

Focus on IFA's work

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Code of practice: avoidance of musculoskeletal diseases amongst interior decorators

Problem

Persons working in the interior decorating trade are in some cases exposed to high loads upon the musculoskeletal system as a result of activity performed in a kneeling position, constrained posture, and the manual handling of loads. The then Lederindustrie-Berufsgenossenschaft (institution for statutory accident insurance and prevention in the leather industry) recognized the need on the part of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for specific codes of practice to address this issue. These codes were to be geared to the diverse tasks of interior decorators, and were to contain instructions for the performance of specific risk analyses, together with detailed suggestions for ergonomic structuring of tasks and appropriate prevention strategies.

Activities

The results of a sector-specific exposure analysis in the interior decorating trade conducted in 2004 by B-A-D Gesundheitsvorsorge und Sicherheitstechnik, Bonn, on behalf of the Lederindustrie-Berufsgenossenschaft, enabled the typical work situations and the specific forms of exposure to which they give rise to be identified and classified. Selected situations were subjected to a more advanced measurement analysis involving the CUELA measurement system, by which the exposure arising could be quantified objectively. The typical tasks and work situations and thus the associated exposure factors formed the basis for a checklist for sector-specific risk assessment.



Interior decorator with the CUELA measurement system in a typical work situation: removal of old floor surfacing. Characteristics of the exposure:

- Kneeling position
- Constrained trunk posture
- Exertion of force

The recommendations or guidance values for the duration or frequency of certain forms of exposure in an occupational situation or regarding strategies for their avoidance are, where possible, derived from existing assessment patterns or standards, or are based upon assessments by experts of the ergonomic situation. Surveys of the specialist literature were conducted for further approaches to behavioural and environmental prevention for the interior decorating trade, and the results compiled.

Results and Application

The content for a comprehensive code of practice is presented in a BGIA Report dealing with the following aspects:

- The effects of forms of exposure typical of the interior decorating trade upon the musculo-skeletal system
- Specific instruments for risk analysis
- Examples of approaches to behavioural and environmental prevention in the interior decorating trade, in particular the creation of a catalogue of remedial exercises

Following a trial implementation and evaluation phase in the field, brief codes of practice limited to specific aspects were condensed from the BGIA Report, revised branch-specifically by the social accident insurance institution, and made available to the businesses.

Area of Application

Businesses in the interior decorating trade, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

Additional Information

- Hoehne-Hückstädt, U.; Ellegast, R.; Luckau, M.: Heben und Tragen, kniende Tätigkeiten und Zwangshaltungen im Raumausstatterhandwerk. BGIA Report 1/2007. Ed.: Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung (DGUV), Sankt Augustin 2007
www.dguv.de/ifa, Webcode d7458
- Merkblatt Heben, Tragen und Transport von Hand – Vermeidung von Fehlhaltungen am Arbeitsplatz, rüchenschonende Tragetechniken und der Einsatz von Hilfsmitteln. Ed.: Berufsgenossenschaft Rohstoffe und chemische Industrie. Heidelberg, 2010
<http://bgc.shop.jedermann.de>
- Arbeiten im Knien und Hocken. Merkblatt LI 011. Ed.: Berufsgenossenschaft Rohstoffe und chemische Industrie. Heidelberg, 2011
<http://bgc.shop.jedermann.de/>

Expert Assistance

IFA, Division 4: Ergonomics – Physical environmental factors

Literature Requests

IFA, Central Division