

The Swedish Work Environment Authority Activities 2015





Foreword

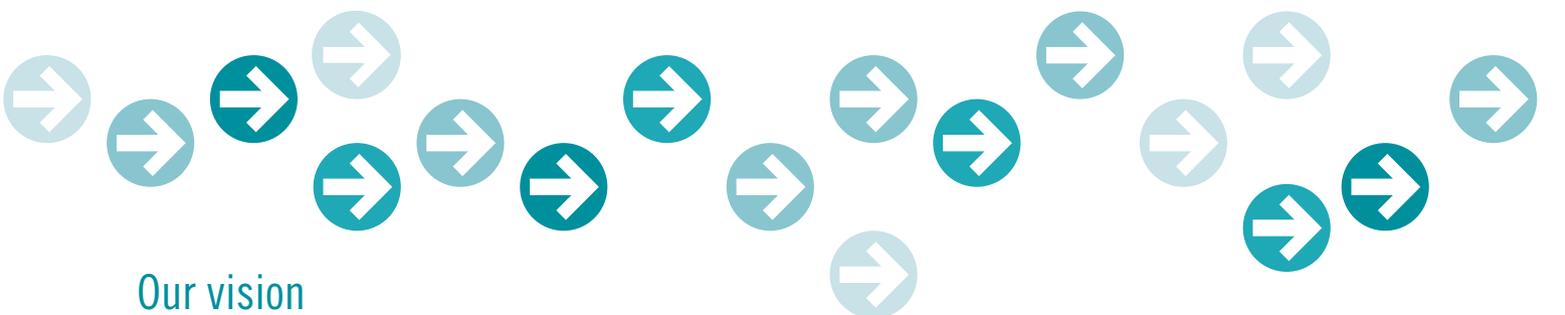
In 1890, 125 years ago, the first work environment legislation came into force. That same year the predecessor to the Swedish Work Environment Authority was formed, the Labour Inspectorate. Much has happened since, within legislation and our authority. Society has changed enormously - industrialisation, urbanisation, population growth, medical developments, public sector growth, technological development and a globalised world. A more complex society has developed, and brings with it new challenges, not least in the work environment area. Continually changing conditions on the labour market makes greater demands on how we work with work environment questions.

The Swedish Work Environment Authority's task is to see that today's work environment and working time legislation is followed and to be responsible for the official statistics in the work environment area. We should contribute to all employers in the country wanting to and being able to create a good work environment for their staff. No one should be injured, become sick or lose their life at work. Healthy staff contribute to a better working climate and an effective operation. Not only individuals but employers profit from a good work environment.

We should offer tools to employers, who are responsible for a functioning work environment, and support safety representatives. A good work environment builds upon cooperation with the labour market partners, sector organisations and other authorities. This, together with supporting analyses, functioning rules, clear communication and effective inspection is our contribution to today's work environment management, 125 years after we started.

Erna Zelmin-Ekenhem

Director-General, the Swedish Work Environment Authority



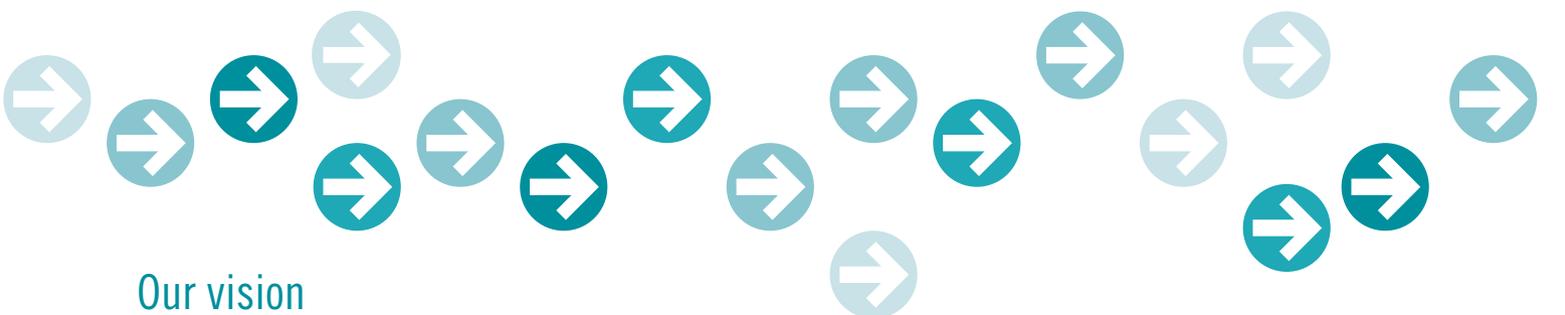
Our vision

Employees in Sweden have the right to a good work environment according to the Work Environment Act. We work for healthy, safe and developing service conditions. Our task is to see that companies and organisations follow the law. Good service conditions benefit the individual, the organisation and society.

