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# COVID-19 pandemic: how OSH at workplaces mitigates consequences

## Webinar for Trade Unions

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EU-ILO Project Manager

Monday / 18 / May / 2020

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## ▶ COVID-19 is also an OSH issue...

- ▶ Coronavirus can be **introduced into workplace** through workers, suppliers, clients, visitors, public and/or contaminated objects;
- ▶ It can be **transmitted** between workers or between them and suppliers, clients, visitors and public during **within workplaces during work activities**;
- ▶ It can be **transmitted** to workers suppliers, clients, visitors and public through contaminated surfaces and objects **at workplaces during work activities**;
- ▶ It can be **transmitted out of the workplaces** through workers, suppliers, clients, visitors, public and/or contaminated objects

**Implementation of an adequate OSH management system at business level can mitigate the impact of COVID-19, save lives and ensure business continuity!**

## ▶ Coronavirus – an occupational hazard

- ▶ *Coronavirus* is an occupational hazard, because it's a biological agent that might be present at the workplace and has the potential to cause damages to workers' health
- ▶ It can be transmitted:
  - **Directly**: through the transfer of respiratory droplets from the infected person to other(s) that are close, released when the infected person coughs, sneezes or speaks;
  - **Indirectly**: through contact with material components of the work (surfaces, tools, work equipment, raw-materials, etc.) or hands contaminated with respiratory secretions of an infected person and later transfer to the mucous membranes of the mouth, nose or eyes of other(s).

**Although the concrete OSH measures to eliminate/reduce coronavirus contagion risk depend on coronavirus specific nature, the risk management process itself (e.g., hazard identification, risk estimation, risk valuation and risk control phases) is the same applicable to any other occupational risk.**

## ▶ Main applicable EU and International Labour Standards and Guidelines

- ▶ ILO Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)
- ▶ ILO Occupational Safety and Health Recommendation, 1981 (No. 164)
- ▶ ILO Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161)
- ▶ ILO Guidelines on occupational safety and health management systems (ILO-OSH 2001)
- ▶ Council Directive 89/391/EEC of 12 June 1989 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health of workers at work
- ▶ Directive 2000/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, of 18 September 2000, on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work

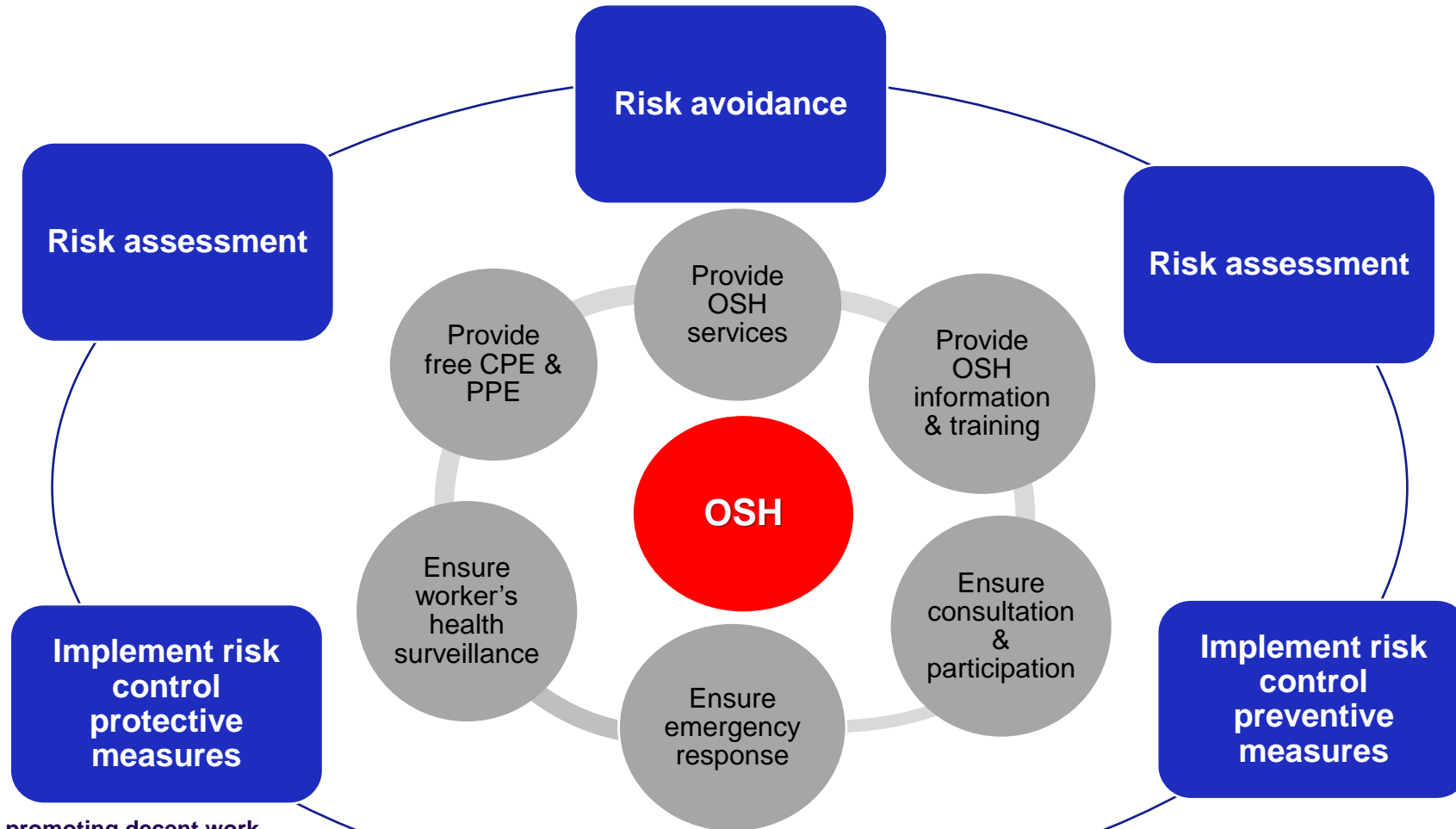
## Employers' main responsibilities according to referred standards

