

# Results of Survey of European Workers on Workplace Safety



The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) recently released the results of a survey of full-time, part-time and self-employed workers age 18 and older about occupational health and safety. Ipsos MORI conducted 16,622 interviews in 31 European countries for the survey.

Here are the findings from the survey on two key areas.

## Aging Workforce

Across Europe, 52% of those polled expect the proportion of workers aged 60+ in their workplace to increase by 2020. But only 12% are aware of existing policies or programs in their workplace to make it easier for older workers to continue working up to or beyond the retirement age. However, this awareness varies significantly between countries.

There are some negative perceptions of older workers, but these aren't as prevalent as believed. For example:

- 35% of workers across Europe think that older workers take more time off work due to illness than other workers
- 28% think that workers aged 60+ are less productive at work than other workers
- Only one in five workers (22%) think that older workers tend to have more accidents at work than other workers
- 42% think that older workers tend to suffer more from work-related stress than other workers, while more workers think the converse (48%)
- Overall, 6 in 10 workers (60%) think that workers aged 60+ are less able to adapt to changes at work than other workers.

Older workers can raise certain health and safety issues in the workplace. Here are some tools to help you protect them better:

- Worker Profile: Older Workers
- Action Plan Checklist for protecting older workers
- Tips for protecting older workers
- Recorded webinar on ergonomic design for the aging workforce.

## Work-Related Stress

The top causes of work-related stress according to the survey participants are:

- Job reorganisation or job insecurity (72%)
- Hours worked or workload (66%)
- Being subjected to unacceptable behaviours, such as bullying or harassment (59%)
- Lack of support to fulfil their role from colleagues or superiors (57%)
- Lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities (52%)

- Limited opportunity to manage work patterns (46%).

Half of workers in Europe (51%) believe that work-related stress is common in their workplace. But a higher proportion of workers say stress is handled well at their workplace than say it isn't (54% and 41% respectively).

Workers in small workplaces (10 or fewer workers) are more likely to say that work-related stress is handled well when compared with workers in larger workplaces (60% vs. 51%).

Workplace stress is a serious issue in Canadian workplaces, too. That's why CSA Z1003/BNQ 9700, the first Canadian standard for psychological health and safety in the workplace, was released earlier this year. (Watch this recorded webinar on the standard to learn more.)

For additional tools on workplace stress, go to the OHS Insider's Psychological Safety Compliance Centre for:

- 10 tips for improving workers' mental health
- A stress prevention at work checklist
- A psychological health and safety survey
- Model Psychological Harassment Policy
- An infographic on psychological safety and much more.

And go to Safety Smart for a safety talk on depression. Not a Safety Smart member? Sign up for a free trial.