

Workplace Instruction –
General



Safety briefing for employees

Information for supervisors

Introduction

Instructions are an important part of modern occupational health and safety: New employees must be made aware by their supervisors of the correct procedures to use for their own and others' safety.

These instructions must be given to all staff members and should be clearly understandable and memorable. The primary goals are to ensure that the health and safety measures are understood and accepted.

Why use workplace instructions?

In order to achieve safe operations and healthy working conditions, all those involved must receive the essential information they need. Occupational safety depends not only on technology, but also very much on the workers' behaviour.

Yet, employees can only work safely if they have been fully informed of the correct processes, dangers, protective measures, safety signs and correct behaviour in the event of malfunctions and emergencies. Informed and motivated employees are the backbone of a successful company.

The benefits for production managers and supervisors:

- Operational smooth-running with less stoppages
- Consistent quality
- Less sick-leave due to occupational accidents and diseases
- Careful use and handling of machinery and equipment
- Cost reduction
- Higher job satisfaction

The aim of this briefing is to support company management in instructing employees on all aspects of occupational health and safety at their workplace.

Legal basis of workplace instruction

The German laws, directives and accident prevention regulations to be observed in particular for instructions are listed below:

- Safety and Health at Work Act § 12, "Instruction"
- Young Persons Employment Act § 29, "Instruction on risks" (instruction at least every six months)
- Ordinance on Industrial Safety and Health § 12, "Instruction and special assignment of employees."
- Biological Agents Ordinance § 12, "Preventive occupational health care"
- Hazardous Substances Ordinance § 14, "Instruction and Information of Workers"
- Noise and Vibrations Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance § 11, "Training of Workers"
- X-Ray Ordinance § 36, "Instruction"
- Radiation Protection Ordinance § 38, "Instruction"
- Accident Prevention Regulation "Principles of Prevention" § 4, "Instruction of insured person"

Who is responsible?

Who has overall responsibility for the instructions?

The company management has overall responsibility. They are responsible for the careful selection of supervisors and the monitoring of the performance of their duties. This also includes the workplace instructions. The management is free to decide who gives the instruction.

Who gives the instructions?

Supervisors (department managers, foremen and women, shift or machine managers, team leaders, etc.) give the instructions in their respective areas of responsibility. Leaving this solely to occupational health specialists or company doctors is not sensible. This group of persons perform advisory functions; they do not have disciplinary powers and authority to give directions. Nonetheless, it makes sense

to involve these persons in the preparation or safety briefing of individual topics.

When are instructions necessary?

Safety briefings must be given at least once a year (young employees at least every six months).

Other reasons would be:

- Recruitment of new employees or moving to other departments
- Starting a new work activity
- Working in unfamiliar circumstances, e.g. troubleshooting, maintenance
- Detection of doubtful actions
- Accidents or near misses
- Questions from employees

Safety briefings must be given at least once a year!

How to proceed?

When?

In principle, instructions can take place at any time. It is advisable to instruct immediately after the start of the work or after the break.

Where?

The location where the instruction is given depends on the respective company's facilities. Possible training areas would be

- Workplace, if it is necessary and useful for the instruction
- The superior's office
- Break room
- Training or meeting room

How?

In principle, the instructions should be memorable and easy to understand for all employees. There should be time to discuss the instruction topics. The mere provision of written information is not suitable. The workplace instruction can also be given as part of a technical instruction.

The following questions would be useful when giving instructions:

- Which risks exist?
- How to protect yourself?

Use feedback for understanding:

- Identify risks and hazards in certain activities
- Show and explain safety devices
- Demonstrate and explain safe working behaviour
- Use open questions to check if instructions have been fully understood
- Answer any and all questions
- Make workplace instructions clear and give reasons for them

The employees should be made aware of the personal advantages to be had by following the safety instructions. Using paragraphs alone to justify workplace instructions, or, indeed, threats, are inappropriate and ineffective.

Categories of safety briefings



General



Personal protective equipment



Workplace



Transport and Traffic

Which contents and topics?

The training topics to be dealt with result from the internal operational requirements.

Instruction topics are, for example:

- Initial safety briefing for new employees
- First aid – the right action in an emergency
- Working with machinery
- Trips, slips and falls
- Hearing protection
- Use of electrical devices
- Hand and skin protection
- Use of protective gloves
- Working with dangerous substances I – Activities involving irritating and corrosive substances
- Working with dangerous substances II – Flammable liquids
- Fire prevention
- Computer work stations
- Alcohol at work
- Manually operated transport vehicles
- Lifting and carrying
- Use of safety shoes
- Ladders and steps
- Pedestrian pallet trucks
- See and be seen while operating forklift trucks
- Road safety

These instruction topics can be dealt with either individually or collectively, depending in particular on the type and size of the enterprise and the group of participants.

[See page 7: Order form for workplace instructions](#)

Is training's documentation required?

Work activities involving dangerous substances require proof of the content and time of the instructions; they **must be documented in written form and confirmed by the instructed person's signature**. Comparable obligations result from the Ordinance on Biological Substances as well as the Radiation Protection Ordinance and X-Ray Ordinance.

In principle, the accident prevention regulation "Principles of Prevention" (DGUV Regulation 1) regulates **the written documentation of all workplace instructions**. It underlines the importance of the instructions. In addition, in this way the instructors demonstrate and meet their duties.

[See also Legal Basis of Instruction \(page 2\) and Copy Template: Given Instruction \(page 5\).](#)

Achieving success

The toleration of incorrect working can often be misinterpreted as acceptance. To avoid this, management and supervisors should note the following:

- Observe and monitor the working method of employees
- React when observing doubtful working methods
- Find out the reasons for incorrect actions and eliminate the causes as quickly as possible
- Do not tolerate incorrect working methods

- Refresh the instruction if required
- Highlight best practice examples

Once the instruction has been given, it is important to achieve the desired goals.

This means consequent monitoring that the work is being carried out as instructed. However, this means that superiors must also demonstrate commitment to the instruction goals by setting a good example themselves.

Instructions Given

Date

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Instructor

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Training contents

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Participants

Surname

Name

Signature

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Order form Workplace Instructions

The documents listed below are intended to support the safety briefing discussions as well as to be handed out to the employees.

If required, they can be supplemented by specific requirements of the company. The instruction aids can be ordered individually or as a package.

The printed versions are only available in German.

Instruction documents	Order number	Number of documents
Complete package (PU022-1 e – PU022-22 e)	PU022-0 e	
Safety briefing for employees – Information for supervisors	PU022-1 e	
Initial safety briefing for new employees	PU022-2 e	
Working with machinery	PU022-4 e	
Trips, slips and falls	PU022-5 e	
Hearing protection	PU022-6 e	
Use of electrical devices	PU022-7 e	
Hand and skin protection	PU022-8 e	
Use of protective gloves	PU022-9 e	
Working with hazardous substances I – Activities involving irritating and corrosive substances	PU022-10 e	
Working with hazardous substances II – Flammable liquids	PU022-11 e	
Fire prevention	PU022-12 e	
Computer work stations	PU022-13 e	
Alcohol at work	PU022-14 e	
Manually operated transport vehicles	PU022-15 e	
Lifting and carrying	PU022-16 e	
Use of safety shoes	PU022-17 e	
Ladders and steps	PU022-18 e	
Operation of forklift trucks	PU022-19 e	
Pedestrian pallet trucks	PU022-20 e	
See and be seen while operating forklift trucks	PU022-21 e	
Road safety	PU022-22 e	

Date of order

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Seminars



Seminars on this and other subjects related to occupational safety can be found online at our seminar database site.

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