



RECOMMENDED

Inspirational people and stories

PAGE 4

TOP STORY

Corona pandemic impacts accident statistics

German Social Accident Insurance releases preliminary figures for the first half of 2020

The figures for work, school and commuting accidents have been declining for years. During the corona pandemic, the figures reached a historic low. This result can be seen in the preliminary figures from the German social accident insurance institutions for the public and private sectors, which the DGUV published at the beginning of October. In contrast, the number of reports of a suspected occupational illness rose significantly.

The figures speak for themselves. The number of work, school and commuting accidents in the first six months of this year has not been this low for a long time. According to DGUV statistics, the number of accidents at work fell by 15.2% to 367,016 compared to the previous year, while the number of reportable commuting accidents actually fell by around 20%. The figures from the pupil accident insurance decreased even more. While there were still 584,763 school accidents in the first half of 2019, there were only 301,543 in the same period in 2020 – a drop of almost 50 percent.

“The figures are not surprising”, said Dr Stefan Hussy, Director General of the DGUV. He sees the lower figures as mainly due to the restrictions imposed by the spread of the coronavirus in recent months. Since the beginning of the year, many people have been on short-time work, and millions of employees have switched to working from home. Day-care centres, schools and universities had to close. Hussy warned against being overly optimistic: “The risk of suffering an accident at work, at school or while commuting was significantly reduced. It can be assumed that the number of accidents will rise again as soon as the pandemic is over.”

The pandemic is also reflected in the incidence of occupational diseases. By the end of June, a total of

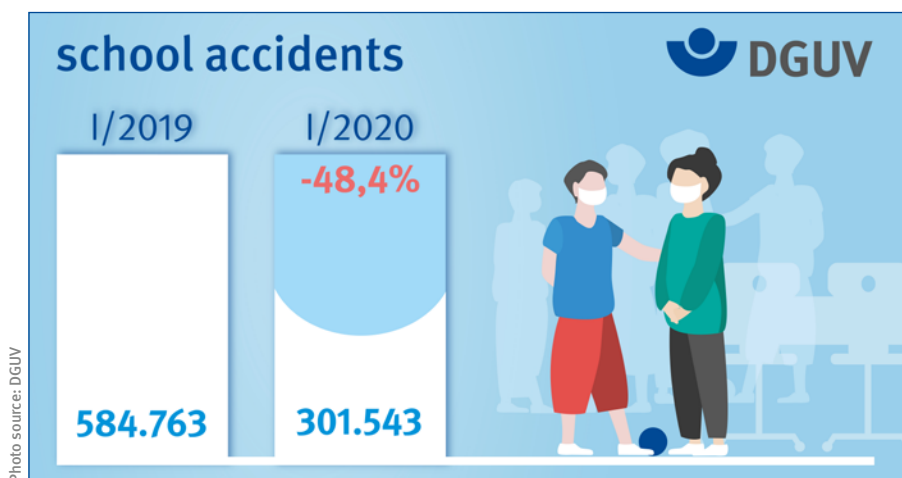


Photo source: DGUV

The figures for school accidents have never fallen so sharply as they did in the first half of 2020.

13,601 suspected cases of an occupational disease in connection with the coronavirus had been reported to the social accident insurance institutions. The number of reports of suspected occupational disease thus rose by around 24% to 51,789. The requirements for being categorised as an occupational disease can be met when employees working in healthcare, welfare services or in a laboratory are infected with the coronavirus. This also applies to volunteers who work in these areas or to people who have been at a similar risk of infection from another job.

The pandemic is an unprecedented challenge for social accident insurance in the post-war period, stated Hussy. In a very short period of time, experts from the social accident insurance institutions have published industry-specific recommendations for protecting workers against infection. With winter around the corner, the challenges will not get any smaller. “We are keeping a constant eye on how the pandemic is developing, and are regularly adapting our recommendations”, reassured Hussy.

Web: www.dguv.de > **Webcode:** d25485 (German only)

FYI

Lesson safety

In order for teaching to carry on being safe and healthy during the coronavirus pandemic, it is important to always keep in mind what is happening with infections and the latest scientific knowledge. To help with this, the social accident insurance has updated and expanded its recommendations for educational institutions.

Web: www.dguv.de >

Webcode: p021494

(German only)



Photo source: Jan Röhl/DGUV

Let's talk

Dear Reader,

Whether from a notice board, via a works council meeting or during a morning chat in the kitchen, if there is news, word usually gets around quickly. At least that was the case before corona. But now that many employees have to keep their distance or work from home, the way many companies communicate has also changed. Instead of meeting in person, people are now increasingly meeting via video or telephone conferences. Regardless of the means of communication, there's nothing better than good communication. This is true now more than ever, because many people are being confronted with ongoing change. This often leads to a feeling of uncertainty.

For many young workers, the start of their professional life looks quite different because of corona. At the same time, many trainees and apprentices have a lot of questions during their training. They feel insecure and are afraid of making mistakes. This is when communication that values and respects them is especially important. This year's prevention programme "Jugend will sich-er-leben" (*Young People Living Life and Living Safely*) aims to promote this by raising young people's awareness of a positive culture of conversation.

