupational safety and health in the committee working under the auspices of the European Commission.

## Regulations related to working conditions, completed in 2023:

- Act Amending the Occupational Safety and Health Act (222/2023):** The amendment specified the employer's occupational safety obligations. The act entered into force on 1 June 2023.
  - The employer's general duty to exercise care was specified so that employers have to factor in employees' personal capacity, which may require individual occupational safety and health measures to ensure each employee's safety and health.
  - Employers' monitoring obligations were supplemented with employees' safety and health at work.
  - The provision on the identification and assessment of risks at work now includes that risk assessment should factor in the ageing of the employee.
  - The amendment specified that the employer must take into account not only the physical workload factors but also workload factors related to the content of the work, the arrangements of work and the social functioning of the work community.
  - In the provision on instruction and guidance, an obligation was introduced for the employer to take the employee's personal capacity into account when providing instruction and guidance.
- Act Amending the Act on Occupational Safety and Health Enforcement and Cooperation on Occupational Safety and Health at Workplaces (336/2023):** The Decade of Healthy Facilities programme set by the Prime Minister's Office is under way from 2018 to 2028. The programme aims to promote health and well-being with relation to public spaces. The Act on Occupational Safety and Health Enforcement and Cooperation on Occupational Safety and Health at Workplaces was amended to extend the OSH authority's obligation to notify other authorities: the OSH authority now has to notify municipal health protection and building supervision authorities of any shortcomings in the indoor air and maintenance of buildings that are discovered in the course of enforcement. The act entered into force on 1 June 2023.
  - The act was specified so that the provision on work involving particular risk now includes employees who have recently given birth and who are breastfeeding in addition pregnant persons.

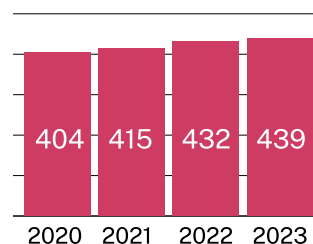
# Personnel

In 2023, the OSH Divisions employed 450 persons. A total of 439 person-years were available. Employees' job satisfaction and average age were approximately at the same level as in previous years.

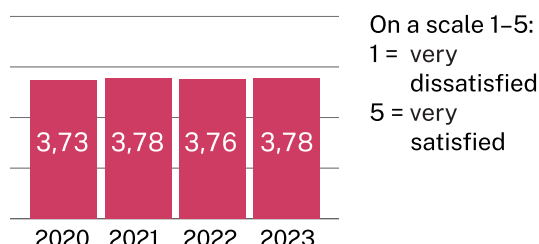
A competence survey was carried out among the personnel in which a task-based competence profile was prepared for each staff member. The competence survey supports the identification of personnel competence and helps to plan the supplementing of competence.

In 2023, the OSH Divisions prepared the values guiding the Divisions' work together with the personnel. The values will provide an excellent basis for preparing for changes in the coming years.