To take (and continuously adjust to changing circumstances) the preventive and protective measures to ensure workers' OSH in all aspects of work, with strictly observance of the hierarchical and sequential GPP

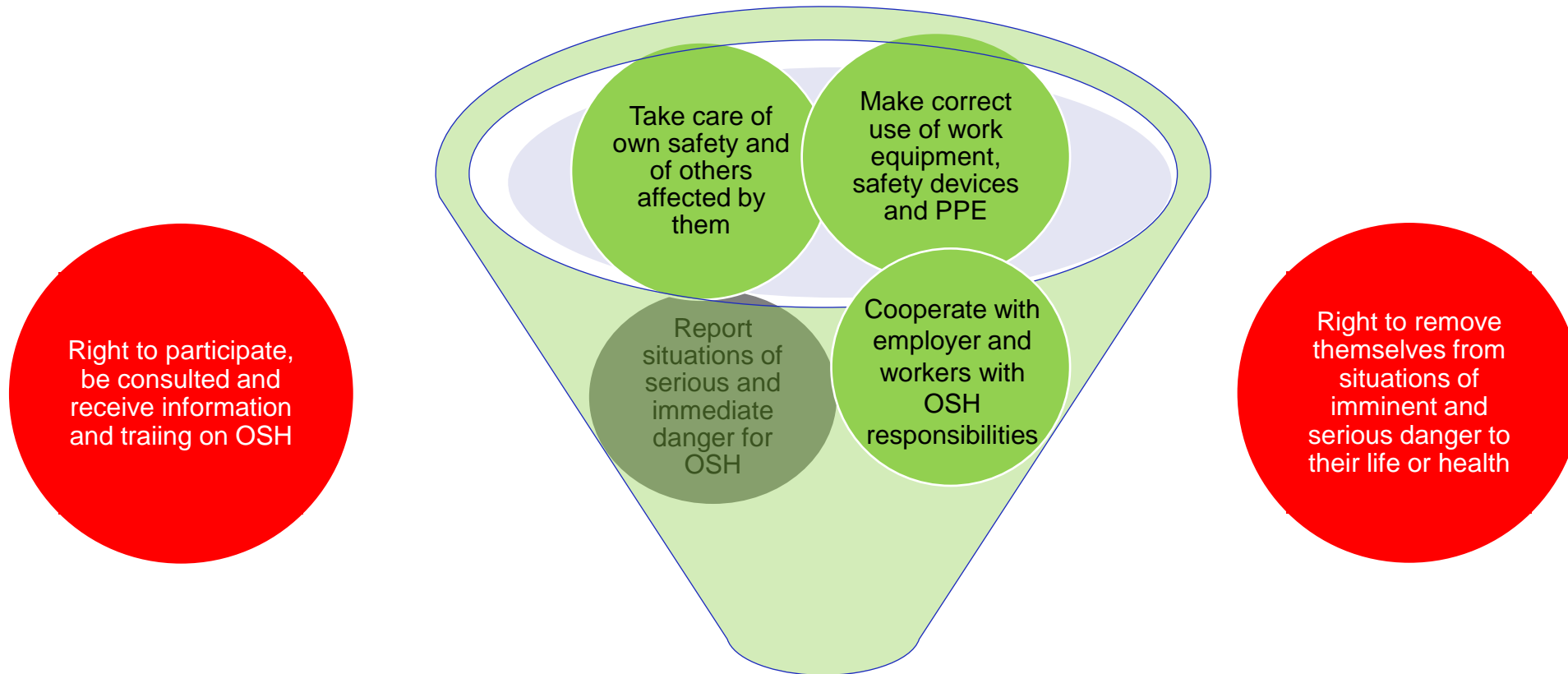
- 
- Avoid risks
  - Evaluate the risks which cannot be avoided
  - Combat risks at source
  - Adapt the work to the individual
  - Adapt to technical progress
  - Replace the dangerous by non or less dangerous
  - Develop a coherent overall prevention policy
  - Give collective protective measures priority over individual
  - Give appropriate instructions to the workers

