Practical tools and recommendations for OSH prevention

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The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of IOSH or EU-OSHA.
The state-of-the-art of OSH and DLPs

Access to accident and occupational injuries insurance for DLPs workers in the EU27 (CEPS, 2021)

Mitigation of physical risks on selected DLPs active in the EU27 (CEPS, 2021)

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EU-OSHA research so far (EU-OSHA, 2023)

Previous studies conducted by EU-OSHA on this subject:

Digital platform work and occupational safety and health: overview of regulation, policies, practices and research

Policy Brief

Digital platform work and occupational safety and health: a review

Previous case studies conducted by EU-OSHA on the four types of on-location and online platform-based work:

Case Study

European for Safet at Work
Methodology

- A rapid literature review (academic + grey literature) to assess the available tools and practices, which digital labour platforms can implement to prevent and manage occupational safety, health, and wellbeing risks.

The literature search was supplemented by the following activities:

- Non-exhaustive analysis of narratives in annual reports, public statements, workers terms and conditions, Apps or ICT features, workplace organizational policies (e.g. OSH, HR…) that focus on working conditions and organizational facilitators of worker safety, health and wellbeing.
- Compilation of initiatives and practices of potential relevance to the research.
DLPs practices in response to the COVID-19 crisis

Types of measures taken by platforms in response to COVID-19 crisis – as reported by platforms (OECD, 2020)

- Social distancing and/or safe provision of services: 58%
- Provision/reimbursement of PPE & hygiene products: 25%
- Full/partial pay for those sick or self-isolating: 23%
- Changes to activation/deactivation policies or loyalty/rating systems: 14%
- Compensation for reduced work opportunities: 11%
- Provision/reimbursement of medical consultations or testing: 9%
- Assistance in applications to government programmes: 9%
- Relief fund for struggling workers: 9%
- Changes to vehicle leasing agreements/other discounts: 6%
- Communication with workers and worker associations: 3%
- Pay bonuses to compensate for additional risk: 2%
# An up-to-date compilation of key initiatives, practices and tools on digital platform work

## Regulatory initiatives
Labour inspectorates and OSH agencies initiatives

## Platform initiatives
Platform industry initiatives

## Social dialogue initiatives
Voluntary schemes and collective agreements

## Trade union and collective action initiatives

## Worker initiatives
Non-governmental organizations and other civil society initiatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Year, Country</th>
<th>Platform work typology</th>
<th>Involved actors</th>
<th>OSH risks</th>
<th>Brief description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Legislation - Spanish Royal Decree-Law 9/2021 (Riders’ law) | 2021, Spain | All types of platform-based work | Originated from collective bargaining agreement reached on 10 March 2021, between trade union CCOO and UGT, employer organisation CEOE and CEPyme and the Spanish government | • Digitised performance monitoring  
• Impact of digital technology and AI surveillance systems | Law that requires online delivery platforms to classify their couriers as employees, rather than independent contractors. Transparency requirements applies to all platforms using algorithmic management. |
| Integration of OSH aspects through platforms’ app and technologies | Ongoing, different regions | On-location platform work | Lyft, DoorDash, Uber, Waymo, Amazon Flex and others. | • Task-specific risks  
• Workplace violence and harassment  
• Road safety | Hotlines, helpdesks, automated support systems, OSH messaging, tips and advice through app-based notifications and automated nudges; corporate group forums  
Interpersonal safety measures, such as emergency assistance or panic buttons |
| Worker initiatives – CoopCycle federation | 2021, Paris | On-location platform work | CoopCycle - federation of bicycle delivery cooperatives, delivery platform workers and other bike delivery actors | • Not specifically mentioned | The service provides access to administrative, legal and economic support and advice and support on OSH-related concerns and queries. |

Summary of key initiatives

PLATFOMS
- Provision of traditional OSH protections such as PPE, physical safety and mental wellbeing prevention strategies, healthcare assistance, the provision of work-related injury insurance, or tailored OSH training and awareness resources.
- OSH policies road safety and violence and harassment.
- Industry pledges and codes of conduct.

PLATFORM WORKERS
- Informal exchanges of information on work-related issues, communication between peers, or self-organising initiatives. Chat forums, social media, face-to-face interactions...
- Informal safety measures and precautions to protect themselves from task-specific risks.
- Opportunities for cooperation, negotiation of working conditions, organisation and representation.

POLICY-MAKERS
- Obligations on mandatory employment injury protections for on-location platform workers.
- Transparency requirements applying to all platforms using algorithmic management.
- Working time limits, road safety protections, right for platform workers to be informed about technological changes.
- Calls for evidence, public consultations.
- Labour inspection actions and raising-awareness campaigns.

