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Occupational health and safety management — Psychological health and safety at work — Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks

*Management de la santé et de la sécurité au travail — Santé
psychologique et sécurité au travail — Lignes directrices pour la
gestion des risques psychosociaux*



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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

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Introduction

This document provides guidance on the management of psychosocial risks and promoting well-being at work, as part of an occupational health and safety (OH&S) management system.

This document is intended to be used together with ISO 45001, which contains requirements and guidance on planning, implementing, reviewing, evaluating and improving an OH&S management system. ISO 45001 highlights that the organization is responsible for the OH&S of workers and others who can be affected by its activities. This responsibility includes promoting and protecting their physical and psychological health.

The aim and intended outcomes of the OH&S management system are therefore to prevent work-related injury and ill health to workers, and to provide safe and healthy workplaces. Consequently, it is critically important for the organization to eliminate hazards and minimize OH&S risks by taking effective preventive and protective measures, which include measures to manage psychosocial risks. Psychosocial hazards are increasingly recognized as major challenges to health, safety and well-being at work.

Psychosocial hazards relate to how work is organized, social factors at work and aspects of the work environment, equipment and hazardous tasks. Psychosocial hazards can be present in all organizations and sectors, and from all kinds of work tasks, equipment and employment arrangements.

Psychosocial hazards can occur in combination with one another and can influence and be influenced by other hazards. Psychosocial risk relates to the potential of these types of hazards to cause several types of outcomes on individual health, safety and well-being and on organizational performance and sustainability. It is important that psychosocial risks are managed in a manner consistent with other OH&S risks, through an OH&S management system, and integrated into the organization's broader business processes.

Psychosocial risks affect both psychological health and safety, and health, safety and well-being at work more broadly. Psychosocial risks are also associated with economic costs to organizations and society.

There are a range of terms that are used in relation to what psychosocial risks affect, including "psychological health" and "mental health". These terms are considered interchangeable and to have the same meaning for the purposes of this document. This document is concerned with all types of impacts on health, safety and well-being at work.

Negative outcomes for workers can include poor health and associated conditions (e.g. cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, diabetes, anxiety, depression, sleep disorders) and associated poor health behaviours (e.g. substance misuse, unhealthy eating), as well as reduced job satisfaction, commitment and productivity. Managing psychosocial risks can result in positive outcomes, including improved job satisfaction and increased productivity.

Although numerous factors can determine the nature and severity of outcomes of psychosocial risks, organizations have a significant role to play in eliminating hazards or minimizing risks. Both the organization and workers have a shared responsibility for maintaining and improving health, safety and well-being at work.

For the organization, the impact of psychosocial risks includes increased costs due to absence from work, turnover, reduced product or service quality, recruitment and training, workplace investigations and litigation, as well as damage to the organization's reputation.

Effective management of psychosocial risk can lead to benefits such as improved worker engagement, enhanced productivity, increased innovation and organizational sustainability.

This document outlines examples of psychosocial hazards arising from work organization, social factors and work environment, equipment and hazardous tasks, as well as a range of control measures that can be used to eliminate hazards or minimize associated risks.

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Organizations are responsible for identifying hazards and minimizing the risks associated with them. The participation of workers, in all stages of the process, is critical to the success of managing psychosocial risks.

This document also includes information on what is important for organizations to consider in relation to raising awareness of psychosocial risks, developing competence in the management of psychosocial risks, supporting the recovery and return to work of affected workers, and planning for and responding to emergency situations.

The success of psychosocial risk management depends on commitment from all levels and functions of the organization, especially from top management.