... ensuring that workplaces, machinery, equipment, processes, chemical, physical and biological substances used at work are safe and do not pose risks to workers' safety and health.

## Employers' main responsibilities according to referred standards



## Workers' rights and responsibilities



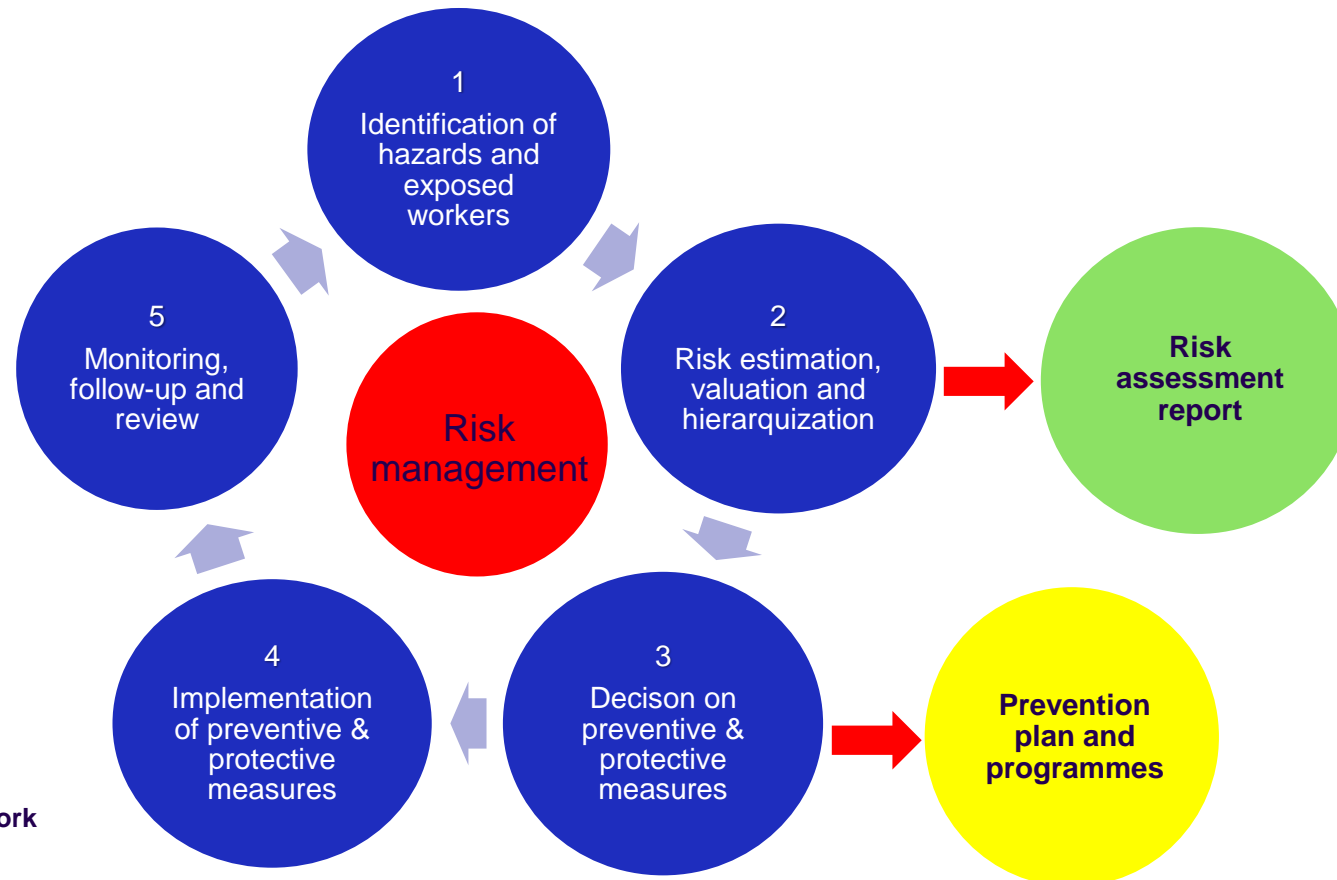


## ▶ What do to at workplaces?

- ▶ 1.º - Ensure the functioning of **OSH services at workplaces** (internal and/or external) which should ensure:
  - Identification and assessment of risks in the workplace;
  - Surveillance of the factors in working environment and practices that may affect workers' health;
  - Advice on planning and organizing work (including: design of workplaces, choice, maintenance and condition of work equipment and substances used at work);
  - Participation in the development of programmes for improvement of working practices as well as testing and evaluating health aspects of new equipment;
  - Advice on occupational health, safety, hygiene, ergonomics and individual and collective protective equipment;
  - Surveillance of workers' health in relation to work;
  - Participation in the analysis of occupational accidents and occupational diseases.

## What do to at workplaces?

- ▶ 2.º - In coordination with workplace OSH services and in close consultation with workers and/or their OSH representatives, implement an **occupational risk (including coronavirus contagion risk) management system**:





## Risk Assessment

Assess all occupational risks to which employees are (or might be) exposed, regarding all work activities, processes, workstations, equipment, substances and products and identify the exposed workers, including:

- ▶ All the risks to which workers were exposed before COVID-19 outbreak and that still remain;
- ▶ The risk of coronavirus contagion, which level depends on:
  - Probability of exposure of workers to coronavirus, considering COVID-19 characteristics (i.e., transmission patterns) and of their contact with infectious persons (e.g., colleagues, suppliers, clients, visitors or public) or contaminated environments/materials (laboratory samples, waste, work equipment, tools, etc.).