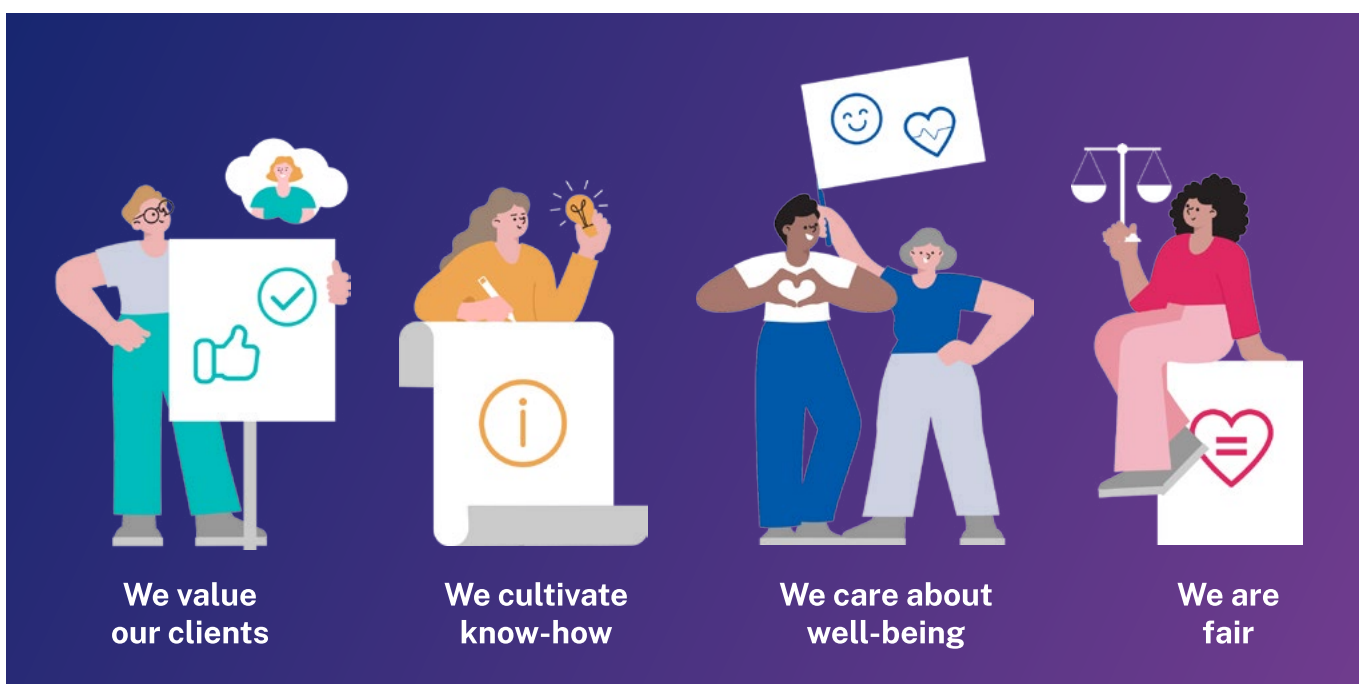
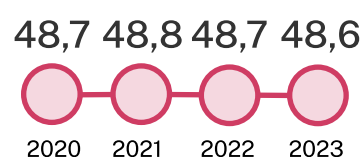
## Person-years



## Job satisfaction



## Average age





# Multi-authority cooperation and internationalisation

The OSH authority engages in active cooperation with other authorities. Each authority has its powers and operating fields defined by legislation, but effective operations require extensive cooperation.

Practical activities include the exchange of information, joint communication and, for example, the focusing of supervision at sites selected through joint analyses.

## Regional forums and exchange of information

A multi-authority cooperation project, concluded in 2023, aimed to develop supervisory cooperation between authorities and clarify and improve the exchange of information between different authorities.

Eight regional cooperation platforms were established to develop supervisory cooperation. In addition to the OSH authority, the forums include police departments, the Finnish Tax Administration and the Finnish Border Guard, and some also include the TE Office, the Finnish Immigration Service, the Finnish Customs and the Alcohol Administration of the Regional State Administrative Agencies.

The cooperation forums engage in practical work. Their efforts include structures to support risk-based selection of inspected targets and long-term regional joint supervision, and carrying out joint supervision. The forums have been well received, and the cooperation authorities have been committed to developing the cooperation.

To intensify the exchange of information between authorities, OSH inspectors were encouraged to exchange information on their own initiative and not hesitate to share infor-



Markku Hanhiova

*In 2023, another aim of the multi-authority cooperation project was to increase cross-border cooperation. Gro Marie Austdal, representative of the Norwegian OSH authority, and Janne Varonen inspecting a construction site in September 2023.*

mation that is of interest to other authorities and within their competence. Similarly, efforts were made to make more extensive use of other authorities' information when planning and implementing OSH inspections.

## International cooperation

Networks, network tools and work platforms are helping to make close cooperation between EU Member States routine.

International multi-authority cooperation contributes to preventing labour exploitation and human trafficking. In 2023, Finland participated in two international action weeks organised by Europol as part of the fight against labour exploitation. The supervision focused on several different sectors. During the action weeks, the five OSH Divisions together carried out a total of more than 100 inspections at workplaces that were thought to have a need for supervision.

In addition to supervisory tasks, the OSH authority also engages in international cooperation in development tasks, campaigns and legislative drafting with EU Member States.

International multi-authority cooperation contributes to preventing labour exploitation and human trafficking.

The European Labour Authority (ELA) coordinates and analyses issues such as workers' mobility and social security and joint and simultaneous inspections at EU level, and acts as a mediator in disputes between EU countries. This requires diverse cooperation and exchange of information between Member States' competent national authorities.

ELA encourages countries to engage in diverse activities to develop methods of communication, cooperation and technical cooperation.

Finland was actively engaged in efforts towards ELA objectives. In 2023, special attention was paid to key phenomena in employment, such as Ukrainian refugees in the labour market, the status of posted workers, international road transport, construction, and the fight against undeclared work as a whole.