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Real-life practices (on-location platform work)

DIGITAL LABOUR PLATFORMS

- Training platforms' incident response teams so they can handle OSH-related queries
  - 21:42 ✓

- Providing online OSH pre-job briefings to platform workers on what needs to be done, what the hazards are, and how to stay safe
  - 21:45 ✓

- Excluding work-related safety cancellations from platform workers' deactivation ratings and performance measures
  - 21:51 ✓

- Facilitating financial advice and guidance and solutions to personal debt and financial struggles
  - 21:53 ✓

- Providing readable and concise platform terms for accident and insurance coverage
  - 20:46 ✓

PLATFORM WORKERS

- Awareness-raising initiatives at mass rideouts, interactions in clusters or waiting points
  - 19:56 ✓

- Solidarity, information exchange and OSH advice through Reddit, Telegram, Quora, Facebook groups
  - 19:58 ✓

- Support through group chats or instant-messaging apps (Whatsapp, Slack)
  - 20:00 ✓

- Following IG, TikTok content creators that showcase their day-to-day activity as platform workers
  - 20:03 ✓
Representation of platform workers and DLPs fictional stories and scenarios

Hannes is a Swedish skilled freelancer in the business of online software development. He offers his services to an international online platform that helps freelancers to manage projects and tasks. He was one of the first freelancers to join this platform when it started back in 2017. This has helped him to develop a good knowledge of the pros and cons of this type of work. Since then, the operator has become one of the largest freelance marketplaces on the web. Hannes has also become the “go-to contact” for platform workers jumping-starting their career in this marketplace, by providing advice on how to deal with the platform rating systems, obtain a continual flow of projects or get the most profitable jobs.

For the past few years, Hannes acts as an influential mental health and wellbeing champion in the industry, advocating for online platform workers to speak openly about work-related psychosocial and psychological issues. Having experienced first-hand the negative impacts associated with job and income insecurity, competition, working in isolation, the dependence on good ratings and overworking issues, he now acts as a welfare champion to disseminate health and wellbeing information in a comprehensive way to other freelancers with less experience. Through a popular blog and post, he shares regular wellness and self-care tips and recommendations to prevent and manage poor mental health, burnout and stress. He also signposts followers to mental wellbeing advice and resources.

Kyrie is a migrant care and cleaning worker with long work experience in several home services platforms. She currently works in Germany for a leading platform provider for home services that connects independent service professionals with interested customers. As part of the day-to-day job, she has dealt with several stressful interactions with clients who have not been satisfied with the quality of her service or have rated her work poorly. She feels demotivated and sometimes considers leaving the industry, but on the other hand, she’s aiming to accomplish 1,500 jobs reviewed with a 5-star rating. Achieving this will make her considered to be a top-rated professional by the platform, which she expects will improve her working conditions.

Kyrie has also gone through some distressing events, which she believes are related to her immigrant status, giving her legitimate reasons to fear for her personal safety. That being the case, she has started carrying out a series of additional interpersonal safety measures. Prior to starting a new service, she always tests a trusted contact about the times and locations where the task will take place and are expected to be completed, or when she enters or leaves a home or facility. When providing the service, she always avoids controversial topics that could lead to arguments, such as sex, religion and politics.

Of late, things have been changing for the better. A few days ago, the platform where she offers her services organised a training session on de-escalation techniques with stressful clients that she attended. She has also joined another training initiative on occupational safety and health for workers from vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.

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Recommendations for digital labour platforms

- Improving effective access of safe mechanisms for platform workers to express OSH concerns.
- Extending OSH considerations as part of platform’s corporate financial transactions
- Reviewing transparency practices in the platform economy
- Introducing OSH features and functionalities into app-based systems.
- Exploring or piloting worker-centred management practices.
- Mainstreaming gender considerations in platforms organisational policies and practices.
- Investing on industry-specific OSH training and awareness resources.
- Reviewing how terms of service can be more fit-for-purpose.
- Introducing occupational safety, health and wellbeing policies
- Providing appropriate PPE
- Prioritising mental health and wellbeing practices.
Recommendations for platform workers

- Participating in online and in-person support and community-gathering initiatives.

- Advocating and calling for a right to be involved, regularly informed and consulted.

- Benchmarking what works well in addressing and tackling specific occupational risks.

- Engaging through in formal or informal mentor or ‘buddy’ schemes.

- Raising platform workers’ voice on their first-hand experiences.


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