This is an important building block for their future professional life. Good communication not only increases personal well-being, but also improves the working atmosphere and reduces accidents.

Dr Stefan Hussy
Director General of the DGUV

“We have to ask the right questions and listen carefully”“

Since 2013, the Occupational Safety and Health Act has made it obligatory for companies to carry out a risk assessment, including an assessment of mental stressors. But less than eight percent of German companies carry out the assessment in accordance with legal requirements. One possible reason is that the topic of “mental health” is difficult to grasp. The processes are complex and require an open discussion culture in the company. Bayer AG has developed a tool with a systematic yet fun approach to address this issue. DGUV Kompakt spoke about this with Thorsten Uhle, psychologist and global HSE Manager focused on occupational health at Bayer AG.

Mr Uhle, taking into consideration psychological stressors when conducting a risk assessment is part of a larger process of promoting safety and health at Bayer AG. How do you go about this?

We have been engaged in a successful health dialogue with our employees in Germany for many years now. We regularly ask questions using a tool I developed. The employees are involved in health circles where they come up with answers and work on ideas for appropriate measures, which are implemented prior to the next survey. We have expanded this well-established methodology to include risk assessments of mental stressors. We are now talking about an OHS dialogue. The aim of this dialogue is to quickly and efficiently determine the current OHS status of employees in order to develop corresponding measures in a participatory manner.

The pandemic is causing more stressors than usual. Many employees are also working from home. How do you stay in touch with them?

In addition to all the major challenges and burdens that “everyday corona life” brings with it, old working methods and organisational forms were very quickly called into question and adapted to these changed conditions. As a result, digital solutions in particular are experiencing a greater uptake. In terms of risk assessments of mental stressors, a rough analysis is carried out digitally or as a paper-pencil version. The detailed analysis was previously done

through a traditional workshop. We are currently developing a digital version for this as well. As modern and trendy as digital solutions are, issues related to safety and health are also about personal closeness and trust. For this reason, the digital detailed analysis workshop will take place in closed video chat rooms.

The Joint German Occupational Safety and Health Strategy (GDA) identifies specific mental stressors and process steps which should be taken into account when conducting a risk assessment. How have you integrated these into your tool?

We have closely followed the GDA's guidelines – this includes everything from the recommended process steps to the selection and naming of our scales. In addition, the five stressor groups specified by the GDA are integrated into the rough analysis: work organisation, work content, work environment, social relationships, and new forms of work. The subsequent detailed analysis is an adaptation of the “kommmitmensch dialogues” from the campaign run by the social accident insurance institutions for the public and private sectors. This is a fun, dialogue-based tool for promoting a culture of prevention, which addresses the areas of stress identified by the OHS survey.

How do you actually use the kommmitmensch dialogues?

When I first received the kommmitmensch dialogue box at the beginning of 2019, I im-



Photo source: Wolfgang Belwinkel/DGUV

Mental stress and strain in the working environment can have very different causes. It is important to talk about them. The dialogue boxes from the *kommmitensch* prevention campaign are a good starting point for this. They are available for the education sector and companies as card sets or in digital form.

mediately thought: “This is the right instrument for our detailed analysis!” As part of a research project, we adapted the dialogues thematically and evaluated them successfully. In the course of our game, which is also dialogue-based, the workshop group developed a common understanding of the status quo of their own prevention culture. Subsequently, real-life examples from everyday work are collected and initial suggestions for measures are written down. A commission with equal employer and employee representation pools these and puts together a concrete package of measures. In my view, success is guaranteed by an open, blame-free culture that encourages discussion, a participatory approach and a clear definition of the manager’s role in the overall process.

How is the game format received by everyone?

Really well! The participants were extremely enthusiastic and engaged. They all fulfilled a certain role: measuring time, recording intermediate results, etc. I made sure that everyone stuck to the time limits per round, which further added to the game feel of the methodology. Safety and health issues, which are usually quite serious, were dealt

with productively in a fun, enjoyable way. In the first pilot project, we conducted four half-day detailed analysis workshops in which 39 proposals for measures were developed. These were then combined into 17 packages of measures.

How can companies be motivated to address the issue of mental stressors more effectively?

Our OHS dialogue takes place on an equal footing. We believe that employees are experts in matters related to their own work – so we have to ask the right questions and listen carefully. And then it’s important to get things done quickly. This increases the employees’ acceptance of the approach and has positive effects on health, attendance and many other things. We know that mental health means quality of life for every individual and that it is a sure-fire guarantee for motivated employees, productivity and quality.



Thorsten Uhle
HSE Manager,
Global Occupational Health
at Bayer AG

TOPIC

An ageing Europe

Demographic change is one of the biggest challenges facing the European Union (EU). It is also putting increased strain on social security systems. But how can the long-term consequences of population change be socially managed? The umbrella organisations of the German Social Insurance European Representation (DSV) have contributed to the discussion with a joint statement.

