

9 Key Conclusions from New Study on Health & Safety of Women on the Job



Workers of both genders face health and safety risks on the job. But for various reasons, female workers may be more vulnerable to certain kinds of hazards. So a new study looked at the state of women's health and safety on the job in Europe.

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work recently released a [study on new risks and trends in the safety and health of women at work](#).

Here are nine key conclusions from the study:

1. Occupational segregation—that is, the concentration of female activity in a few sectors, such as healthcare; education; public administration; hotel, restaurant and catering; retail; financial; and other customer services—seems to be increasing rather than declining over time. So to be effective, OSH policy should enhance its activities in these sectors.
2. In such sectors where an increasing proportion of workers are aging, such as healthcare, specific policies should be developed to address the health and safety risks of these workers and enhance their work ability and wellbeing.
3. Informal work is increasing among women, which raises OSH concerns, as these types of jobs are more likely to be unstable, unprotected and precarious.

4. The jobs women do and the choices they make still depend largely on their family commitments. As a result, the study found that many women are involuntarily in temporary jobs or on multiple and short-term contracts, which has a high impact on their OSH.
5. Women may have a higher level of exposure to health and safety hazards and are particularly affected by multiple exposures, such as in the healthcare and cleaning sectors as well as in the traditional sectors of agriculture, manufacturing and transport.
6. Women are more exposed to slips, trips and falls and accidents linked to violence.
7. Women are increasingly affected by musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and stress.
8. Women are more likely than men to suffer from multiple discrimination at the workplace relating to gender, age, ethnic background, disability and sexual orientation, while migrant women also face discrimination based on their origin or class.
9. [Violence and harassment](#) are a particular issue in service sectors. Additionally, new forms of harassment, such as cyber-harassment, are an emerging issue in some sectors, such as education. Related reporting and support procedures are still lacking. And female workers in personal services and who work at clients' premises are particularly vulnerable.