

Labour Inspections in Iceland

Occupational Hygiene

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The Administration of Occupational Safety and Health

The main AOSH vision is that

EVERYONE RETURN SAFE HOME FROM WORK

That is ensured by

- ✓ Labour inspections
- ✓ Digital communications
- ✓ Works machinery and equipments inspections
- ✓ Developing promotional and educational materials in line with the need of workplaces
- ✓ Encouraging social dialogue on the importance of occupational health and safety
- ✓ Deliver messages to people directly through the media, including social media, that they use the most.



Vinnueftirlitið Our main goals



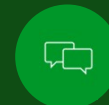
Our strategy is structured around **five main goals**. Each one of them should contribute to long-term improvements and positive changes in order to make the vision a reality.



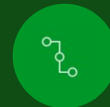
WELL-BEING



SAFETY



PARTICIPATION



SIMPLIFICATION



ADJUSTMENT

AOSH

- Diverse group of >60 staff with a broad background, and the activities are spread over 9 establishments throughout the country
- About 17 of them go on workplaces inspection visits
- Ca 1400 visits per year – >5% of companies get a visit
- The values of the AOSH:

Trust - Cooperation –

Prevention - Success



Labour Inspections – Main Focus

- Labour Inspections according to the Organisation's initiative
- Labour Inspections at **constructions sites**
- Labour Inspections due to **work accidents**
- Labour Inspection due to **complaints**
- Labour Inspection due to **licensing**
- Digital communication



Labour Inspection - Initiative

- Emphasis determined in the yearly work plan is based on risk analysis and frequency of work accident in certain sectors.
- Usually announced with few days notice
- Meeting with managers and OSH representatives
- Random talks with employees
- Instructions with time limits given in reports



Labour inspections – Complaints

- Respond to a complaint - it is assessed if labour inspection is necessary
- The labour inspector never reveals if the inspection is done based on a complaint or as by AOSH initiative
- Regular inspection can focus on the issues to which the complaint relates to
- Sometimes the complaint leads to digital communication with the workplace representative



Digital communications (DC)

- In 2023 the AOSH started a digital communications requesting data proving that companies have in place OSH plan and whistleblower protection
- DC yearly work plan is based on risk analysis and frequency of work accidents in certain sectors
- Instructions with time limits is given in reports if OSH is deficient
- By utilizing DC the AOSH can reach out to more workplaces than by on-site visit inspections and thus raise attention to OSH with well-being of the workers in mind



Emphasis on follow-up/fulfillment



- When instructions are given in a report, after a visit, there is a time limit for responding to them with improvements **unless there is an imminent danger**
- In some cases there are followed-up inspections
- Once improvements have been made by workplace/employer, based on the instructions given by AOSH, a final closure letter is sent to the workplace with encouragement to continue its OSH work

Occupational Safety and Health

A risk assessment in the workplace is made of five main elements of OSH. The purpose is to promote safety and health in the workplace so that everyone can get home safe.

- Musculoskeletal system
- Psychosocial factors
- Work Environmental factors
- Chemicals
- Machines and Equipment



Our Main Challenges

- ✓ Tackling increased diversity among employees participating in the labour market
- ✓ Reduce work accidents
- ✓ Promote well-being and good mental health of all employees
- ✓ Facilitate a general dialogue on the importance of a good workplace culture
- ✓ Encourage everyone in the workplace to participate and take responsibility to ensure good OSH
- ✓ Platform workers – How to reach them
- ✓ Impact of more advanced technology, including AI and robotics
- ✓ Impact of a combination of telework and on-site work



Occupation Hygiene (OH) in Iceland

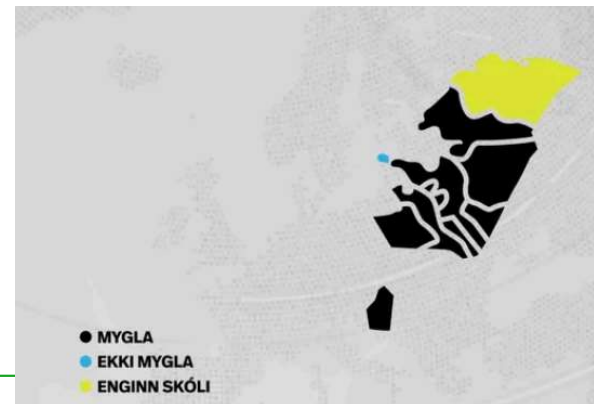
- Occupational hygiene at AOSH focuses on the promotion of health and well-being in the workplace
- Key OH areas include
 - Physical hazards
 - Chemical hazards
 - Biological hazards
 - Psychological hazards