  - The severity of resulting health outcomes, considering individual factors (age, underlying diseases and health conditions), and measures available to control the impact of the infection.
- ▶ The risks resulting from the preventive and protective measures against coronavirus contagion (and their interaction), including: psychosocial risks (stress, domestic violence and isolation, associated with teleworking/social distancing); ergonomic risks, and exposure to chemical agents (due to increased use of cleaning/hygiene products).

## Risk assessment



Inspired in European Commission "*Guidance on risk assessment at work*"

## ▶ 1. Hazard identification

**To identify hazards, causal agents and exposure conditions, gather all relevant and available information relating to each work activity, in particular on:**

- ▶ Tasks
- ▶ Places where work is done
- ▶ Who does the work (permanent or occasionally)
- ▶ Other people who may be affected (visitors, subcontractors, public, ...)
- ▶ Training received by each worker for task execution
- ▶ Written work procedures and/or work authorizations
- ▶ Facilities, equipment, ...
- ▶ Tools used
- ▶ Energies used
- ▶ Composition of raw materials and final product
- ▶ Contents and recommendations of safety labels
- ▶ Organization of work ...

# ▶ 1. Hazard identification

## Potential sources of information:

- ▶ Legislation
- ▶ Manufacturer Instruction Manuals
- ▶ Safety Data Sheets
- ▶ Sequencing of activities of the productive process
- ▶ Subcontracted activities
- ▶ Support activities (maintenance, cleaning, loads, downloads ...)
- ▶ Methods and work processes
- ▶ Experience and qualification of workers
- ▶ Statistical data (accidents, incidents, occupational diseases, ...)

## 2. Identification of exposed workers

Ensure that all groups of workers or third parties that may be affected are properly considered, including:

- ▶ Office workers
- ▶ Clients
- ▶ Suppliers
- ▶ Night cleaning crews
- ▶ Maintenance personnel
- ▶ Guards
- ▶ Visitors
- ▶ Nearby population, ...

