



Micro and small enterprises & OSH

Working for safer, healthier and more successful small businesses

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) is looking into safety and health in Europe's micro and small enterprises (MSEs).¹ MSEs are the foundation of the EU economy and employ around half of its workforce. However, the safety and health of workers in MSEs are not always well protected. Owners and managers in MSEs can find occupational safety and health (OSH) management challenging because of a lack of resources or know-how. More needs to be done to recognise the specific OSH challenges faced by these companies and to identify practical solutions.

Gaining a deeper insight into OSH in smaller enterprises

EU-OSHA has launched a wide-ranging project that seeks to identify effective policies, strategies and practical approaches to OSH management specifically in MSEs. Its goals are to:

- provide evidence-based support for policy-makers;
- identify good practices and encourage the development of practical tools;
- increase knowledge about the factors that determine good OSH in MSEs.

The project assesses the state of OSH in MSEs, taking the views of managers and workers into account. It identifies good practices and explores the role of OSH intermediaries, presenting a thorough analysis of the results alongside evidence-based support for policy recommendations.

EU-OSHA aims to improve workplace safety and health in MSEs by providing support for evidence-based policy recommendations and sharing good practices.

Why risk assessment is key for micro and small enterprises

Ultimately, the aim of this work is to find ways to help MSEs improve their management of workplace risks to safety and health. The cornerstone of good OSH management is risk assessment — and it's also a legal requirement throughout Europe. Risk assessment means identifying workplace hazards and establishing a preventive action plan. Many MSEs fail to carry out proper risk assessments, but the good news is that help is available. EU-OSHA's Online interactive Risk Assessment (OiRA) tools are free, tailored to specific sectors and multilingual (<https://oiraproject.eu>). They guide the user step by step through a risk assessment, making the process easy even for those with no experience of OSH management.

¹ Micro and small enterprises (MSEs) are companies with fewer than 10 and 50 employees, respectively.

More information on safety and health in MSEs



<http://osha.europa.eu>