

Labour Inspection Structure and organization

Name of institution that manager work

The [Ministry of Employment](#) is responsible for issues relating to working hours, work environment, the organisation of work and labour legislation among others.

Department(s) responsible for Labour Inspection

The [Swedish Work Environment Authority](#) (SWEA) is the administrative authority for issues relating to the working environment and carries out inspections at workplaces (<http://www.av.se/inenglish/>). The SWEA is an independent authority that pertains organisationally to the Ministry of Labour. The SWEA's supervisory activities include carrying out inspections to verify that employers comply with work environment rules and making the necessary decisions with a view to provision and maintenance of a good work environment. The Inspection Department (AI) carries out most of the inspection activities.

Law that covers organization and functional composition

- Work Environment Act (1977:1160) Amendments: up to and including (SFS 2005:396)
- Working Hours Act (1982:673) Amendments: up to and including (SFS 2005:428)
- Work Environment Authority (Standing Instructions) Ordinance (2007:913)

Scope of labour inspection

The SWEA supervises compliance with work environment and working hours laws and regulations in all workplaces, all branches of activity and forms of employment, except regarding work on board ships. The SWEA also oversees certain provisions of the Tobacco Act and the Environmental Code with regard to genetic engineering and pesticides. The SWEA's objective is to reduce the risks of ill-health and accidents in the workplace and to improve the work environment in a holistic perspective, i.e. from the physical, mental, social and organisational viewpoints.

Supervision of work on board ship, including both civilian vessels and warships is exercised by the Swedish Transport Agency.

There are other supervisory authorities with partly overlapping areas of surveillance, which can sometimes result in certain activities being inspected by more than one supervisory authority.

Local divisions

The SWEA has a head office for central supervision and an office in each of the 10 districts for regional supervision. The SWEA's inspection is divided into three regions.

Programming and communication

Annual planning takes place and a performance-driven monitoring system for checking progress exists. A group including representatives of the districts and management staff of the Head of Supervision drafts the annual plan. Frequent videoconferences among district offices take place.

Human Resources and career development

Permanency of inspectors

Inspectors are employees under the Swedish Work Environment Authority. A recruitment freeze is currently operating within the SWEA. No work environment inspectors are being recruited at present.

Selection process

The district in which the inspector is to serve conducts the recruitment process based on merits and competence. All inspectors are appointed as Work Environment Inspectors.

Background required

Most of the inspectors have post-secondary (university or college) qualifications. All staff with supervisory duties, whether recruited by head office or the districts, undergoes a common foundation-training programme that lasts six months. This basic training is followed by individualised development measures over a three-year period.

Visits and functions

Types of visits

Advance notice of the inspection visit is usually given by phone or letter, but the law also entitles the inspector to arrive unannounced. One or more inspectors may be present at the inspection. The actual procedure can vary depending on the industry concerned, the size of the organisation and other circumstances.

The most common inspection visits are "normal inspections" where the inspector takes a holistic view of the work environment, including possible technical, chemical, ergonomic and psycho-social hazards. "Targeted

surveillance” is used for inspections of a limited risk zone and are planned in advance within a specific project. At “two-stage inspections”, the employer is asked to inform the inspector on his view of the hazards of the workplace and the ways they are being addressed. This information is analysed and forms the basis of the inspector’s design of the agenda for the inspection, which then follows. “Macro inspections” are used for inspecting employers carrying on business in many units or at a large number of geographically widespread workplaces. “Targeted remedial stipulations” are used for reaching many inspection objects simultaneously, e.g. in the same industry.

Role of preventive measures

The SWEA provides advice, responds to inquiries and publishes information. The SWEA also maintains a very active website with interactive services including brochures, web-based trainings, preventive information. Both centrally and at district level, conferences are held annually for safety delegates of various kinds. The SWEA also takes part and attends trade organisation meetings to supply information concerning rules and accident prevention.

Programming

Selection of workplaces for inspection is based on an assessment of the workplaces presenting the greatest risk of ill-health or accidents. Advice and information are obtained from other executive officers, the media, the Social Insurance Agency, statistics, work injury reports and sickness, absenteeism data and the inspector’s own knowledge of the workplace.

Registries and reporting of accidents/diseases at work

Employers are obliged to notify to the SWEA of any accident or other harmful influence at work that has caused death or severe injury or affected several employees simultaneously. The same applies for incidents seriously endangering life or health and work accidents, accidents while travelling to and from work and other harmful effects of work (work-related illness).

Sanction and administrative processes

If the work environment inspector has observed any deficiencies in the work environment, the employer receives an inspection notice with written stipulations requiring him to correct the deficiencies within a certain length of time. Inspection notices cannot be appealed. If the employer does not comply with the inspection notice, the SWEA can issue an injunction for the taking of a certain measure. The SWEA can also issue a prohibition when the inspector considers there to be an immediate and serious risk of accidents or ill health. An administrative court can impose a contingent fine if the injunction or prohibition is not complied with. If an employer fails to comply with an injunction or prohibition, this can lead to a penalty in the form of a fine or for serious work environment crimes, imprisonment.

Social dialogue and labour inspection

There is regular consultation of the social partners in strategic occupational safety and health matters as well as priorities for the general work of the inspection department. There are regular formal meetings with the social partners to inform and discuss strategic activities of SWEA.

ILO Conventions ratified

Sweden ratified Convention No. 81 in 1949 and Convention No. 129 in 1970.