Ensure that groups of particularly vulnerable workers are taken into account, in particular:

- ▶ Young workers
- ▶ Pregnant women, women who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding
- ▶ Workers with disabilities
- ▶ Newly admitted workers
- ▶ Temporary agency workers and fixed-term workers
- ▶ Isolated workers
- ▶ Foreign workers
- ▶ Workers especially sensitive to certain risks



### 3. Risk estimation

Estimates the magnitude of the risk - based on the expected level of damage (consequences) and its probability of occurrence

$$\text{Risk} = \text{Probability of Occurrence} \times \text{Severity of Consequences} = \text{Frequency} \times \text{Gravity}$$

Risk	Probability of occurrence	Gravity
Serious and imminent	4-Very likely	4-Fatal
Serious	3-Likely	3-Irreversible
Moderate	2-Unlikely	2-Reversible
Low	1-Very unlikely	1-Light

	Gravity / severity / seriousness				
	1	2	3	4	
Probability / likelihood	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				

## 3. Risk estimation

### Example of criteria for classification of the severity level of the consequences

Damage severity characterization and scale		
Qualitative level	Characterization	Weight / points
Slightly harmful	Small cuts, eye irritation, headache, discomfort	1
Harmful	Lacerations, burns, minor fractures, deafness, dermatoses, asthma, musculoskeletal disorders	3
Extremely harmful	Amputations, major fractures, intoxications, multiple lesions, cancer, chronic diseases, death	6

## 3. Risk estimation

**Example of criteria for classification of the probability of occurrence (based on its expected frequency)**

Occurance probability characterization and scale		
Qualitative level	Characterization	Weight / points
Low	It is expected that it may occur rarely	1
Average	It is expected to occur relatively easily	3
High	It is expected to occur very often	6

## 3. Risk estimation

Example of criteria based on the occurrence probability and expected damage severity

Risk = S x P		Damage severity		
		Slightly harmful	Harmful	Extremely harmful
Probability	Low	Trivial	Tolerable	Moderate
	Average	Tolerable	Moderate	Substantial
	High	Moderate	Substantial	Intolerable

## 4. Risk valuation

- ▶ Comparison of the estimated risk with normative or other benchmarks which establishes the acceptable risk and makes a judgment on the acceptability of the risk in question;
- ▶ Acceptable risk: risk that is within the limits established by normative or other standards and that the system stakeholders (employers, workers, labour inspection, etc.) accept conscientiously, in spite of the existence of solutions that could further minimize it;
- ▶ If a risk is not acceptable, then adequate prevention and protection measures must be implemented to control it (i.e., to minimize its occurrence probability and/or severity of its consequences)!