ELA's activities include study visits between Member States, training events, the compilation of good practices, and joint enforcement weeks. In 2023, representatives of the Finnish Occupational Safety and Health Administration took part in inspections in Estonia and visited Belgium.



Marianne Fredriksson-Karppinen

Two Finnish transport inspectors took part in the roadside inspection of heavy goods vehicles in Estonia on the road between Tartu and Tallinn in May 2023. The inspection also included observers from Lithuania and Latvia. The trip was coordinated by the European Labour Authority (ELA).



Hanna-Kaisa Rajala

*A Finnish representative participated in the assessment of the Slovenian OSH Administration coordinated by SLIC. In SLIC assessments, observers are not assessing the workplace, but the inspection process of the authority.*

The EU's Senior Labour Inspectors Committee (SLIC) develops occupational safety and health supervision, prepares common guidelines and policies, and organises evaluations of OSH administrations and exchanges of inspectors. In addition, SLIC acts as a channel of communication between OSH administrations in different countries and promotes active interaction. In 2023, the SLIC theme days addressed the mid-term review of the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021-2027. Finland was involved in the evaluation process of the Slovenian OSH Administration.

Finland participates in four SLIC working groups and four sub-groups. The tasks of these working groups are related to general enforcement matters, new risks, biological agents, the occupational safety and health of mobile workers, chemicals and machine safety and robotics.

In 2023, Nordic co-operation was chaired by Iceland, under whose leadership the labour working groups of the Nordic Council of Ministers promoted the themes of future working life, equality and inclusiveness in various projects, especially the green transition as a wide-ranging theme. Ministers of Labour attended a Council of Ministers meeting in Iceland and an accompanying seminar on the green transition.

In spring 2023, a seminar was organised in Latvia in cooperation with the European Labour Authority (ELA) in the context of Nordic-Baltic cooperation against undeclared work. The theme of the seminar was cross-border supervisory cooperation in combating undeclared work, participated by representatives of the middle management of OSH administrations in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

# OSH supervision in figures

	2020	2021	2022	2023
<b>Inspections and inspected sites</b>				
Total number of inspections	14,596	20,268	23,105	24,510
Total number of inspected sites	12,472	16,588	18,770	19,657
Time used for one inspection at the workplace (average hours)	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.3
Inspections/inspector-person-years	51	70	76	81
<b>Inspection types</b>				
Workplace inspections	9,176	12,544	15,874	18,411
Document-based inspections	5,420	7,511	5,153	4,836
Remote inspections			1,947	1,099
<b>Obligations</b>				
Written advice	26,293	34,163	42,490	45,007
Improvement notices (incl. inspections and improvement notice documents)	4,110	4,912	6,231	6,903
<b>Coercive measures</b>				
Prohibition notices confirmed by the OSH authority	57	43	39	31
Binding decisions	160	163	179	222
Periodic penalty payments to be paid (qty)	31	33	26	43
Periodic penalty payments to be paid (EUR)	263,500	314,500	203,000	347,000
Decisions on negligence fees for contractor's obligations and liability	84	55	62	84
Negligence fees for contractor's obligations and liability, total (EUR)	449,500	327,000	204,450	376,560
Decisions on negligence fees related to posting workers	18	35	34	70
Negligence fees related to posting workers, total (EUR)	99,500	173,500	155,000	340,000
<b>Investigation requests and statements</b>				
Investigation requests to the police	371	403	489	503
Statements to the police/prosecutors	547	764	527	711
<b>Service demand</b>				
Customer contacts/total service demand*	32,508	36,499	34,334	36,037
Inspections based on customer contacts	1,829	2,018	2,030	2,117
<b>Investigation of occupational accidents and occupational diseases</b>				
Occupational accidents investigated	841	1,151	1,087	943
Occupational diseases investigated	15	52	36	34
<b>Employees (person-years)</b>				
Occupational Safety and Health Divisions	404	414	432	445
<b>Operating expenditures (EUR 1,000)</b>				
Occupational Safety and Health Divisions	26,130	27,167	29,837	33,406

\* The total number includes emails received by the OSH Divisions and calls answered by the telephone service. Contacts are also sent directly to the inspectors, and these are not included in the total number for service demand.

# Supervision of shipping

In 2023, OSH supervision in shipping was carried out both in ports and aboard vessels. A total of 307 inspections were carried out.

