



Nordic labour inspection conference 2024

Swedish Work Environment Authority

Occupational hygiene

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Our core activities

- Inspection
- Regulation
- Analysis
- Communication

The government's work environment strategy

- **A sustainable working life** – every one should be able to and willing to work a full working life.
- **A healthy working life** – the working life should contribute to development and well-being.
- **A safe working life** – no-one should risk their life or health, due to their job.
- **A labour market free from crime and cheating** – a poor work environment should never be a competitive tool.

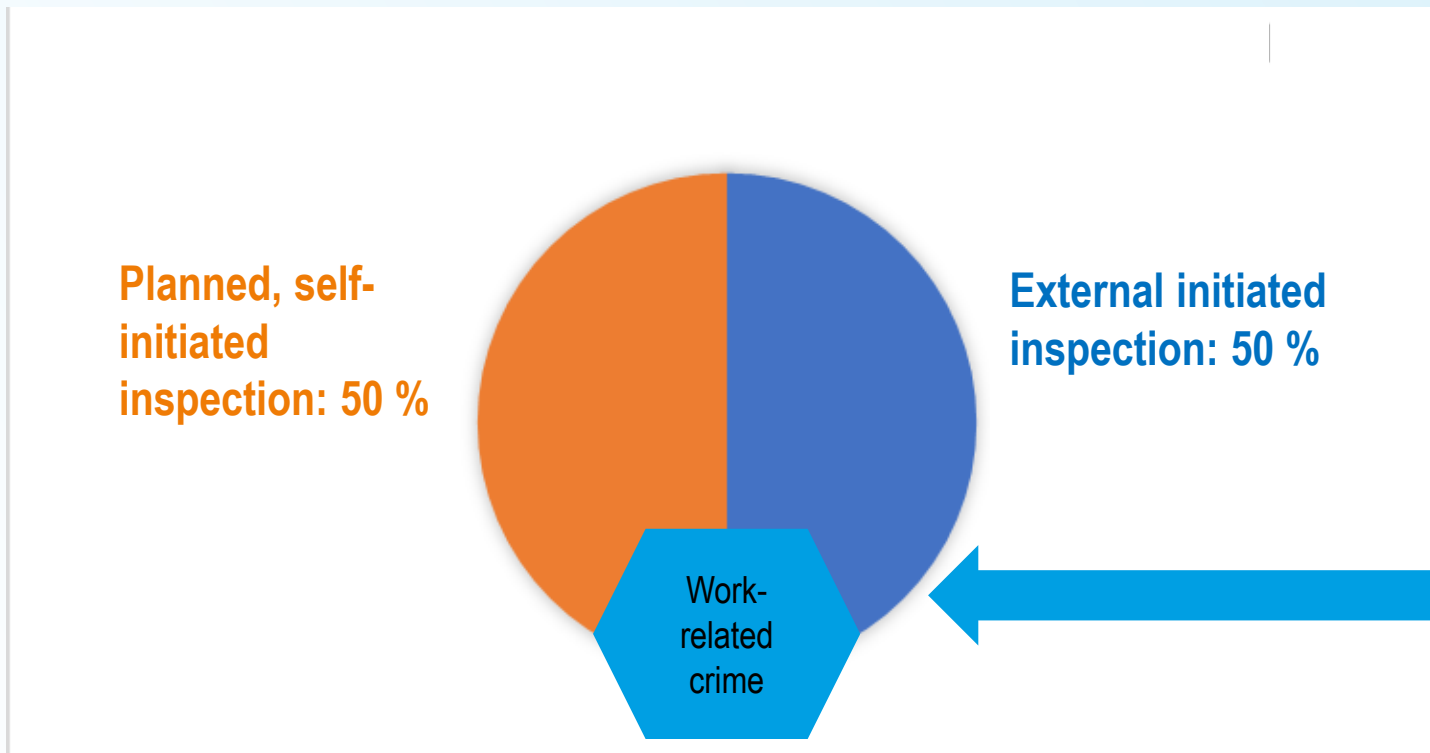
The Government's expanded zero vision: no-one should die as a result of work.