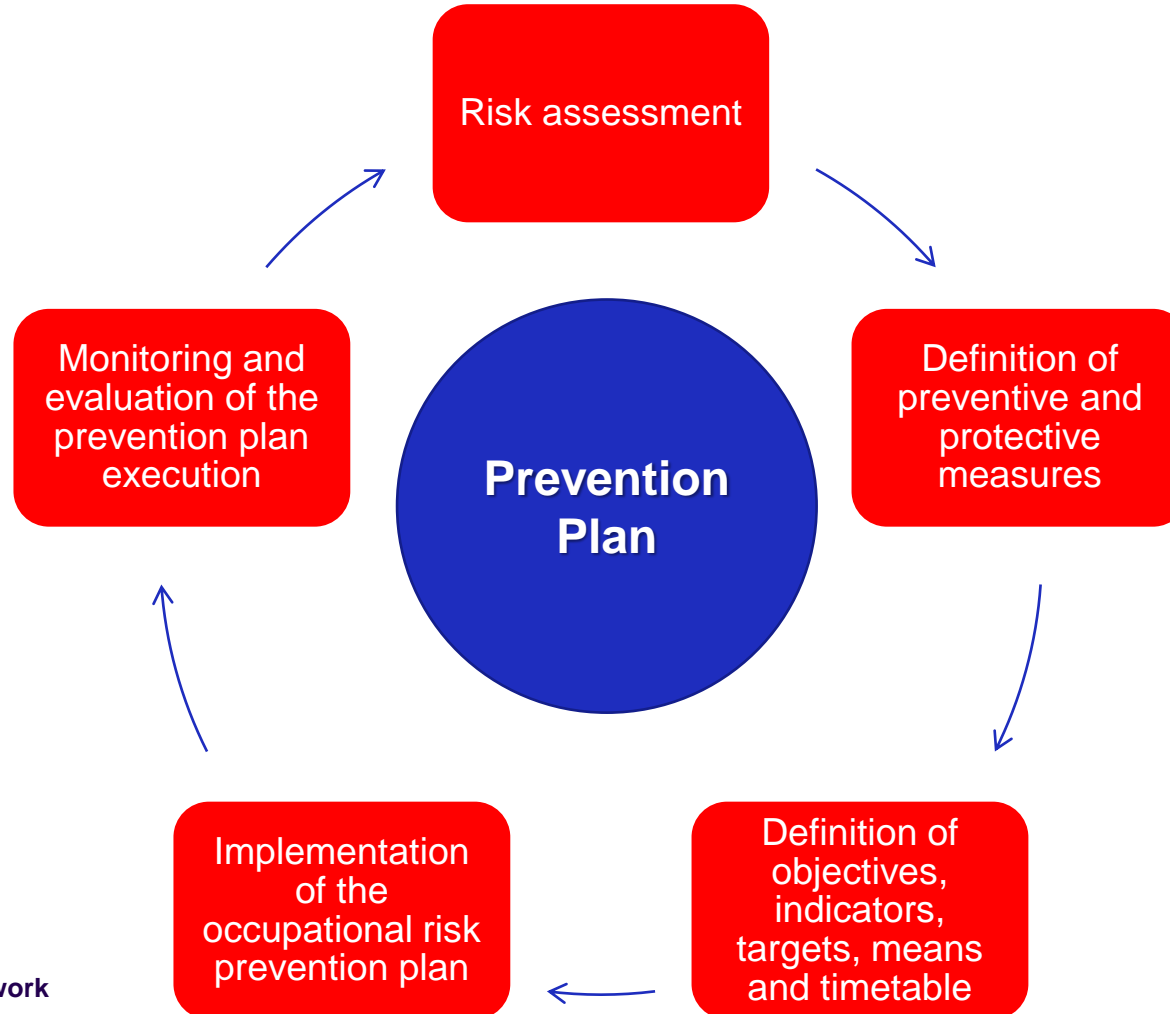
## 4. Risk valuation

Risk level	Preventive and protective measures
<b>Trivial</b>	Does not require specific measures.
<b>Tolerable</b>	There is no need to improve preventive action. However, more cost-effective solutions or improvements that do not entail a significant economic burden should be considered. Regular checks are necessary in order to ensure that the effectiveness of the control measures is maintained.
<b>Moderate</b>	Efforts should be made to reduce the risk. Measures to reduce risk should be taken within a specified period. Where the risk is associated with extremely damaging consequences, further action will be required to establish more precisely the likelihood of the damage as the basis for determining the need to improve the control measures.
<b>Substantial</b>	Work should not be started until the risk has been reduced. Considerable resources may be required for risk control. When the risk corresponds to work being carried out, steps must be taken to reduce the risk level, as soon as possible and in a time less than on the case of moderate risk.
<b>Intolerable</b>	Do not start or continue work until the risk has not been reduced. Even if using unlimited resources, the work should be banned until the level of risk has been reduced to an acceptable level.

## 4. Risk hierarchy

- ▶ Process of setting the level of priority with which each of the unacceptable risks should be controlled, considering that the employers' resources are limited (and could be not sufficient to attend to all unacceptable risks) and that preventive and protective measures could be mutually exclusive;
- ▶ Criteria for setting up the level of priority of risks:
  - Estimated risk level
  - Number of workers exposed
  - Frequency of the exposure
  - Degree of exposure
  - Urgency of the intervention
  - Criticality of the expected damage to the operations of the employer.

## Risk control





## Risk control

### Preventive measures

- Formulate, approve and implement a coherent overall occupational risk prevention policy and plan.
- Integrate OHS concerns in the management systems of all employer's areas and functions (planning, HR, procurement, stockage, production, logistics, etc.).
- Organize internal OSH services and provide them with the necessary means
- Assess all occupational risks to which the workers are, or may be, exposed in all phases of the production process and regarding all workstations.
- Replace a dangerous work equipment or a (biologic or chemical) agent by anon-dangerous or or less dangerous.
- Provide training and information to workers and ensure their consultation and participation on OSH matters.

### Protective measures

- Introduce teleworking regime and workers' paid dispensation or anticipation of paid annual leave periods (where possible)
- Introduce lagged working hours and/or additional work shifts (with fewer people each) to reduce exposure.
- Reorganize workstations layout and circulation paths in order to ensure physical distancing of workers.
- Replacement of physical contacts by contacts by phone, email or virtual meetings (online).
- Installation of collective protection systems, including safety and health signs, to prevent physical contacts.
- Provide adequate PPE to workers and provide training on their use and disposal

## Occupational Risks Prevention Plan

On the basis of the risk assessment, an **Occupational Risks Prevention Plan** should be formulated and implemented. This plan should contain, at least, the following information:

- ▶ Identified Hazards
- ▶ Risks assessed, their respective level and exposed workers
- ▶ Most appropriate OSH Preventive and protective measures to implement
- ▶ Timetable and resources needed to implement each measure
- ▶ Responsible persons for the implementation of each measure
- ▶ Objectives, indicators and targets regarding the implementation of each measure;
- ▶ Procedures for monitoring and evaluating implementation of the measures

