



Inspections in the area of Psychosocial Working Environment in Denmark

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**The Danish Working Environment
Authority - WEA**

www.at.dk

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Psychosocial Working Environment (PWE): Legal background



- WEA is a government agency under the Minister for Employment
- The Working Environment Act:
 - *”The work shall be planned, organised and performed in such a way as to ensure safety and health”*



Strategy for improved Work Environment – “the 2020 strategy”

Objectives of Strategy:

- **25 pct. reduction** of serious **work related accidents**
- **20 pct. reduction** of work related **muscular and skeletal wearing down**
- **20 pct. reduction** of **Psychosocially conditioned overload**

Strategy involves 19 initiatives

Influences on how inspection is conducted

- **Political**
 - Government - policy making, agreements, Ministerial foci etc.
 - **Employer's organisations and Labour Unions**
 - Agreements on boundaries for practice
 - What the WEA have and do not have official opinions about (the right to manage, wages, schedules of work etc.)
 - **Research** – knowledge on health and safety in relation to PWE. Legitimizing our notices.
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PWE: Increased political focus

- An area of regulation since 1974
 - Since 2005: PWE is a targeted area in the working environment prioritisation by the Danish government
 - WEA inspects PWE in all public and private enterprises in Denmark
 - 2007: Welfare agreement
 - Extra appropriation
 - New tools on PWE
 - Increased inspections on PWE in "high risk" sectors
 - 2013: PWE is co-ordinated with other work environment problems in terms of improvement notices
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Inspection types

- **Risk Based Inspections**
(and Expanded Risk Based Inspections)
- **Inspections due to complaints** (from employees, labour unions, managers, occupational health clinics etc.)
- **Inspections of accidents** – either through IT reporting (EASY), in urgent cases through the Police, companies or the media
- **Inspections due to incidents** and approaches from occupational health clinics

Expanded Risk Based Approach

2015: Political decision ending special actions on PWE.

2016: Expansion of the regular Risk Based Inspections
(focusing on PWE)

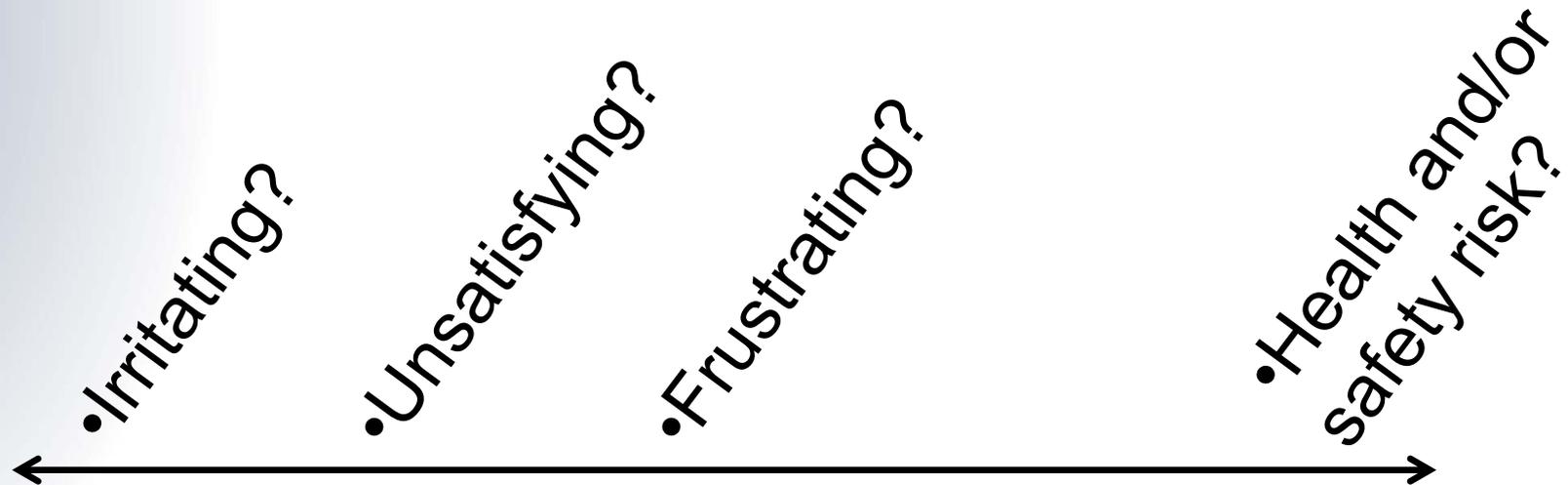
Certain **sectors** have **an increased risk of employees becoming psychologically strained** are selected
(Education, Hospitals, transportation of passengers, etc.)

