



issa

INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY ASSOCIATION

Social security and a culture of prevention

A three-dimensional approach
to safety and health at work



Social security and prevention

A changing world of work requires a new prevention strategy



Each year, an estimated 2.3 million people die as a result of work-related accidents and diseases, 313 million suffer non-fatal workplace accidents and 160 million new cases of occupational illnesses are reported. The financial burden of compensation, health care and rehabilitation is huge, and can amount to 4 per cent of GDP annually for work injuries alone.

Prevention pays

Investment in prevention has led to a significant decrease in occupational accidents and diseases. It has saved millions of lives and avoided enormous human suffering. And investment in prevention makes economic sense. An international cost-benefit study carried out by the ISSA documents that investments in prevention have a significant return. Increased health and productivity of workers are strategic assets, not only for companies in local and global markets, but for societies as a whole.

New risks, new approaches

Global trends in occupational health reflect the changing nature of risks, as mortality rates from occupational accidents have reduced, while the impact of work-related health problems is growing in importance.

Today's working population is faced with "traditional" occupational risks, as well as a multitude of emerging work- and non-work related health challenges. New technologies, ergonomic risks, demographic changes, stress and other psychosocial factors affect the lives and health of workers.

Increasingly, both occupational and non-occupational factors determine health and performance at work. The health of workers has become a crucial factor for the sustainability of social security schemes.

A unified approach to prevention

The focus in prevention is therefore widening, from a traditional technical risk management approach to the promotion of a more holistic prevention culture, where safety, health and well-being are interrelated. This broad and integrated approach requires the involvement of diverse societal actors, and a unified approach to prevention.

Towards a global culture of prevention

The ISSA's three-dimensional approach to safety and health at work



For social security systems, the preservation of the health of every person is a key objective. Both work-related and non-work related threats to well-being must be prevented and adequately addressed by different societal actors.

In response to the need for a more holistic understanding of prevention in society, the ISSA has developed a three-dimensional prevention approach, linking risk management, health promotion and return-to-work measures.

Putting the person at the centre of prevention

Each of these three dimensions of prevention contributes to the overall objective of a safer and healthier workplace and society. The risk management dimension limits the incidence of accidents and occupational diseases; the health promotion dimension aims to reduce the risks related to non-communicable diseases through health surveillance, early diagnosis and intervention. But prevention does not stop there. The return-to work dimension aims to prevent exclusion through early intervention and rehabilitation.

Together, these three dimensions illustrate that the health of the individual remains at the centre of prevention, and that at each level, a proactive effort is required in order to protect, maintain or restore the health of the worker. The workplace plays a crucial role in all these three-dimensional prevention activities, as it is the place where the workforce can be reached, a culture of prevention can be promoted, and where training measures and prevention efforts can be organized.

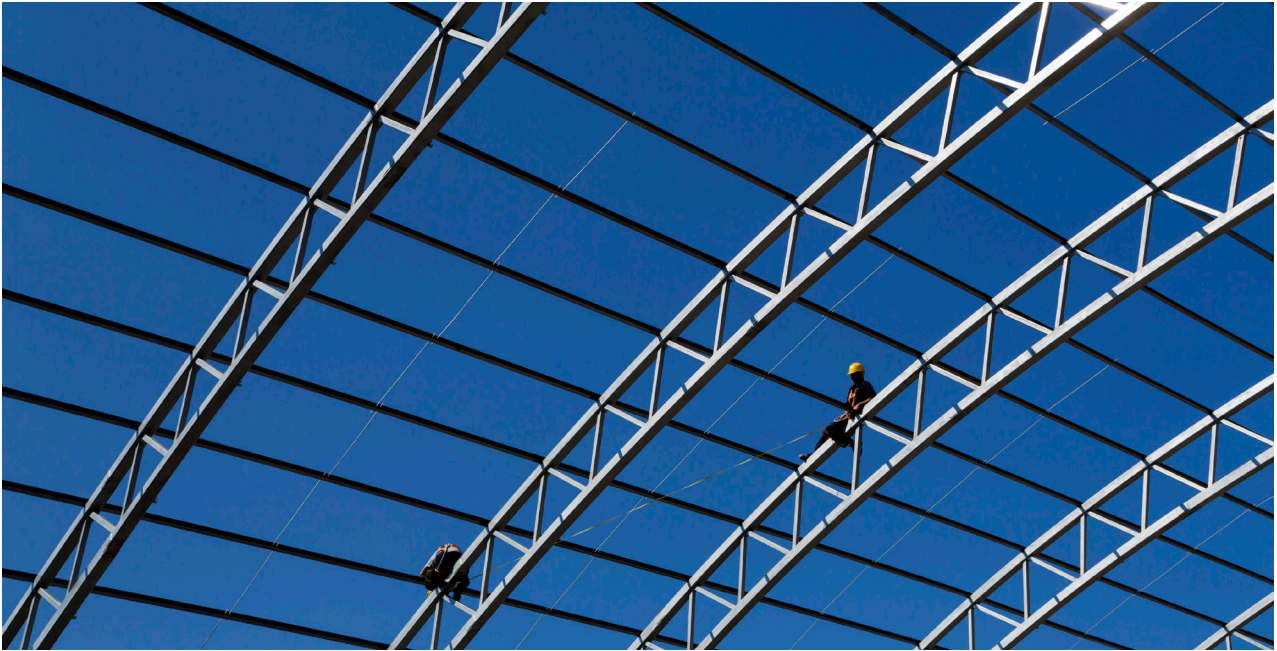
Developing a culture of prevention

Safety, health and well-being at work must be placed high on national and international agendas and lead to the development of a genuine prevention culture at the workplace and beyond. A well-functioning occupational safety and health system, supported by a range of societal actors, brings positive effects not only to employers and employees, but ultimately to society as a whole.

