

Focus on IFA's work

Edition 11/2010

617.0-IFA:638.1

GESTIS database: scientific criteria documents

Problem

With the amendment of the German Hazardous Substances Ordinance (GefStoffV) on 1 January 2005, a large number of atmospheric limit values that had been valid in Germany up until that point were deleted from the TRGS 900 technical rule for hazardous substances. Experts who have not been involved directly in the decision-making processes may frequently have difficulty understanding why, following critical review in the light of the new GefStoffV, some atmospheric limit values have been retained in the TRGS 900 and others not.

Where a valid limit value does not exist for a working agent, substance-specific information on toxicological and occupational medical experience is required. Such information may for example be readily accessible in many scientific criteria documents for atmospheric limit values that have since been abolished.

However, the original documents describing the atmospheric limit values and classifications valid in Germany up to the end of 2004 have not been compiled in a single publication. Instead, they are spread over a number of technical rules, series of publications (including loose-leaf publications), etc. They were to be merged into a database.



Sources of atmospheric limit values and their scientific criteria

Activities

Based upon the former version of the German Hazardous Substances Ordinance and the TRGS 900 technical rule in force at the time, the criteria documents against which the atmospheric limit value was defined and the substance classified were surveyed and collected, and the references to the sources entered into a database. A comprehensive text was drawn up explaining the legal principles and decision-making procedures of the regulatory bodies in Germany and at EU level.

Results and Application

The GESTIS database of scientific criteria documents can be accessed free of charge on the Internet. It indicates the source, where accessible, of the original documents upon which all workplace atmospheric limit values valid in Germany are based, together with the scientific criteria for the classification of the substances as carcinogenic, mutagenic, reprotoxic or sensitizing. In addition, the database contains bibliographical information for the documents which until the end of 2004 formed the basis of the German atmospheric limit values which have since been abolished, and briefly explains the background to their deletion from the TRGS 900. A direct link is provided to texts available in digital form and without copyright protection.

Finally, the GESTIS database of scientific criteria documents indicates further summaries which contain comprehensive information on toxicology and occupational medicine concerning the substances involved.

Area of Application

Occupational physicians, toxicologists, OSH professionals

Additional Information

- GESTIS database: Scientific criteria documents www.dguv.de/ifa/gestis-quellen (in German only)
- Brüggemann-Priesshoff, H.; Nies, E.: Wissenschaftliche Begründungen für Luftgrenzwerte und Einstufungen von gefährlichen Arbeitsstoffen. Vol. 52 8/2003, pp. 125-248. In: *aaa arbeitsmedizin und arbeitsschutz aktuell*. Urban & Fischer, Munich 1983 – loose-leaf edition

Expert Assistance

IFA, Division 1: Information technology – Risk management

Literature Requests

IFA, Central Division