Physical hazards

Indoor Air Quality and Moisture Damages

- Poor air quality and moisture damage and mouldy workplaces are some of the most common complaints received by the AOSH
- Often difficult for the inspector to prove if the problem exist and if the health problems are originated at work, home or other sources
- Many elementary schools and pre-schools in Iceland have been closed and renovated due to moisture and moulds in building materials.
- Mouldy schools in half of the country's municipalities and thereof 64 schools in the Capital area



Physical hazards

Noise, reverberation and IAQ in pre-schools

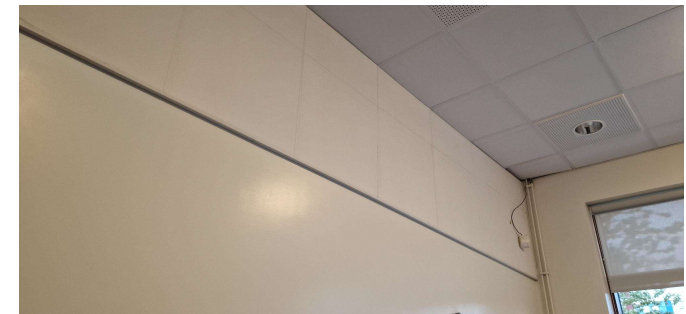
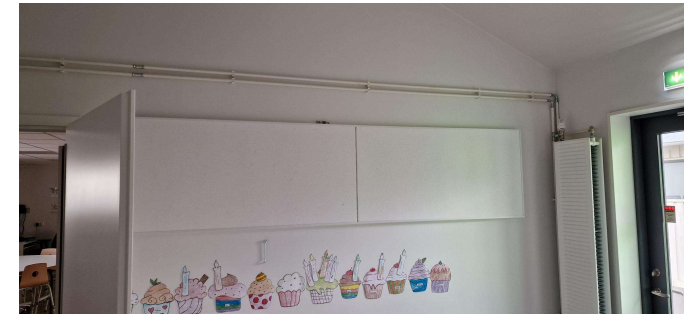
- AOSH Champaign – Measurements done in over 20 pre- and elementary schools
- AOSH get many complaints from pre-schools teachers about noise and echoes in the schools
- AOSH has different sets of testing devices that gives valuable information about these environmental factors helping the schools to improve the acoustics and IAQ



Physical hazards – Main results

Noise, reverberation in pre-schools

- The ideal reverberation time (RT60) in a pre-school classroom should be relatively short, ideally $<0,4$ sec (ÍST 45:2016 – Acoustic cond.)
- Most of the pre-school were between 0,3-0,5 sec
- However, noise level was often high or between 70 and 85 dB (A) at average
- The use of acoustic treatment, furniture arrangement, teaching strategies etc created a quieter and more conducive learning environment for young children



Physical hazards – Main results

IAQ in pre-schools

- CO₂ and TVOC was too high big part of the day
- >800 ppm in majority of the schools



Chemical hazards

Asbestos

- Asbestos is a significant problem in Iceland even though import and use of asbestos was banned in Iceland in 1983 – earlier than almost any other
- Only those who have attended a license course, supervised by AOSH, may work on buildings etc. containing asbestos that can cause only minor pollution
- Application for authorization to work with asbestos from AOSH and Health Authorities is needed for each project
- AOSH approves 40-60 asbestos work per year
- Probably many asbestos works done by individuals without permit
- “Asbest.is” with info about asbestos and applications



Chemical hazards - Precautions for hot work

Recent poster was launched to remind workplaces and employees of what to remember during hot work outside

Er öryggið í lagi?
VARÚÐARREGLUR VIÐ HEITA VINNU

Brúnnið skal vera
+ 60 mín.