These are subjected to more thorough inspections, meaning that focus group interviews are almost always conducted in these sectors.

The Danish Work Environment Authority's approach to PWE



- Health and safety risks directly related to the tasks of employees?



Inspection practices when working with PWE



Phases	Activity
Data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting with representatives of Working Environment Organization (WEO)• Written materials (company's work place assessment, statistics of employees absence due to illness, register of episodes with violence, etc.)• Observations of work processes• Dialogue with employees supported by guidance tool (individual or focus group interviews 6-8 persons)• Hearing of Management
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• On site or back at the Office
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conclusion of inspection – meeting with WEO and Management at the end of inspection• Or concluding remarks via Phone

Possible reactions in the area of Psychosocial Working Environment



(Guidance verbal)

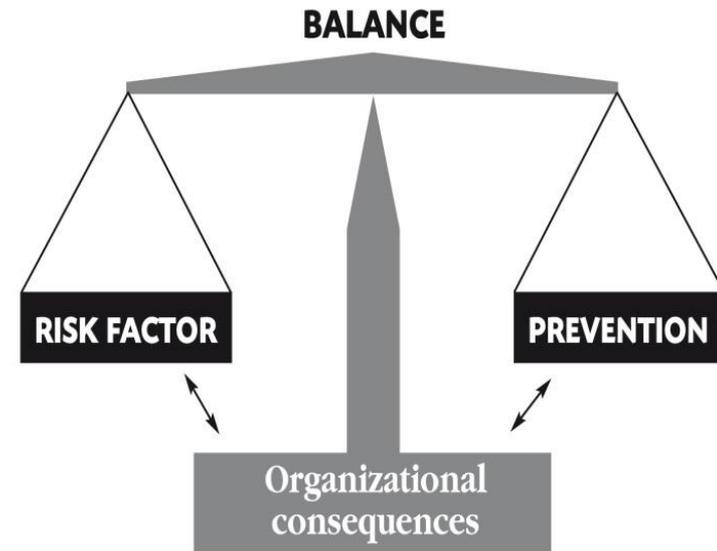
1. **Guidance in writing**
 2. **Improvement notice** effective immediately **or** with a deadline of 3 – 6 months
 3. **Notice to examine PWE** (by use of authorized Working Environment Advisor)
 4. **Notice to employ Working Environment Advisor** to address Bullying and/or Sexual Harassment
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The method on PWE: Risk factor approach

- Risk factors:
 - Workload/pace of work
 - Emotional demands
 - Bullying/sexual harassment
 - Violence and traumatic experiences
 - Psychic first aid
- Prevention factors:
 - Help and support
 - Influence on planning and prioritization
 - Education and instructions
 - Technical solutions etc.
- Consequences:
 - Turn over rates
 - Absenteeism due to sickness
 - Errors, mistakes and complaints.

WEIGHING OUT THE PROPORTIONS

Prevalence of risk factor proportional to the enterprise's level of prevention.



The original guidance tool

Risk factor: Risk of violence and threats

Prevalence of risk factor

These questions are only relevant when the work includes contact with clients, citizens or customers

Are employees subjected to threats and/or violence?

Ask about the enterprise' own registration and reported incidents with violence and threats.

Amount of incidents with violence and threats (within the last year): _____

Ask about whom, when, where and how often.

Which kinds of violence and threats are occurring?

- Assault or likewise physical violence
- Robberies
- Physical threats (e.g. violation of personal physical boundaries)
- Spitting at employees
- Verbal insults
- Discriminating comments
- Threats on telephone, emails etc.
- Threats on employees' personal safety or employees' children, spouses etc.
- Vandalism of employees personal property
- Other incidents?

Are violence and threats occurring when employees are working alone?