Under the leadership of the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency Traficom, inspections on the temporary storage of dangerous goods in port areas were carried out in cooperation by several authorities. In addition, the transport documents for dangerous goods, the marking of cargo units and the securing of cargo with straps were inspected. A total of 28 inspections were carried out, and they were part of a broader joint supervision of the transport of dangerous goods by the Baltic Sea states.

A total of 14 inspections targeting stowage companies in ports were carried out, where 48 pieces of written advice and 1 improvement notice were issued. A total of 13 inspections were carried out at port authorities, where a total of 20 pieces of written advice and 5 improvement notices were issued. In addition, other maritime operators, such as shipping companies, were investigated with 25 inspections. For these inspections, employers were issued 9 improvement notices and 31 pieces of written advice.

## The majority of vessel inspections were related to the MLC

A total of 227 inspections of vessels were carried out, covering 140 vessels. Approximately half of the inspected vessels were of a gross tonnage (GT) of more than 500 GT and about half were vessels of less than 200 GT. Seven ships with a gross tonnage of 200–500 GT were inspected. In addition, one fishing vessel less than 24 metres in length was inspected.

A total of 153 of the inspections were related to the international Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) and mainly targeted commercial vessels in foreign traffic. A total of 66 ships were inspected. Of the MLC inspections, 32 were carried out on the basis of documents and one by remote inspection. During the inspections, 245 pieces of written advice and 17 improvement notices were issued.

In addition to the MLC inspections, a total of 74 inspections were carried out regarding, for instance, various boarding crafts, work boats, pilot boats, fishing vessels and small passenger ships in domestic traffic.

When examining the conducted inspections in accordance with the industrial classifications, a total of 186 inspections were carried out in the water transport sector, which resulted in a total of 347 pieces of written advice and 27 improvement notices. The greatest number of obligations were related to the vessel's working environment (82).

A total of 96 inspections were carried out regarding water transport activities and ports, of which eight were document-based inspections. These inspections resulted in a total of 86 pieces of written advice and ten improvement notices.

Regional State Administrative Agencies were informed of and investigated six serious occupational accidents in shipping.

## Supervision also for industries related to shipping

Some inspections were also carried out that are related to shipping but not recorded in the supervision figures of the industrial classifications for water transport sector and shipping.

There were 11 inspections of marine or freshwater fishing and fish farming. A total of 147 inspections of the building, maintenance and repair of ships and boats were carried out. Of these, 71 were document-based inspections and 11 concerned serious occupational accidents at shipyards and boatyards. A significant proportion of the inspections were carried out at the shipyards in Turku (39) and Rauma (25). The shipyards are international workplaces with a high ratio of subcontracting. They are typically shared workplaces where one employer exercises primary control and where more than one employer or independent worker operates simultaneously or consecutively. Inspections at the shipyards were mainly related to the supervision of the use of foreign labour, the supervision of contractor's obligations and liability, and accident investigation.

## Supervision of primary production

In 2023, OSH supervision of primary production was carried out in the sectors of agriculture, forestry and fishing. Inspections were carried out by 116 different inspectors. OSH inspectors inspecting primary production sectors also supervise other sectors.

A total of 510 inspections related to primary production were carried out at 423 inspection sites. A total of 853 pieces of written advice and 131 improvement notices were issued on the basis of these inspections. Agriculture was subject to 322 OSH inspections. About one third of these inspections addressed the use of foreign labour. Seven inspections related to avian influenza were carried out at fur farms.

In 2023, 14 accidents were investigated in agriculture, 5 in forestry and 2 in fishing.

The accidents were of different types. Several serious accidents were caused by situations related to the use of machinery, among other things.

Three accidents related to mobility were investigated.

Two accidents caused by animals were investigated, both caused by cattle.

Reports regarding occupational diseases and suspicion of occupational diseases usually involved rashes due to mould and dust exposure and respiratory tract diseases and symptoms. They were examined as occupational disease investigations or in connection with other inspections.

### Supervision of primary production by sector (TOL 2008)

	Crop and animal production, hunting and related service activities	Forestry and logging	Fishing and aquaculture
<b>Total inspections</b>	<b>322</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>12</b>
Workplace inspections	187	103	7
Occupational accident investigation	14	5	2
Supervision of the use of foreign labour	114	47	2
Contractor liability supervision	7	20	1
Market surveillance	0	1	0
<b>Total obligations</b>	<b>676</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>30</b>
Written advice	595	233	25
Improvement notices	81	45	5

Tyosuojelu.fi

Website of the Occupational Safety  
and Health Administration in Finland