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For



# **“WORK HEALTH ISSUES” REPORT**

COLLECTION OF RENTAL INDUSTRY PRACTICES AND OFFICIAL AVAILABLE STATISTICS  
AS REFERENCE POINTS

PETER CAVADA, DECEMBER 2024

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## 1. SUMMARY

- In contrary to accident management with its availability of comprehensive statistical information, detailed facts and figures about occupational health diseases are not on the same level of due to data protection issues.
- Therefore, rental industry specific data about work related health issues are not available. Furthermore, data collection is either decentralized, not consolidate or on a too generic level.
- Nevertheless multiple “occupational health” instruments and practices are applied within the rental industry to support the wellbeing of employees.
  - Generic “Health management instruments” such as employee surveys, communication, training, and data management
  - Physical related practices (focus on most common issues such as musculoskeletal disorder, hearing loss, skin protection) typically organized parallel to safety management
  - Psychological related practices (early warning systems and support)
  - Disease related practices and support for seasonal health issues
- Results from generic studies, strategies, and/or publications can be used as proxies only to identify potential areas of concern for the rental industry with its specialized functions and work-processes.
  - A great portion of work-related absence is caused by psychological diseases. Next priority areas are musculoskeletal disorders. (UK-HSE)
  - The EU OSHA is defining strategic initiatives along the four priorities of “work-related cancer”, “occupational circulatory diseases”, “work-related musculoskeletal disorder”, and “limiting exposure to reprotoxic substances”
  - Results from the German DGUV statistics for 2023 show the top three groups of occupational health related diseases of “infectious agents”, “physical impact”, “skin diseases”, and “respiratory tract”. Psychological issues are not included.

## **2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE DOCUMENT**

- ERA is focusing within the actual 3-years strategy period on people and related issues to increase the attractiveness of the industry. Managing and reducing “occupational related health issues” play a major role to support this strategy and to reduce negative work-related health impacts in the rental industry.
- The focus of this report is to collect, structure and summarize the currently applied practices within the rental industry
- Due to the fact, that within the rental industry the availability of statistical data is not given data from other sources such as the EU-OSHA, German DGUV or the UK based HSE are added to the report.

## **3. PROCESS AND METHODOLOGY**

Work related health issues are due to data protection and worker rights not systematically registered and documented within companies. Therefore, the project team was not able to generate a data based rental specific analysis.

As an alternative the following approach was implemented:

- Structuring including short description of work-related health issues by the expert team and collection of practices from the rental industry
- Collection of input from official released studies from EU-OSHA (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work), UK based HSE (Health and Safety Executive) and the German DGUV (Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung)

## 4. STUDIES as reference points

### 4.1. EU-OSHA

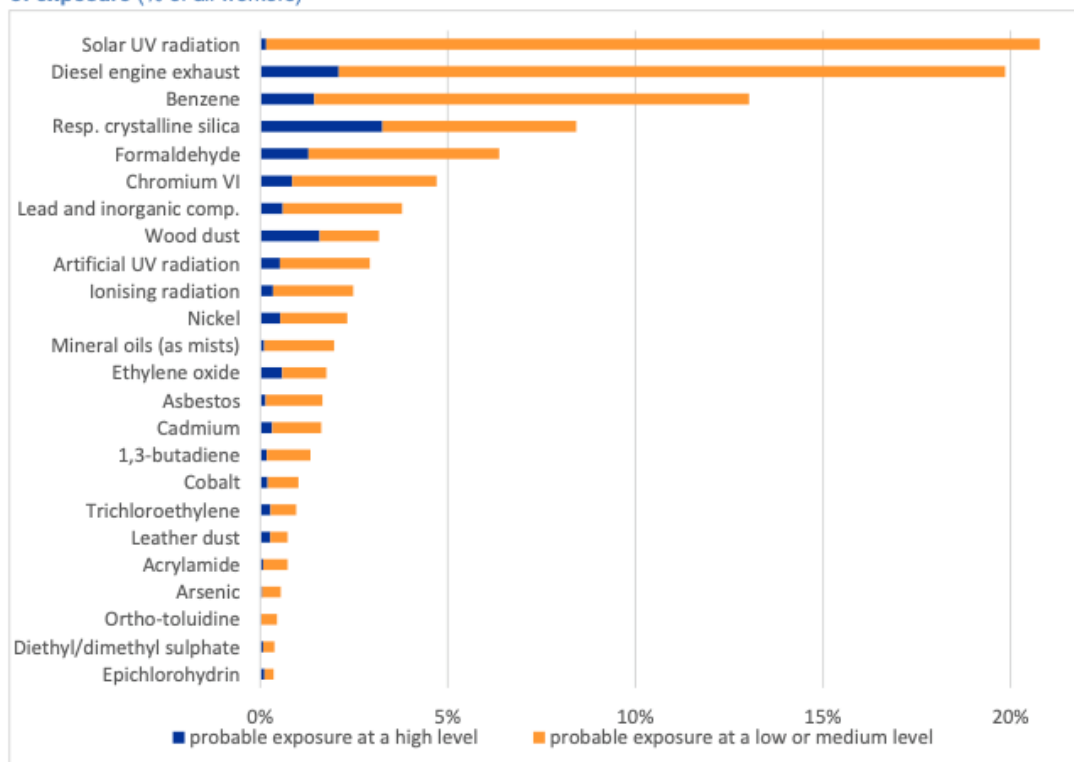
#### 4.1.1. Priorities for prevention of occupational diseases at the EU level