Demographic change is forging ahead. As in Germany, this development can also be seen throughout the EU. This is the conclusion of a report published by the EU Commission in June. The report provides information on long-term demographic trends in Europe and identifies the driving forces of change and its effects. On the basis of the report, the Commission will publish a Green Paper in spring 2021 to initiate a debate on the long-term implications of ageing populations.

The DSV welcomes the debate at EU level. It is clear that the EU must contribute to the modernisation of social policy. The European Pillar of Social Rights provides a good compass for this. Nevertheless, the DSV also notes in its statement that there are some additions needed. In its view, higher average life expectancy is often accompanied by a longer working life. As such, preventive approaches to maintaining employability throughout a person’s working life are an important factor.

In addition to maintaining employability, Europe-wide cooperation on research in the field of healthcare is also important. Digitalisation in particular offers potential for this. As the pandemic has shown, crisis-proof health systems are important. According to the DSV, sufficient financial resources must continue to be made available for this.

Web: www.dsv-europa.de/en ›
Statements › Labour and Social Affairs

Inspirational people and stories: 20th German Paralympic Media Award



Photo source: Binh Truong

The winning photo “Grenzlos” (*Boundless*) shows Léon Schäfer doing the long jump. Photographer Binh Truong perfectly captured the extraordinary aesthetics.

The German Paralympic Media Award was recently presented for the 20th time. The DGUV presents this award to outstanding media coverage of disabled sports in five

categories. The award winners for 2020 were: Binh Truong (photography), Andrea Fabian (online media), Jonas Bargmann and Maurizio Valgolio (audio) and Andreas Kramer (film/video). There were two winners in the print category: Andreas Kehrer with a report on the wheelchair basketball team “Thuringia Bulls” and Tim Scholz with “Der Weg nach Tokio” (*The Journey to Tokio*). This year’s special prize went to Henry Wanyoike, the Paralympic marathon runner from Kenya. The award jury also wants to honour those who frequently report on sports for people with disabilities. In 2020, Lars Braesch of the Fehmarnschen Tageblatt newspaper will receive this honorary award. Nominations for 2021 are already open.

Web: www.dguv.de/gpma (German only)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Let’s talk! – the new prevention programme “Jugend will sich-er-leben”



Photo source: JWSL

What does communication have to do with safety and health at work? A lot. Because accidents often hide poor communication or a lack of it.

A company or a public institution is characterised by how people talk to each other and the way communication is done. With this in mind, the DGUV prevention programme “Jugend will sich-er-leben” (*Young People*

Living Life and Living Safely, JWSL) started the new 2020/21 vocational school year on 31 August with this year’s theme of “Communication”. The prevention programme provides all vocational schools and training companies in Germany with teaching materials on cross-sector and cross-occupational topics via the DGUV’s regional institutions. Adapting to the coronavirus pandemic, concepts have been expanded to include topics such as “e-learning” and “working from home”, as well as modules designed specifically for working on topics at home.

Entries for the JWSL Creative Competition for vocational schools are now open until 28 February 2021.

Web: www.jwsl.de (German only)

Der Deutsche
Arbeitsschutzpreis
2021

German Occupational Safety & Health Award – Entries now open

Every two years, the German Occupational Safety and Health Award honours examples of outstanding commitment to the safety and health of employees at work. The prize is awarded in the categories: strategic, operational, cultural, personal and best newcomer. Companies can submit applications until 1 February 2021.

Web: www.deutscher-arbeitsschutzpreis.de (German only)

NUMBER OF THE MONTH

29,3 %

... of all reportable falls from heights involving dependent employees and contractors performing activities at work in 2019 occurred when using ladders or step-ladders. Most accidents involving falls occurred when using this equipment. This is followed by accidents involving falls when using stairs (19.1%).

However, most fatal falls from heights are related to roofs, terraces, glass roofs, rafters and eaves. 25% of all fatal falls from heights occurred in connection with these structures.

Web: www.dguv.de ›

Webcode: p021537

Legal Information

Published by: Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung (DGUV), Dr Stefan Hussy (Director General). The DGUV is the umbrella association of the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions for the public sector and for trade and industry.

Publishing committee: Dr Renate Colella (Chair), Udo Diel, Dominique Dressler, Prof Dr med. Axel Ekkernkamp, Markus Hofmann, Gabriele Pappai, Dr Udo Schöpf, Karl-Sebastian Schulte

Editorship: Gregor Doepke, Kathrin Baltscheit, DGUV, Glinkastr. 40, 10117 Berlin

Editorial team: Kathrin Baltscheit, Diana Grupp, Katharina Braun, Anne Schattmann

Translation: Peter Love

Layout: Atelier Hauer & Dörfler, www.hauer-doerfler.de

Publisher: Quadriga Media Berlin GmbH, Werderscher Markt 13, 10117 Berlin

Printing: DCM Druckcenter Meckenheim

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

 @DGUVKompakt

News live from the editorial team:

www.twitter.com/DGUVKompakt

Contact

KOMPAKT@DGUV.DE
WWW.DGUV.DE/KOMPAKT