**To control OSH risks (including coronavirus contagion), OSH preventive and protective measures should be implemented to reduce their occurrence probability and the severity of their consequences!**

## Risk Assessment Template (INHST)

<b>Department/section:</b>								<b>Assessment:</b>		<b>Initial</b>		
<b>Workstation:</b>										<b>Periodic</b>		
<b>Number of workers (attach list):</b>								<b>Assessment date:</b>				
								<b>Last assessment date:</b>				
Hazard		Probability			Consequences			Risk Estimation				
		L	A	HI	SH	H	EH	T	O	M	S	I
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												
8												
10												

**Legend:** L-Low; A-Average; HI-High;  
SH-Slightly Harmful; H-Harmful; EH-Extremely Harmful;  
T-Trivial; O-Tolerable; M-Moderate; S-Substantial; I-Intolerable.

## Risk Control Template (INHST)

(for risks valuated as “M”, “S” or “I”, in the previous template)

	Hazards	Measures	Tasks	Information	Training	Risk controled?	
						Yes	No
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
8							
10							

## Risk Prevention Plan Template (INHST)

(for risks valuated as “M”, “S” or “I”, which are not yet controlled)

	Hazards	Necessary measures	Responsible	Execution date	Evidence of the effectiveness of the measure	
					Date	Signature
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
8						
10						

## Risk Prevention Plan Template (other example)

(Preventive and protective measures to implement)

WORKSTATION	HAZARD	RISK	DAMAGE / EFFECT	RISK ANALYSIS					PROPOSED MEASURES
				PMDL	EL	PL	CL	RL	
				[1]	[2]	[3]=[1]x[2]	[4]	[5]=[3]x[4]	
Venjakob R58 and surface painting	Electrical equipment	Direct and indirect electrical contact	Electrization and electrocution	2	4	8	60	480	O9
	Handling of dangerous chemical agents	Skin contact	Chemical burning	2	4	8	60	480	O2; O3; O5;O6; O7; O10
		Inhalation of dust, gases or vapors of harmful substances	Asphyxiation	2	4	8	60	480	O2; O3; O5;O6; O7; O14
	No retention basin	Leakage	Chemical contamination	6	4	24	25	600	E1; O2; O3; O4; O5; S2
	Presence of noise	Noise exposure	Deafness	2	4	8	60	480	O11
	Manual Load Handling	Excessive physical exertion of lifting objects	Musculoskeletal disorders	2	4	8	60	480	O2;O9; O15; O16

PMDL – Preventive Measures Disability Level; EL – Exposure Level; PL – Probability Level; CL – Consequences Level, RL – Risk Level

## Risk Prevention Plan Template (other example)

(Follow-up of the implementation of control measures)

OCCUPATIONAL RISK PREVENTION PLAN						
Employer:	"XPTO"		Establishment:		Date:	XX/XX/XXXX
Department / Section:				Workstation:	Produção	
Prevention plan responsible:			Responsible for the external service provider:			
Date and signature:			Date and signature:			
WORKSTATION	PREVENTION AND PROTECTION MEASURES	RESPONSIBLE	TERM	CONTROL	CONTROLLED BY	CONCLUSION DATE
Painting of borders	O2; O3; O5;O6; O7; O9; O10; O11; O14		Dec/2009			
Repairs, Choice-Inspection	O2;O9; O10; O13; O15; O16		Dec/2009			
Venjakob R58 and painting of surfaces	O2; O3; O4; O5;O6; O7; O9; O10; O11; O14; O15; O16		Dec/2009			
	E1		Dec/2009			
	S2		Dec/2009			
Mobile work equipment	O11; O15		Dec/2009			
	E3; E4		Dec/2009			
	S4		Dec/2009			

## ▶ Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

### Physical distancing:

- ▶ New principles of social conduct: refraining from hugging, kissing or shaking hands;
- ▶ Re-organize the work in order to ensure physical distancing between people that, otherwise, would interact closely at work (e.g., workers, customers, suppliers, visitor, public), through:
  - Teleworking, workers' paid dispensation or anticipation of paid annual leave periods (where possible)
  - Lagged working hours or additional work shifts (with fewer people each);
  - Substitution of physical contacts by phone, email or virtual meetings (online) contacts;
  - Ensure the maximum distance possible between workstations;
  - Avoid crowding of people at workplace: cancellation of gatherings, social or sport events; institution of lagged hours for the use of common areas/spaces (e.g., cafeteria, rooms, library);



## ► Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

### Physical distancing (Cont.):

- Limit the number of persons (workers, clients or public) allowed to be simultaneously in a given space to a fraction of its capacity (e.g., 1/3) or to a given ratio per square meter (0,04 per sm);
- Limit the minimum distance between people (shop, airport, pharmacy, information service, etc.) to a specific number of meters (1 m in open space; 2 m indoor) and put appropriate safety signs;
- Forbid the presence of public or customers at workplaces and deliver products at the premises door or at customers' domicile, but without the entrance of the worker at the customers' premises;
- Prevent suppliers from entering workplace by receiving orders (re.g., aw materials) at the entrance;
- Implement different circulation paths: different enter and exit doors and circulation paths; different paths per circulation direction, etc;
- Install physical barriers (glass or acrylic windows, shutters, etc.), especially in front-office workstations.

## ▶ Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

### Hygiene:

- ▶ Promote good respiratory hygiene at the workplace (e.g., covering your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze);
- ▶ Ensure easily accessible places to wash hands with soap and water and paper towels to dry them;
- ▶ Provide workers with easily accessible alcohol-based antiseptic solution for hands hygiene;
- ▶ Promoting a culture of handwashing and the adoption of adequate basic procedures for hands hygiene;
- ▶ Prohibit eating or drinking in working areas;
- ▶ Promote the non-sharing between workers of personal, work and domestic items (cell phones, headphones, PPEs, crockery and kitchen utensils, clothes, uniforms, towels etc.) and food.

## ▶ Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

### Cleaning:

- ▶ Promote a culture of regularly cleaning, with adequate detergent and/or disinfectant, the following:
  - Surfaces of desks, telephones and keyboards;
  - Workstations, work equipment, work tools and PPEs (if reusable and appropriate);
  - Doorknobs, handrail, counters, light switches, elevator buttons, vending machines, payment terminals, dispensers, etc;
  - Common areas such as toilettes, rest rooms, cafeteria, meeting rooms, etc.

## ▶ Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

### Information, training and communication:

- ▶ Provide information and training to managers, workers and their representatives on:
  - The risks to which they are exposed and the adopted measures to prevent their exposure, in particular, to coronavirus;
  - Physical distancing measures, principles of social conduct, respiratory hygiene, procedures for hands hygiene and cleaning of premises and material components of work;
  - How to act in case of Covid-19 infection;
  - Correct use, maintenance and disposal of PPE;
  - Updates regarding the COVID-19 situation at the workplace, region or country;
  - Their right to remove themselves from a work situation that poses an imminent and serious danger for life or health.

## ▶ Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

### Health surveillance and response mechanisms:

- ▶ Employers should safeguard the surveillance of workers' health, according to local health authorities guidelines and, in particular, ensure that:
  - Workers with suspected symptoms of Covid-19 do not come to the workplace
  - In case of development of Covid-19 symptoms at the work site: worker communicates situation to supervisor and moves the “isolation area” defined in the contingency plan, while awaiting transfer to an appropriate health facility; worker or employer contact health authorities; employer notifies OSH services/occupational physician and adequately disinfect the workplace; provide health surveillance of persons who have been in close contact with the infected worker;
  - Expand workers' access to paid sick leave, sickness benefits, and parental/care leave and inform all workers

## ▶ Examples of specific OSH Preventive and Protective Measures that can mitigate the risk of coronavirus contagion at work

### Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- ▶ Whenever the implementation of other measures is not enough to control the risks, the employer should also, when appropriate:
  - Provide adequate and free of charge PPEs to workers, taking into account the results of the risk assessment and the eventual need using simultaneously several PPEs;
  - Provide information and training on the best way to use and maintain the needed PPEs.

## Conclusions:

- ▶ Coronavirus is an occupational hazard;
- ▶ The transmission of coronavirus at work is an occupational risk;
- ▶ Employers have the responsibility to assess the risks resulting from the exposure of workers to coronavirus and to implement the most adequate OSH preventive and protective measures to control it;
- ▶ The implementation of adequate OSH management systems contributes to reduce the negative impacts of COVID-19 pandemic or of any other type of biological agent (bacterium, fungus or virus) on workers' health and business continuity.

## World OSH Day 2020

### Key available resources and materials:

- ▶ [Report for World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2020 - In the face of a pandemic: Ensuring Safety and Health at Work](#)
- ▶ [PPT Presentation of the World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2020](#)
- ▶ [Video](#)
- ▶ [Prevention and Mitigation of COVID-19 at Work ACTION CHECKLIST](#)
- ▶ [Poster for World Day for Safety and Health at Work 2020](#)





## Q&A



## Contacts

**Дякую за увагу!**

**Thank you for your attention!**





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