(Describe whom, when, where, how often)

The work is characterized by:

- Control and power position of persons with personal/ social/ financial problems
- Handling of money, e.g. to clients or transportation of money
- Regular management of conflicts with clients/citizens
- Other

Organisational Consequences

- High level of "alertness" in the department/ enterprise
- Attitude that violence/ threats/ robberies are an unavoidable part of the job (down playing)
- Bad reputation (of the department/ enterprise)
- Loss of commitment/ lack of motivation to have contact with clients
- Anxiety of working alone
- Other consequences?

Prevention

Which precautions do you take to ensure that violence and threats are limited as much as possible? What are the effects?

Do you have a plan for preventing and dealing with violence, threats and traumatic experiences? What is the content of the plan?

Prevention measures

- Definition of violence, incl. guidelines on how employees should act when faced with insulting or violent behaviour
- Instruction on how employees should act in case of robbery (hand over the money, not to try to catch the robber, calling for help etc.)
- Instruction/ education in conflict management, communication, mental first aid etc.
- Guidelines for working alone/ guidelines for two employees working together when there is a known risk of violence and threats
- Guidelines on who manages the situation during incidents (e.g. who calls for help, who handles the threatening citizen)
- Information about matters that can have an effect on the risk of violence (e.g. the client/ citizens specific problems)
- Work is organised with focus on reducing risk of violence
- Short waiting time for citizens/ clients under high strain
- Appropriate physical work space (e.g. escape routes, space which enables the employee to get away from aggressive clients/ citizens)
- The work space and waiting areas are decorated to give a calm and kind impression and atmosphere
- Appropriate technical prevention measures (e.g. alarms, video surveillance, time lock on money)
- Measures to prevent angry clients/citizens to get in direct physical contact with employees
- Systematic and regular mentoring activities
- Guidelines for registration of incidents

Actions taken shortly after an incident

- Managerial support (who to alarm, who takes over the situation etc.)
- Mental first aid
- Debriefing (among the team of employees)

Follow up

- Professional crisis counselling is available
- Investigation and analysis with focus on prevention
- Incidents are reported to police and other authorities/ insurances
- Managerial support (e.g. call the employees, measures to lighten the return to the work place)

How do you make sure that employees know the plan and it is followed?

Is there anything else that helps to prevent violence and threats?

- Implemented April 1. 2007 24 sector- or job specific guidance tools
 - Each guidance tool includes
 - The 3 to 5 most important *risk factors* in that sector
 - The most important *preventive factors* for the sector
 - Questions regarding the most relevant *consequences*
 - *Still in use; although we are in a transition towards using version 2.0 entirely.*

Amended Guidance tools (2015)

- Not sector/job specific any more.
- Arranged in order to identify problems related to the specific risk factors.
- Supports the writing of improvement notices as the guidance tools correspond with IT templates.