- Source: OSH Wiki (EU OSHA)
- Top priorities are defined within the EU OSH Strategic Framework 2021-2027 with the following key issues
  - Work-related cancer
  - Occupational circulatory diseases
  - Work-related musculoskeletal disorder
  - Limiting exposure to reprotoxic substances
- Extending the scope of the Directive 2004/37/EC on carcinogenic and mutagen substances to carcinogens, mutagens and reprotoxic substances (CMR) (amending Directive 2022/431/EU)
- Establishing and reinforcing occupational exposure limits (OELs) for carcinogenic, mutagenic and reprotoxic substances.
- Further actions will take place such as raising awareness on musculoskeletal disorders (e.g., the launch of EU-OSHA's Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2023-2025 on creating a safe and healthy digital future, focusing on psychosocial and ergonomic risks), providing guidelines for protecting workers against exposure to hazardous medicinal products and imposing stricter exposure limits for substances such as lead and asbestos

#### 4.1.2. Occupational cancer risk factors in Europe

- First findings of the “Workers’ Exposure Survey” (WES)
- Authors: Marine Cavet, Xabier Irastorza, Elke Schneider, Nadia Vilahur
- Release: 2023
- Aim of the study - Quote:
  - The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) has conducted a large worker survey, the Workers’ Exposure Survey on cancer risk factors in Europe (WES), in six EU Member States: Germany, Ireland, Spain, France, Hungary and Finland.
  - The aim of this first publication is to present initial findings from the survey and provide an overview of the type of information that can be obtained from WES. Future publications will go deeper into detailed data analysis.
- Main Findings – Quote:
  - The most frequent assessed occupational exposures among the 24 cancer risk factors considered in the survey were: solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation, diesel engine exhaust emissions, benzene, respirable crystalline silica (RCS) and formaldehyde, followed by hexavalent chromium, lead and its inorganic compounds, and wood dust. RCS, diesel engine exhaust emissions and wood dust stand out with higher proportions of workers probably exposed to these risk factors at a high level, as Figure 1 shows.

**Figure 1: Percentage of workers probably exposed to the 24 cancer risk factors included in WES, by level of exposure (% of all workers)**



Base: all workers in the six countries, WES 2023, EU-OSHA.

