

What is the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authority preoccupied with at the moment?

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The Labour Inspection Authority supervises compliance with the requirements of the Working Environment Act and its regulations. The Labour Inspection Authority's overall objective is a healthy working environment for everyone, safe and secure employment conditions and meaningful work for the individual. The Labour Inspection Authority's contribution to a better work-life is mainly done by supervisions, guidance and information. In 2013 new official regulations became operative. One of the strategic areas is still prevention of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) among employees in Norwegian enterprises. In connection with new regulations we see that there is a need for revision of the guidance- and information material related to prevention of MSDs.

We encourage enterprises to work systematically with their own working environment. As a part of this the companies are decreed to do risk-assessments and make action plans on how to prevent MSDs. During supervisions we have seen that there is a need to make it clear to the enterprises what we demand when it comes to quality of ergonomic risk-assessments. This includes both "what to do" and "how to do it". Three parallel materials are now being developed:

- Revision of our guidelines to the regulations of ergonomics, which includes guidelines concerning both manual handling and office work, and general advice on how to prevent MSD's.
- Factsheet/Tool for Office Workplaces which will include information about common challenges at office workplaces, and a practical tool to identify risks. This tool is meant for small and medium-sized enterprises, to use without assistance from experts.
- A factsheet regarding the requirements of the law and regulations concerning ergonomic risk-assessments. Keywords are good planning and organizing, active cooperation and involvement by employer, employees and the occupational health services, adequate design of the assessment-tool chosen, identifying risk-reducing measures and written documentation.

The development work is based on knowledge from science and experience. It is developed by inspectors with experience and knowledge of ergonomics. We have also collected knowledge from occupational health services concerning open-plan offices, which are getting more common. The factsheet regarding ergonomic risk-assessments is developed by members of our internal network of ergonomists in cooperation with colleagues from The Norwegian Petroleum Safety Authority. In the session we will give a further presentation of this work.