The ISSA supports social security policies that foster preventive approaches to protect and promote workers' health in all branches of social security. Proactive and preventive approaches that enhance employment and health contribute to building a global prevention culture and improve the sustainability of social security systems.

Vision Zero

A world without fatal or serious occupational accidents is possible



In order to further reduce occupational accident rates and the related human suffering and economic costs, the ISSA advocates for a new approach, based on “Vision Zero”.

“Vision Zero” is a strategy for preventing workplace accidents, based on the view that all accidents are preventable and that a world without fatal and serious accidents is possible.

“Vision Zero” promotes a culture of prevention and a commitment to safety by all people at the workplace. Importantly this culture must be an integral part of management systems, based on the philosophy that in principle no single accident is acceptable, as this provides a basis for learning from accidents and improving processes to avoid similar incidents in the future.

The ISSA is committed to “Vision Zero”, and supports social security institutions to actively contribute to this approach. The ISSA has been a driving force at the international level to mobilize stakeholders from the public sector, government, business and civil society to promote a culture of prevention.

Together with other initiatives, the ISSA is developing an International Prevention Culture Index, which, based on a number of performance indicators, will assist companies in measuring their prevention culture levels and in identifying improvement potential.

In response to dramatic events such as the collapse of the Rana Plaza factory building in Bangladesh, the ISSA

is actively contributing to improved safety and health conditions in producing countries based on “Vision Zero”, as part of international efforts to promote decent work worldwide through sustainable supply chains.

The ISSA partners with other institutions to promote and develop a global culture of prevention and has developed a series of international professional standards for prevention.

Prevention pays!

The benefits of prevention significantly outweigh the investment costs



Calculating the international return on prevention for companies: Costs and benefits of investments in occupational safety and health

There is a growing body of evidence that investment in prevention pays. The benefits of prevention significantly outweigh the investment costs. Prevention is also human right, but it needs to be put into practice. Not every worker, employer and occupational risk insurer has identified the prevention of occupational risks as a priority. Even the best compensation and rehabilitation cannot make up for the loss in quality of life that results from a work accident or illness.

An effective prevention strategy ensures that rehabilitation and workers compensation can be sustained financially. The ISSA has conducted an international study that calculates the potential return on prevention for companies. This study, based on a sound scientific methodological approach, demonstrates that an employer who invests 1 euro (EUR) in prevention measures at the workplace can have a potential return of up to 2.2 EUR. In other words, the return on prevention (RoP) is an impressive 1:2.2.

Similarly, a study on the economic benefits of occupational safety and health (BenOSH) was conducted by the European Commission and a study on the economic approach to prevention in the construction sector was conducted by the Professional Agency for Risk Prevention in Building and Civil Engineering (OPPBTB) in France.

Despite applying different methodologies, these studies concluded that the return on prevention is a factor of 1:2.

This evidence provides employment injury schemes with a convincing argument why workers and employers covered under their scheme should invest in prevention. The results of these studies also point to the need for insurance schemes that only compensate the cost of accidents to rethink their strategy and develop prevention programmes that reward those companies that have an excellent occupational safety and health record.