Spørgeguide: Vold februar 2016

<p>HUSK:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oplysninger fra både ansatte og ledelse • Tag stilling til evt. skadelige data som fx APV, tilvælsundersøgelser, ryggeskrivelser m.m. • Spørg ind til vold i arbejdet og vold uden for arbejdstiden • Eksempler på opgaver/aktioner med psykisk og fysisk vold • Afvejning først der skal træffes med de samme -- Giv styrkeindsats • Risiko for traumatiske handlinger -- Brug spørgeguide til psykisk førstehjælp 	<p>Risiko for vold i eller uden for arbejdstiden</p> <p>A1 Er der risiko for vold (fysisk og/eller psykisk) som er relateret til arbejdet?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Er der risiko for vold i arbejdstiden? • Er der risiko for arbejdsrelateret vold uden for arbejdstiden? <p>A2 Hvilken type arbejde udføres?</p> <p>A3 Hvad karakteriserer borgere, som I arbejder med/leverer? Fx:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psykisk eller fysisk handicappede (indlæst typer handicap) • Psykisk syge • Socialt udsatte/ulønnsomt trænge • Kædetrusler • Påvirkede af alkohol og eller stoffer <p>A4 Hvilken adfærd har disse borgere? Fx:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbalt eller fysisk udbrudsbegrebende med store adfærdsmæssige problemer • Impulsivt/vedvarende (uforsvarlig adfærd) • Selvskadede adfærd <p>A5 Hvilke arbejdsfunktioner har de ansatte i forhold til borgere? Fx:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kontrol- eller overvågning, fx fysisk fastholdelse af borgere • Andre arbejdsfunktioner, der øger risikoen for vold i eller uden for arbejdstiden? <p>A6 Hvilke arbejdsopgaver og handlinger er forbundet med en voldstrusle?</p> <p>Konkrete voldsepisoder</p> <p>A7 Har I været udsat for voldsepisoder?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvor ofte forekommer vold? (adgang på døgn) • Hvor udsættede er vold i arbejdstiden? (er der områder med særlig risiko for vold?) • Hvor udsættede er vold? (og hvem er evt. særlig udsat?) • I hvilke situationer? (fx ved konkrete arbejdsopgaver/aktiviteter eller særlige personsituationer) • Har der været arbejdsrelaterede voldsepisoder uden for arbejdstiden? <p>A8 Hvilke former for vold bliver I udsat for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fysisk vold (fx overfald, brudningsforsøg, spark, slag, skub, fastholdelse, kast med genstande, bid, stik, kends og sprøj) • Trusler fx mundtlige trusler, brevtrusler på livet, trusler om hævnakt mod arbejdspladsen eller trusler, der vedrører privatliv/familie, venner eller andre nærtstående personer eller omgivelser) • Andre brændende emner (fx ydmygelser, mistænkeliggørelse, forfølgelse eller diskriminerende udsagn) • Trusler eller brændende adfærd via elektroniske medier (sms, e-mail, hjemmeside, sociale medier) <p>A9 Hvad er omfanget af volden?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hvor ofte forekommer episoder med vold (dagligt/ugevis/indtægt)? • Over hvor lang tid har ansatte været udsat for voldsepisoderne? • Virksomheden anmeldte arbejdsulykker med vold? • Virksomheden søgte registrering af vold <p>A10 Udfører ansatte arbejde alene?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifere ansatte arbejdet en særlig fare for vold (fare eller alvorlige voldsepisoder)? • Hvordan er der særlig risiko for at komme til skade ved alenearbejde? <p>Vurdering af, om risikoen er tilstrækkeligt forebyggende: Er der match mellem risiko/forekomst og forebyggelse?</p>
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Authority's strategy to support the inspection on psychosocial factors

- Training of all inspectors – introduction course to PWE and continuous training (case work etc.)
 - Inspection of PWE has been made more systematic:
 - Method descriptions and instructions for the inspectors
 - Templates
 - Best practice examples
 - Call in - on complex psychosocial work environment issues
 - Special PWE Competence Forum:
 - Support inspectors in assessing possible improvement notices, writing the and assessing the hearing and
 - Inspect the more complicated PWE-problems
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PWE inspection flow

**WEA inspection at the enterprise:
Detect health and safety risk on PWE**



WEA issues an improvement notice on PWE



Enterprise improves conditions to solve the PWE-problem



WEA account of solution (including description of effects)



**Acceptance:
Enterprise is re-inspected
by WEA within 12-18
months**



**Rejection:
Enterprise is re-visited to
establish if implementation is in
fact sufficient, partly solved or
in actually unacceptable**

Status

- Overall reduced time consumption per enterprise
 - The improvement notices more targeted and qualitatively better due to:
 - Better qualified inspectors
 - Call in function supporting in making assessments and to the point notices
 - Templates, guidance tools and continuous case training
 - Easier to follow up on targeted improvement notices
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Inspectors' experiences with PWE inspection



- Tools and training has made it easier to structure PWE inspections
 - The guidance tool is used for
 - Preparing inspections
 - During interviews
 - To guide the writing of improvement notices etc.
 - More inspectors assess PWE-problems and write improvement notices or screen and deliver inspections on to inspectors with more PWE competences
 - Also more inspectors with special competences in PWE have been recruited (especially in 2012-2014)
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Feedback on the risk factor based guidance tool



	New approach	Old approach
Strength	Targeted	More comprehensive
Weakness	Simplistic and more general	harder to operationalize

SME's and Psychosocial Working Environment



- Workload/Pace of work
 - Organizational change
 - Communication issues

 - Inclusion in the educational sector
 - Strain related to cocktail effect of emotional demands and temporal condition.
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Perspectives and Future challenges...



- Reaching goals for 2020 – a reduction of 20 % of PWE related overload
 - Serious Work Environment problems that relate to political reforms or other societal premises, that the WEA is demanded to stay clear of.
 - Private sector enterprises – employees tend to be more discrete and unwilling to address problems with the WEA
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