Selection for our inspections

- There are about 1.5 million workplaces in Sweden
- We have about 300 work environment inspectors in the authority
- We must carry out our spot checks with great care – we must monitor the most serious risks in the sectors where we consider them to be most prevalent
- Thus, every year, we put a lot of effort into making a sharp selection of sectors and employers to be prioritized for inspection

Allocation of our resources to two different categories of inspection

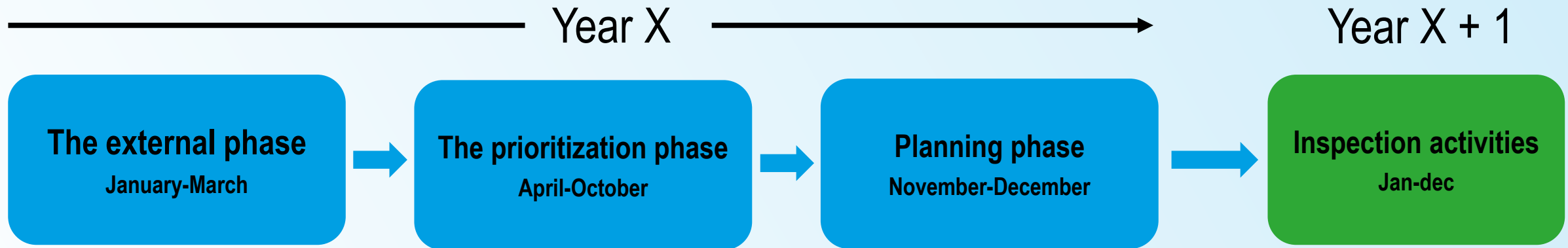


External initiated inspection

- Notification or work prohibition by safety representative
- Notifications regarding accidents and serious incidents
- Tips from the public or workers
- Co-operation between government authorities regarding inspection of work-related crime

The planned, self-initiated inspection

The three phases of the planning process, carried out every year



How are inspections and guidance conducted?



If shortcomings are not fixed

- Injunction
- Ban
- Penalties
- Sanction fees
- Fines



Work environment risks in occupational hygiene

- Physical
 - Noise, vibration, radiation and electromagnetic fields
- Chemical
 - Chemical substances and products, allergenic substances, CMR substances, quartz and asbestos
- Microbiological
 - Infectious agents (eg. viruses, bacteria, genetically modified microorganisms)



Current inspection activities in the field of occupational hygiene

- Small workshops – vibration levels, medical check-ups, welding fumes and ventilation.
- Construction industry and dentistry - vibration levels and medical check-ups.
- Asphalt workers work environment.

Most common requirements:

- Investigate and assessment, inform and educate about vibrations
- Medical checks connected to vibration exposure
- Register of chemical risk sources
- Risk assessment for chemical exposure based on current safety data sheets
- Labeling of pipelines with hazardous content

Mandatory inspections within the area of occupational hygiene

- REACH regulation regarding the work environment, control of risk management measures and exposure levels. Mostly surface treatment, manufacturing, chemical and food industry.
 - Most common requirements:
 - Register of chemical risk sources
 - Current SDS with exposure scenario
 - Risk assessment for chemical exposure
- Safe use when handling asbestos and particularly dangerous chemicals which require a permit for handling.
 - Most common requirements:
 - Correct use and storage of PPE (tight fitting masks)
 - Update object-oriented instructions.
 - Correct report 2 days before start demolition

An expanded work environment strategy – no-one should die as a result of work

- Affects both inspection and regulation
- Example of activities connected to zero vision:
 - Vibrations
 - >30% of approved occupational diseases are linked to vibrations (many relatively young people affected), probably a large number of unreported cases
 - Vibration project 2023 - 2025 how to prevent vibration injuries from handheld tools – aim to raise knowledge on the subject both internally and externally
 - Upcoming revision of OEL for quartz due to the recent evaluation by NEG/DECOS
 - Webinars targeting small enterprises to raise awareness regarding chemical risks (e.g. welding fumes, quartz, diesel exhaust, asbestos)



Current topics /upcoming risk

- Green transition – new industries with multiple chemical exposures
 - recycling
 - lithium-ion batteries
- Artificial stone (new risk?), ban in Australia, alarming reports concerning accelerated silicosis in several countries
 - Rapid joint action between departments to acquire knowledge about the current situation in Sweden

What about the situation in your countries?

Challenges - internal

- Many workplaces and too few inspectors. Approximately 3% of all establishments are visited each year for inspection.
- A closer collaboration between inspection and regulation regarding planning of activities (eg. inspection projects combined with guidance materials and communication).

Challenges - external

- Health effects with long latency
 - difficult to follow up due to mobility within the labour market
- OEL - not always a safe limit
- How to make manufacturers use state-of-the-art technical solutions in product development? Can authorities have an impact through standardisation work?
- A new regulation structure enters into force 1 January 2025.