## 4.1. UK – HSE (Health and Safety Executive)

### 4.1.1. Statistical data

- Source: [www.Hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
- Health and safety at work – Summary statistics for Great Britain 2024
- New and long-standing cases of work-related ill health by type, 2023/24

46%	Stress, depression, or anxiety
32%	Musculoskeletal disorder
21%	Other type of illness

- Work-related stress, depression, or anxiety by industry

Average all industries	Approx. 2'000 cases / 100'000 workers
Public admin / defense	Approx. 4'000 cases / 100'000 workers
Human health / social work	Approx. 3'300 cases / 100'000 workers
Education	Approx. 2'600 cases / 100'000 workers

- Work-related musculoskeletal disorder by industry

Average all industries	Approx. 1'200 cases / 100'000 workers
Admin & support service activities	Approx. 2'000 cases / 100'000 workers
Construction	Approx. 1'900 cases / 100'000 workers
Transportation & storage	Approx. 1'800 cases / 100'000 workers

- Work-related musculoskeletal disorders by affected area 2023/24

43%	Back
37%	Upper limbs or neck
20%	Lower limbs

- Occupational lung disease by type

35%	Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
22%	Non-asbestos related lung cancer
20%	Asbestos-related lung cancer
20%	Mesothelioma
3%	Other disease

### 4.3. Germany – DGUV (Deutsche Gesellschaft Unfall Versicherung)

- Statistical data (Source DGUV Statistics, 2023)<sup>5</sup>
- A total of 72'630 so called "recognized cases of occupational disease" are registered for 2023
- The German DGUV differentiates 137 occupational diseases, sorted in
  1. Diseases caused by chemical agents (451 cases, 0.6%)
  2. Diseases caused by physical impact (9'271 cases, 12.7%)
  3. Diseases caused by infectious agents or parasites including tropical disease (54'436 cases, 74.9%)
  4. Disease of the respiratory tract, lungs, pleura, peritoneum, and ovary (2'810 cases, 3.9%)
  5. Skin diseases (5'542 cases, 7.6%)
  6. Miner's nystagmus (zero)
  7. GDR-OD (1)
  8. Other diseases (119 cases, 0.2%)

### 4.4. Further Information

- Source: Internet search
- Germany, psychological aspects
  - Every year approx. 27.8% of the total population is affected by psychological diseases (stiftung-gesundheitswissen.de)
  - In 2023 17.4% of work absence from 40–44-year-old due to psychological diseases (statista.com)
  - Particularly affected are professions in social, or domestic sector as well as medical health professions
- Eurostat
  - Source Eurostat (online data code: hsw\_occ\_ina)
  - Based on available data for EU Member States (excluding Germany Greece and Portugal)
  - Based on different reporting systems special statistical systematic applied to consolidate data
  - Data shown in table are index values (starting point is 2013 = Index 100) for defined groups of occupational diseases



Topics	2013	2021
Total	100	74
Selected occupational cancers	100	73
Pneumoconiosis	100	49
Contact dermatitis	100	50
Selected musculoskeletal disorders	100	73

## 5. HEALTH ISSUES within the Rental Industry

### 5.1. Process

- The OSH experts from the working group identified and defined health issues based on experience and areas of concern within the rental industry.
- The list is not reflecting priorities, which will vary from company to company.

### 5.2. Structure and definition

- Five different sections are defined with corresponding diseases.
- Definitions are based on input from OSH Experts from the rental industry.

Health Issue	Definition / Description
<b>1. Physical</b>	
Musculoskeletal disorder	Conditions that affect the muscles, bones, and joints. Caused by repetitive motion, poor posture, or heavy lifting, or whole-body vibration
White finger disease	Potentially caused by exposure to vibration (HAVS)
Hearing loss	Potentially caused by exposure to loud noises
Respiratory disease	Conditions that affect the lungs and can be potentially caused by exposure to dust, chemicals, harmful substances
Skin issues	Different conditions potentially caused by exposure to e.g., chemicals, harmful substances, excessive sunlight
<b>2. Psychological</b>	
Stress	Caused by a variety of factors such as workload, short deadlines, critical interpersonal relationships, and other factors from business or private life
Depression	Serious mental health condition that can affect an employee's ability to work and function normally
Anxiety	Caused by feelings of worry, fear, and nervousness
Burn out / Bore out	Phenomenon as a result of chronic work-related stress factors
<b>3. Diseases</b>	
Diabetes	Growing problem, caused by a variety of factors among other lifestyle or eating habits
Cancer	Potentially caused by chemicals, radiation, and other environmental or lifestyle factors
Cardiovascular disease	Group of conditions, which affect the heart and blood vessels caused by a variety of factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and smoking
Obesity	Growing problem, caused by sedentary lifestyle and poor eating habits
<b>4. Seasonal</b>	Any kind of seasonal diseases such as Flue, Corona
<b>5. Other</b>	