Our goal is to reduce risks of ill health and accidents in working life and improve the work environment. We believe that everyone wants to and can create a good work environment. We thus strive towards each workplace having active work environment management, where everyone can contribute.

Our mission

We report to the government about our activities. In the letter of appropriation, which is issued each year, the government states which goals and result requirements are expected of us. Also described are special assignments that we could receive during the year. To further our work, each year we carry out planned activities and campaigns, and we work with strategic goals both in the short and long term.



Support to stakeholders

We support employers, safety representatives and other partners in their work environment management through making accessible relevant information and useable tools. We develop practical support in the form of e-services, checklists, guidance, starter kits, templates and interactive education. We also have a qualified customer service that answers questions about work environment via telephone or email.

Slag Skyddsronder



Provisions and rules

We have about 80 legally binding provisions in the work environment area that we continually work to improve. Our ambition is that our rules and provisions will become clearer, more accessible and directed at areas where they will be of the most benefit.

During 2015, a provision about the handling of quartz and rock dust comes into force and we are updating a couple of other provisions, among others one which deals with chemical work environment risks. We are also working further with a provision that deals with organisational and social work environment.

Sanction fees instead of fines

Earlier, several stipulations in our provisions carried penalties. This means that one could be sentenced to fines if one broke them. After a legislative amendment, from 1 July 2014 several rules are combined with a sanction fee. The difference is that fines are a penalty one is sentenced to in a court, while sanction fees are fees one pays. Information about which rules are covered and what sanction fees can entail are on our website.

This year we will continue the work of increasing knowledge about the sanction fees by means of, among other things, an external information campaign.



Systematic work environment management means the employer's work with investigating, carrying out and following up in such a way that ill health and accidents at work are prevented and a satisfactory work environment achieved.

Systematic work environment management

Our four-year program for systematic work environment management to increase knowledge and improve the application of it in working life has now covered three years. It is an

umbrella for different activities with the focus on information, inspection and cooperation, and there are also safety culture activities.

This year we are publishing

more tools and support material for systematic work environment management and safety culture on our website. This consists of, among other things, information films and educational tools.



Women's work environment

Women are affected to a greater extent than men by work-related ill health. The Swedish Work Environment Authority received in 2011 an extra assignment from the government; to reveal and improve women's work environment. The focus was on the risk of musculo-skeletal disorders.

Three years' work with this assignment has given us much new knowledge. We have, for example, compiled a knowledge overview that shows why women are affected more by musculoskeletal disorders than men. The causes are partly about our gender-segregated labour market but also that women have more repetitive and monotonous working tasks than men. With the aim of facilitating the employers' work with preventing strain injuries, we have developed new assessment tools and used them in more than 4 000 inspections.

Another knowledge overview shows how norms and values steer the working conditions for women

and men. When we added a gender perspective to our supervision it showed clearly that the gender pattern in society, that is that the man is the norm, is also found in working life. Here it is important that our supervision and also all employers' work environment management has a gender perspective.

At the beginning of 2015 we will give our final report to the government. At the same time we will publish a number of short films on our website. The films summarise our mission and aim at disseminating our experiences and involving more employers.

We have received the task of continuing our work with women's work environment during 2015. This entails, among other things, that we observe International Women's Day on the 8th March in connection with regular inspections and that we continue to inspect female-dominated sectors.

Many schools inspected

School is Sweden's biggest workplace in terms of how many people are simultaneously covered by the Work Environment Act. To prevent employees and pupils from being injured or becoming sick, the country's schools must drive systematic work environment management. This does not happen to a sufficient

extent today. Therefore, in the autumn of 2013 we began a campaign of inspections of primary, secondary and upper secondary schools.

By 2016 we will have inspected 30 per cent of the country's schools and all larger education providers. All schools and education providers

will receive campaign information, and the tools and educations available on our website so that they can start or develop their systematic work environment management.

We wish to contribute to a school work environment with less stress, more security and better physical relationships.





National inspection of building and installation work

The building sector is one of the most accident-prone fields in the country. Accidents and occupational illnesses are twice as common among building workers than among other employees. Building and installation worksites are living workplaces where the conditions change all the time. Building projects are often split, with many contractors from several sectors. The proportion of foreign workers and temporary personnel is increasing. Our register of companies who post employees in Sweden shows that the building sector is the single largest sector that registers foreign manpower. It requires therefore good planning where everyone who is in the process – builders, project managers, building work environment coordinators and employers – take their responsibility to see that the work environment is always taken

into consideration. This applies to planning and projection such as during the construction of a building or installation.

During 2015–2017, we are inspecting building and installation work over the whole country. Because the building process is complex and there are many people responsible for different areas, the supervision is divided into several directions. We put the most resources into the small construction companies and less into the larger ones, but with the same goal; to reduce accidents and ill health in the sector. We also inspect those who are responsible for the early stage of the building process, for example building contractors and building work environment coordinators. This so that, even here, there will be good conditions created for work environment in the building stage.