Helstu hættur:

112

HNS Vinnueftirlitið

Is safety secured?
PRECAUTIONS FOR HOT WORK

There must be a fire watch
+ 60 min.

Main hazards:

112

HNS Vinnueftirlitið

Czy BHP jest zachowane?
ŚRODKI OSTROŻNOŚCI PRZY PRACACH GORĄCYCH

Ochrona pożarów musi być
+ 60 min.

Główne zagrożenia:

112

HNS Vinnueftirlitið

Chemical hazards – Toxic license - Acute toxicity

- AOSH issues toxic substances licenses to those who want to purchase/use/import toxic substances for commercial use
- After the person applies for a permit, toxic storage facilities are inspected, and their use is reviewed and then approved is acceptable
- Very few licenses per year (4-8)
- This will hopefully ensure that the toxic substances are managed and handled safely and carefully



Chemical hazards – EU-OSHA e-tool

- Practical e-tool on dangerous substances in the work-place
- This e-tool was translated and adjusted for Iceland workplaces in 2019 and is based on a similar tool called KEMIGuiden from PREVENT in Sweden
- Easily identify and mitigate hazards related to dangerous substances and chemical
- It helps businesses in Iceland, especially SMEs and those who lack specific knowledge of these issues, to manage and properly manage dangerous substances in the workplace



ESB útgáfa



7 spurningar

Fljótlegur

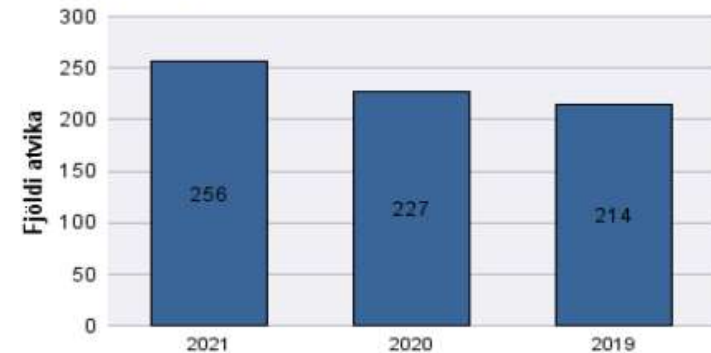
36 Spurningar

Start

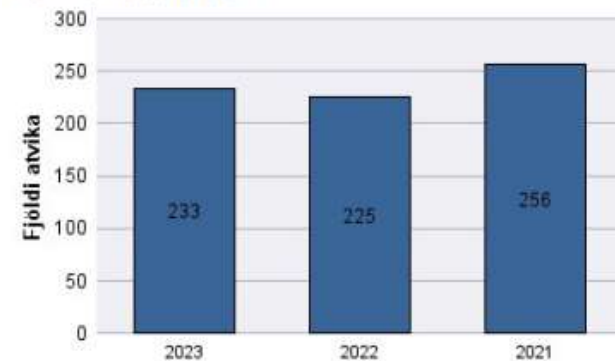
Biological hazards

- Biological hazards are a significant concern in many workplaces in Iceland, particularly in healthcare, agriculture, and laboratory settings.
- Regulations on Biological Agents and GMM and GMO
- AOSH reviews applications to The Environment Agency of Iceland from companies on OSH related issues when working with BA, GMM and GMA
- 5-10 such applications per year
- Needle/cut accidents – National hospital statistics

Atvik flokkuð eftir árum



Atvik flokkuð eftir árum



Psychological hazards

Workplace bullying, harassment and violence campaign (Let's Work Together: Take action against sexual harassment)

- On our web:
<https://island.is/s/vinnueftirlitid/gripum-til-adgerda-gegn-kynferdislegri-areitni>
- On YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4x5J8Nlu-fQ>



Physical/Psychological hazards

Think about: Head, shoulders, knees and toes

- It is about the importance of building trust and a healthy workplace culture that lays the foundation for the safety and well-being of employees. The emphasis is not least on the importance of welcoming young people into the labour market.
- On our web:
<https://island.is/hugsum-um-hoefud-herdar-hne-og-taer-vid-vinnu>
- Joint website with VIRK:
<https://hhht.is/en-gb>

