



Training of newly recruited supervisory staff within the Swedish Work Environment Authority

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Introduction

The Swedish Work Environment Authority was formed in 2001 through the amalgamation of the former Labour Inspectorate and National Board of Occupational Safety and Health. A project to develop the training of newly recruited staff was conducted by the Work Environment Authority between 2003 and 2005, aimed at adapting the training of newly recruited supervisory staff more closely to the new organisation, promoting a uniform approach and quickly deploying newly hired inspectors for supervisory duties. The present report is a brief description of the new scheme of training.

General

The supervisory training consists of a foundation training programme followed by individual development measures. The foundation programme lasts for half a year and is the same for all newly recruited supervisory staff, i.e. work environment inspectors and staff working on Provisions, EC-Directives, standards and appeals. This foundation training is followed by individually adapted training measures lasting three years and including, for example, a range of advanced courses for inspectors.

Since the competence for supervision within the work environment sector is present within the Authority itself, the training is organised in-house. It has a strong operational slant and a practical approach. The Authority's own resources are mainly relied on, but expertise is outsourced for several fields of a more general nature, such as communication, ethics and official Swedish.

Aims of the supervisory training

The aim of the supervisory training is for the participant, after completing the training,

- to be familiar with the Work Environment Authority's mission, activities and basic values,
- to be familiar with the laws and regulations governing our activities,
- to be proficient in identifying and assessing work environment hazards in working life, and
- to be secure in his or her official and professional capacity.

Allocation of responsibilities and tasks, quality assurance

An internal policy document has been compiled for the supervisory training, aimed among other things at clarifying roles and securing the quality of the training.

The policy document highlights the various roles of those taking part and the role and responsibilities of managers. The managers are responsible for making clear that the training has top priority and for ensuring that staff taking part have a mandate and sufficient time to complete the assignment. It is the new employee's immediate superior who decides when he or she is ready to work independently.

Since large parts of the training are conducted locally, and also as a means of safeguarding the quality of training, a number of implementation documents have been created. There is a study guide for the trainees and a guide for those co-ordinating local training activities. Use is also made of common teaching material, and supporting documentation has been evolved for the individual development plans.

Pedagogic

The pedagogical structure of the training is aimed at achieving step-by-step development during the training period. During the foundation training programme, development proceeds from facts to skills. As the participants proceed to work practically with supervision and with the aid of various individual inputs, their skills develop and they eventually become sufficiently familiar with their professional role to work independently.

Various pedagogical methods, e.g. teaching, private study based on assignments, seminars, practical exercises, web-based sections, role play, applied tasks and inspections together with experienced colleagues, are used in order to vary the training and adapt it to the participants' different learning styles. One essential ingredient of the training is the illustration of different fields through actual instances, often taken from the Authority's own activities.

Content of the foundation training

The foundation training comprises two overarching blocks, one dealing with the official role and one addressing different work environment areas.

The official role

The training of new staff for the official role addresses four fields:

- Work environment legislation.
- Administrative skills.
- Supervisory methodology.
- Professional role and ethics.

This part of the training is conducted in the form of common week-long courses at central level in Stockholm and also locally within the inspection district or division concerned.

- Instruction and private study concerning **work environment legislation**: the Work Environment Act, the Work Environment Ordinance and Provisions in this context permeate several sections of the training. After the training the participants must have a knowledge of the rules governing the work environment, especially systematic work environment management, the regulatory instruments of the Work Environment Authority and how the EU impacts on our rules. The relation to adjacent legislation is also dealt with. The theoretical knowledge thus acquired is then successively applied to supervisory duties and inspections.
- The training in **administrative skills** includes sections dealing with administrative legislation and external and internal policy documents. Public domain access and secrecy are vital fields, as are questions of prejudice and sideline occupations. The problems and issues which can arise in connection with the exercise of authority are illustrated with a large number examples from the Work Environment Authority or other authorities.
- The **supervisory methodology** training begins with tuition, private study and practical assignments concerning the Work Environment Authority's internal policy documents, remit, methods and information system. The internal rules governing inspection are particularly important. From then on the training is linked to performed inspections and supervisory tasks. The training also includes a section on modern official Swedish, with practical exercises.
- The participants are successively trained for their **professional role**, with special emphasis on ethics and communication in the supervisory process. The sections dealing with communication are dominated at

first by theoretical elements, e.g. analysis of different modes of communication, rhetoric and questioning techniques. Conversation methodology, interview techniques and ability to bring about a constructive dialogue are developed in practice through role play derived from the inspectors' everyday activities. Ethics and morals, values and dilemmas of the new professional role are also included in theory and practice throughout the foundation training.

Work environment areas

The new staff members are also given training in

- musculoskeletal,
- chemical,
- physical,
- organisational, social and psychological, and
- technical aspects of the work environment.

This part of the foundation programme takes the form of local training with private study based on study assignments, local tuition, applied tasks and inspections. Web-based training sections have been devised for a number of areas and can be accessed on the Authority's intranet. Training in these work environment areas runs parallel to training in the official role.