## 6. RENTAL INDUSTRY PRACTICES

### 6.1. Health management instruments

- Broadly used instrument are “yearly employee engagement survey” with questions about workplace safety and psychological wellbeing. Results as well as required actions are shared within the management and with teams.
- “Trust persons” are first contact points in case an employee wants to report any complaints about undesirable behavior such as: aggression, violence, sexual harassment / unwanted intimacies, bullying & discrimination.
- Periodic information and communication to team members
- Training and workplace instructions are standard tools to increase awareness, sharpen sensibility and provide guidance
- Workplace related “Toolbox talks” (e.g., lifting safety)
- Special “Wellbeing Events”
- Special section on the corporate intranet about wellbeing programs, specialized offers, health checklists, health assurance support, contact persons as well as external resources and contacts
- Data management
  - To prepare for the upcoming requirements from the CSRD (ESRS S1 – own workforce) internal teams to define and collect health related data
  - External medical services are key partners in the process and data source
- “Early Care” models focus on monitoring and managing work ability risks.
  - Prevention method that works well especially with psychological issues
  - “How to act” training and coaching for supervisors
  - Intervention policy describing the process and working steps to be followed incl. a specialized “call-for-action” form

## 6.2. Physical related practices

- Related issues are often incorporated and part of safety management and preventive actions
- Musculoskeletal disorder
  - Special working platforms in the mechanical areas to avoid bad posture
  - Support equipment and lifting equipment for heavy weightlifting and carrying
  - Lifting safety attachments
  - “Lifting Safety” instructions in four steps: preparation (e.g., determine the weight) – Get help! – Proper lifting techniques – other tips and tricks (e.g., take your time)
- Hearing loss
  - Different kind of hearing protection from plugs to earmuffs or otoplasty
- Respiratory disease
  - Provide, use, and interpret safety data sheets for substances
  - Company internal database with specialized software tools
  - Define workplace instructions and train accordingly
  - Exhaust extraction systems in technical rooms especially in testing areas for machines, vehicles, and equipment
  - Offer right personal protective equipment incl. training of proper usage
  - Special protection against dust (e.g., via hoods) in cleaning areas
- Skin issues
  - Initiatives working with hazardous substances and products

## 6.3. Psychological related practices

- “United For Mental Strength” campaign (ERA convention 2023)
  - Data show that 1 in 10 people will experience a mental health problem each year
  - Mental health is accounting for 20% of all work-related illness in the UK with being stress, anxiety, panic attacks, depression, eating disorders, loneliness being the most prominent examples
  - Furthermore approx. 800'000 people worldwide commit suicide each year
  - Establish a platform to share key projects, ideas and best practices and accelerate the change in the industry
  - Special initiatives:
    - Mental health survey and workshop
    - Training of 6% of workforce as “Mental Health First Aider”
    - Implementation of a Health Assured App and Employee Assistance Program
    - Quick access to counselling sessions
    - Monthly workplace reviews
    - Annual employee surveys
    - Creating an open and non-judgement culture
- “Mental Wellbeing” is top of the list in many companies. Employee surveys indicate the importance and priority.
- Multiple offers for employees such as

- Yoga classes for employees
- Sport for in between, usage of breaks for short fitness exercises
- Diversity day
- Special lectures for “diversity and age”, neurodiversity
- Women’s get together and her-career campaigns
- Mental health day
- Multiple initiative, advice, and coaching support
  - Healthy handling of stress situations
  - Relaxation in everyday life
  - Healthy habits (nutrition, drinking, sleep, fitness)

#### **6.4. Diseases related practices**

- Close cooperation with external medical services as an important knowhow source for risk assessments or analysis including advice
- Usage of external sources for appropriate, periodic medical examinations

#### **6.5. Seasonal health issues**

- Support “vaccination” against viral seasonal diseases