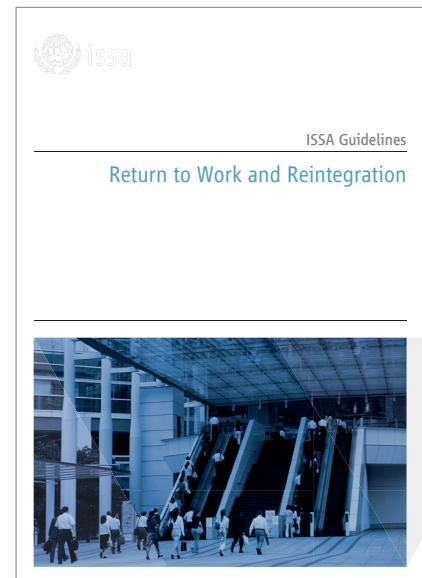
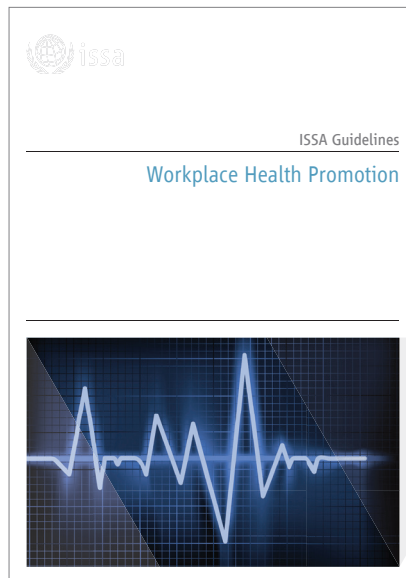
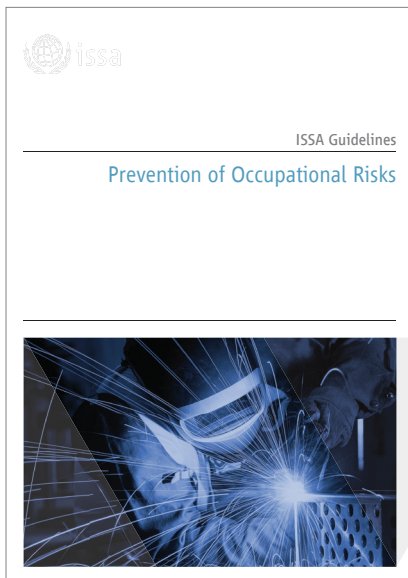
Together with the prevention of occupational risks, the potential benefits of return-to-work programmes are also considerable, both for employees, enterprises and social security systems. The Social Security Organisation of Malaysia, for example, has calculated the potential return on investment for their return-to-work programme to be 1:2.4.

Download the ISSA return on prevention report:

www.issa.int/rop

The ISSA Guidelines on prevention

Professional standards for an integrated approach to safety and health



To support the development of an integrated approach to prevention, the ISSA had developed internationally-recognized guidelines for social security administration in three key areas: the prevention of occupational risks; workplace health promotion; and return to work and reintegration.

The ISSA Guidelines provide social security institutions with international standards in a specific area of prevention, and a benchmark for administrative improvements. Each set of Guidelines is complemented by additional resources, references and links to good practice examples, to provide background and assist implementation.

Prevention of Occupational Risks

The *Guidelines on Prevention of Occupational Risks* address occupational risks that are insured by social security institutions. The Guidelines offer social security institutions a comprehensive set of prevention concepts and tools to build up prevention capacities and programmes, with a view to reducing the number of work-related accidents and diseases and related compensation claims.

Workplace Health Promotion

The *Guidelines on Workplace Health Promotion* support social security institutions to achieve tangible benefits by taking a leadership role in protecting and promoting workplace health. The significant loss in productivity due to non-communicable diseases has a negative impact on economic growth and places a burden on society. Social security institutions play a major role in influencing and facilitating the return to work after injury or illness.

Return to Work and Reintegration

The *Guidelines on Return to Work and Reintegration* address the question of how social security can work together with other stakeholders in order to support persons who are on sick leave from work, and who retain an attachment to a specific employer. The overall aim is to bring people back into active employment through various measures and support programmes.

The Guidelines are at the core of the ISSA Centre for Excellence, which promotes good governance, high performance and service quality in social security administration. Together with other services and events, the ISSA provides training and support for institutions to implement the Guidelines.

The Guidelines seek to foster accident insurance systems that not only provide compensation for work-related accidents, but actively engage in prevention strategies in order to avoid them, and secure the medical and vocational rehabilitation of the injured worker.

The ISSA global prevention network

The Special Commission on Prevention and International Prevention Sections



Prevention has been on the ISSA's agenda since its creation in 1927. The ISSA has established an expert network of organizations and individuals involved in the prevention of work-related accidents and ill-health that brings together the unique experience, knowledge and expertise from all branches of social security.

The ISSA's Special Commission on Prevention

The ISSA's Special Commission on Prevention and its 13 International Sections represent a unique worldwide network of occupational safety and health expertise working to promote a global culture of prevention, placing occupational safety and health high on national agendas.

Building on a unique history of activities, the Special Commission on Prevention fosters the prevention of occupational risks and promotes improvements in the delivery of social security among ISSA members and other stakeholders.

The Special Commission works closely with other ISSA Technical Commissions concerned by workers' health, including the Commissions on Medical Care and Sickness Insurance, and on Insurance against Employment Accidents and Occupational Diseases.

The ISSA Special Commission on Prevention coordinates a network of International Prevention Sections that provide a pool of specialized prevention knowledge from a wide variety of fields.

The World Congress on Safety and Health at Work

Since 1955, the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work has been co-organized by the ISSA with the International Labour Organization. A unique international prevention platform, the World Congress brings together more than 3,000 safety and health experts, decision makers from the field of social security and the public sector as well as employers' and workers' representatives from around the world to exchange ideas, research and best practices on highly topical issues in the area of occupational safety and health. The XXI World Congress will take place in Singapore in 2017.

Promoting excellence in social security
Promouvoir l'excellence dans la sécurité sociale
Promoviendo la excelencia en la seguridad social
Förderung von Exzellenz in der sozialen Sicherheit
За повышение стандартов в социальном обеспечении
促进卓越的社会保障
دعم التميّز في الضمان الاجتماعي

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