After completing the training in these five areas, the new staff members shall have a knowledge of the commonest accident and health hazards in every area and shall understand the connection with different risk sources. They shall also understand the Work Environment Authority's remit and role in this sector, e.g. in relation to other agents.

The training in different work environment areas contributes towards a holistic view of the work environment and constitutes an important platform for inspectors and training participants with specialist functions.

Inspections

One important element in the training of inspectors is their development of their proficiency by taking part in at least 15 inspections. Initially they take part as observers, gradually participate in an increasingly active capacity. Towards the end of the foundation training the training participants are expected to lead inspections themselves, under the guidance of experienced inspectors.

Non-inspection participants take part in inspections for at least two days.

Extent of the training

The foundation training lasts 85 days for inspection staff and 55 days for other supervisory staff. This includes four weeks of courses at central level, local training, private study and inspections.

Further development of the new staff members' competence is governed by their individual development plans. Different persons have different development needs. In addition to advanced courses for inspectors concerning technical, chemical, physical, organisational and musculoskeletal hazards of the work environment, there is an advance course concerning communication in the supervisory process. Development plans can also include other in-house or external courses, set reading, guidance and work experience, e.g. in another division of the Authority.

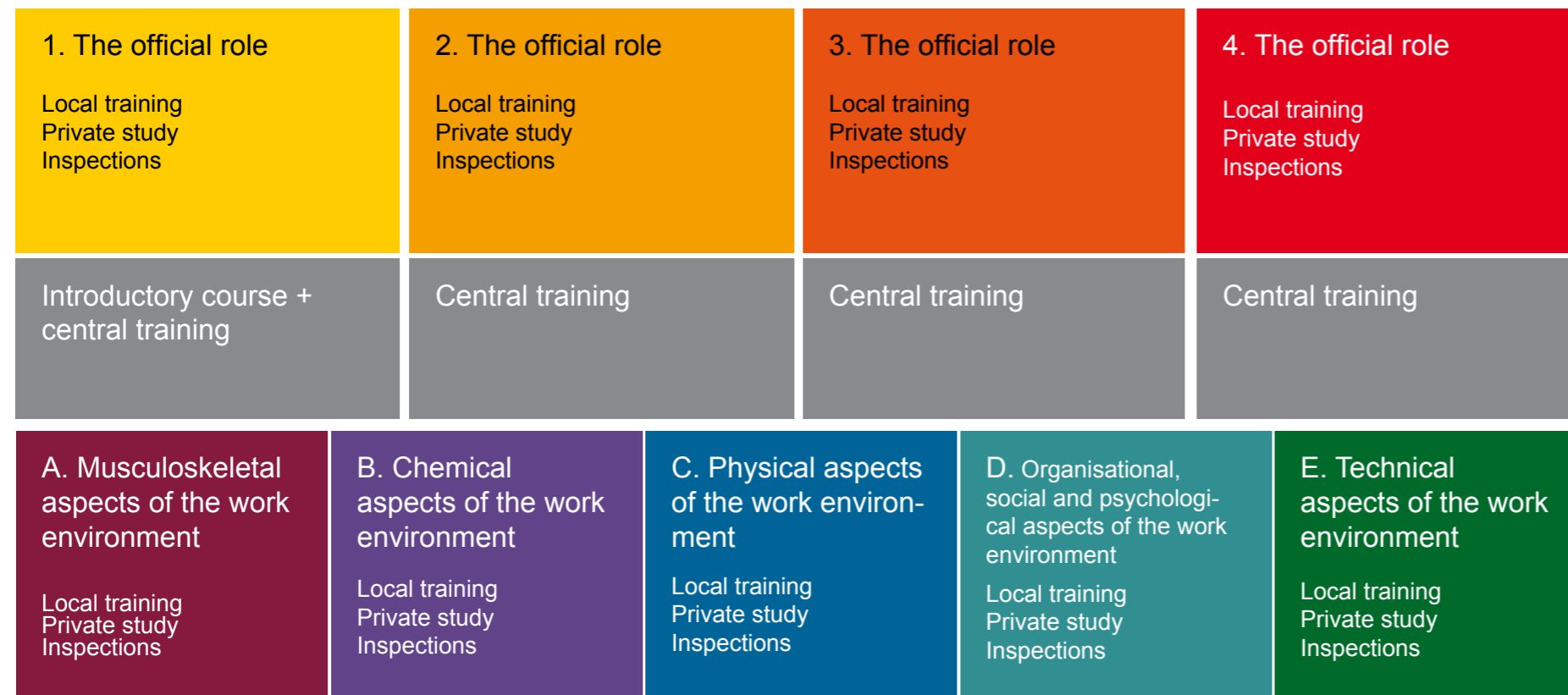
The future of supervisory training

The new training programme for newly recruited supervisory staff will be reassessed at roughly three-yearly intervals in relation to the development of working life and the Authority's remit.

A graphic overview of the training has been compiled and is appended to this report.

Graphic overview of the training

Obligatory foundation training programme, 6 months approx.



Individual development plan, 36 months approx.