Accessibility and equality

We are one of several authorities who have responsibility to realise the policy that deals with activity limitations within the area of work environment. We work with driving questions about accessibility as a natural part of our work environment management and our supervisory tasks. The work environment needs to function for all employees with different prerequisites, be that physical, social, psychological and cognitive.

We also contribute to achieving the gender equality policy goals that aim at women and men having the same power to shape society and their own lives. We make sure to integrate our decisions and processes from a gender equality perspective to ensure that our organisation corresponds to peoples' needs and their right to a good work environment.



Healthy workplaces prevent stress

Every year, EU countries carry out a joint campaign during the European work environment week in October. The theme for the campaign, which was carried out last year and which continues this year as well, is psychosocial

risks. The campaign in Sweden consists of a supervision campaign, external communication efforts and a concluding work environment parliament where we summarise the year's results.



Statistics and analysis

On assignment from the government we collect and compile statistics on occupational injuries. In addition to reports of occupational injuries, every other year investigations are made about how the working population experiences their work environment and the difficulties it brings. We identify trends and correlations around work environment and occupational injuries.

The preliminary statistics for 2014 indicate the number of reported occupational injuries has dropped during 2014 compared

with 2013, but fatal accidents have increased. We follow and report changes that occur during 2015.

Patterns and links which can be seen are important for the direction of our inspection and communication efforts. In addition to the official statistical report that comes out in June, we also give out fact sheets about work environment.

During the year we follow up and analyse the knowledge and application of systematic work environment management in the country's workplaces. We plan to

develop deeper analyses of three areas:

- Increased risk of occupational injury/accident.
- Analyses of positive work environment indicators based on questions about organisation of work and especially good work.
- Systematic work environment management in Swedish working life.



We disseminate knowledge about working life research

An important part of our work is to inform about research that has significance for working relationships in society. We work actively to convey information in an understandable and accessible way in order for as many as possible to have practical use of it. This we do via monitoring, collecting, compiling and disseminating research-based knowledge about work environment and working life. We publish different reports, so called knowledge compilations, where renowned researchers summarise actual experiences and research results within a number of themes.

This year we plan to present ten reports about, among other things, preventive efforts within female-dominated sectors and the situation for foreign employees in Sweden. All our published reports are free of charge and can be downloaded from our website.



Market surveillance

We run active market surveillance, which means that we check that products that are released onto the market fulfil basic health, environmental and safety requirements. We are responsible for market surveillance of a great number of products where joint rules within the EU apply for several of them.

Machines are the product group that is the most challenging in the EU to run market surveillance within. The variation of machines is large and the development is fast. When it comes to machines we are responsible for both those that are used by employees, and by private people.

We prioritise supervision of products that entail great safety risks if they are not safe. Planned projects within market surveillance this year are, among other things, boiler installations, handheld machines, steering systems and vibration-reducing gloves.



International work

We participate internationally in order to, in the role of government expert authority, influence the development of European work environment policy. We argue the importance of a good work environment and offensive work environment management. A good work environment promotes health and personal development for

women and men, success for companies and organisations as well as growth and prosperity for society, both in Sweden and abroad.

Last year the division for international affairs was established at the Swedish Work Environment Authority to increase our capacity within international work. For example we contribute to the EU's

work with directives, standardisation and market surveillance, and we participate in Nordic and European development work. During 2015, we will be focusing especially on the Commission's evaluation of the European work environment legislation as well as a new European work environment strategy.



Register for posted workers

We are responsible for building up and administering a national register of posted workers. A posted employee is a person who is sent to another country by their employer to work there for a limited time.

Foreign employers who post employees to Sweden are obliged to register when the posting occurs and to appoint a contact person. The registration can be done via our website. The information in the report makes it easier for the authorities and partners on the labour market to ensure the posted employees' rights in Sweden. We also exercise supervision to see that the rules are followed.

We are located across the whole country

Our inspection department consists of five regions; south, west, east, mid and north. Every region has a regional office and at least one branch office. The inspection department's main task is to be responsible for supervision according to work environment legislation. Every year we carry out approximately 20 000 inspections at Sweden's workplaces.

At our head office in Stockholm there is the management group, the legal department, the department for regulations, the department for administration and analysis, the department for international affairs as well as the department for communication and press.

Do you have questions about work environment?

On our website you can find information about work environment, all our provisions and answers to common questions in several languages. You are welcome to contact our customer service if you have any questions about work environment and Swedish legislation or about our e-services. Our staff are multilingual and answer close to 50 000 questions from the public every year.

Our customer service is available Monday to Friday from 8 am to 4.30 pm. You can reach us at +46 (0)10 730 90 00 or via our website. We are also on Facebook at www.facebook.com/arbetsmiljoverket.

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Our vision: Everyone wants to, and can, create a good work environment

