

AMS BAU -

an occupational health and safety management system by BG BAU

**Managing health and safety
with AMS BAU –
safe
efficient
competitive**



Nowadays, anyone who wants to stay competitive in the long term in the construction industry will need an effective health and safety management system. Especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) cannot afford the costs of losing working hours due to occupational injuries. More and more clients are already placing high demands on their contractors' health and safety policies, too.

That is why BG BAU – the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the building trade – has developed a cost-neutral management concept which helps its corporate members to set up and improve the occupational health and safety organisation in their company.

AMS BAU – as it is called – is a practice-oriented management system which matches the requirements of the construction industry exactly. It takes account of specific conditions such as constantly changing workplaces, weather influences and special contractual agreements in the construction industry. Very often accidents are caused by a lack of work organisation. So, AMS BAU places the emphasis on healthy and safe workplaces.

Implementing AMS BAU is voluntary. After a successful assessment of the implementation within the company and on a building site, showing that organisation is in line with AMS BAU, companies gain a certificate valid for three years.

The AMS BAU concept



(Media: folder and CD-ROM - available only in German language)

The core of AMS BAU is the easily understandable and user-friendly guidelines (folder and CD-ROM) with 11 steps that can be integrated into the operational structures and processes. Explanations are given for each of the 11 steps, together with notes on methodology and documentation, and a to-do list. Valuable practical help, such as examples of handling and operating instructions, checklists or test reports complete the support.

Step 1: Setting up a safety policy

The integration of occupational health and safety in the business organisation is determined as a target in a company policy statement and introduced to the staff.

Step 2: Defining health and safety targets

With the active involvement of the employees, targets such as reducing sick days below the industry average are defined and measures are set out to assess fulfilment.

Step 3: Establishing an organisation structure with responsibilities and tasks

A requirement for a functioning health and safety organisation is a transparent organisation structure with clearly defined duties and responsibilities for managers, but also for the employees. A key component is to guarantee access to medical care and technical safety advice.

Step 4: Controlling information flow and cooperation, identifying legal and other requirements

Matters concerning safety, such as procuring personal protection equipment, how to handle faulty equipment, hazards and accidents are discussed regularly. Ideas and suggestions which come from the employees should be taken up here. A particular person is nominated to keep in contact with the authorities and to identify the rules that the company has to follow.

Step 5: Identifying and assessing hazards, deriving and implementing measures, controlling

It is a legal obligation of the proprietor or company to carry out the preventive identification and assessment of all hazards and risks at work. Based on this risk assessment the necessary protective measures should be established and their effectiveness reviewed.

Step 6: Regulations in case of emergencies

For events such as falls from a height, collapsing structures or fire, immediate action is required. By determining the necessary aid and rescue operations in advance, lives can be saved and additional damage can be prevented. Emergency phone numbers have to be publicised, first aiders have to be trained and first-aid materials have to be provided.

Step 7: Procurement

When procuring equipment, machinery and tools, adherence to safety regulations and environment compatibility are important selection criteria as well as quality and efficiency.

Step 8: Selecting and cooperating with subcontractors

Any subcontractors must be able to ensure the same safety standards as the contractor. Work must be coordinated to reduce any mutual risk between the company's own employees and those of a subcontractor.

Step 9: Preventive occupational medical care

Taking account of the increasing physical stress and risk of accidents on construction sites, employees can have their health checked as part of occupational health screening (eg by the Occupational Health Service of the BG BAU). However, in particularly dangerous or stressful cases, special screening methods are required, eg repeated work in damp or humid environments of between two and four hours a day, or contact with asbestos during refurbishment work.

Step 10: Qualifications and training

To fulfil the demands of the job, employees must have the necessary knowledge and skills. In addition to a relevant professional qualification, training and instruction in the workplace is required. The content has to be understood even by non-native speakers. Should further training be essential, BG BAU provides training on demand and qualifications in occupational safety and health for different target groups.

Step 11: Monitoring results, reviewing of health and safety organisation

After a certain period the effectiveness of the health and safety organisation and the degree of fulfilment must be verified, shortcomings should be eliminated and new targets should be defined.

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