

Literature, only available in German

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- Ratgeber zur Gefährdungsbeurteilung: Handbuch für Arbeitsschutzfachleute. Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin (BAuA). 2. Aufl. Dortmund, 2016
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- **Information on the internet under:**
<http://www.gda-psyche.de>
<http://www.gefaehrungsbeurteilung.de>

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Occupational Safety and Health



Mental stress at workplace

- Identify
- Assess
- Optimize

Advice for Companies



Mental stress

Mental stress factors (e. g. pressure of time and keeping of deadlines, information overload, insecurity of workplace, psychosocial conflicts) gain more and more importance through changes in working environment. These can cause manifold health problems and thereby lead to high costs for companies and society.

If

- Work content
- Work organization
- Working environment and
- Social relations

are not optimally designed, impairing effects of mental strain can arise.

Occupational accidents and diseases are more likely to occur.

Short-term effects with employees can be mental fatigue, monotony, mental satiation and experience of stress.

Medium- and long-term effects can be feeling of ill health and diseases, which result in frequent absenteeism and often lead into incapacity to work and early retirement.

Consequences and identification of mental strain

Above average numbers of accidents, a high rate of sickness absence, high rate of labour turnover, variation in efficiency and failure in work quality as well as social conflicts can be first signs for the existence of critical effects of mental strain.

According to § 5 Occupational Safety and Health Act employers have been bound by law to assess their workplaces regarding possible risks since 1996. Part of these is mental stress.

The following methods are suitable for the assessment:

- Observation-related interviews
- Staff surveys as well as
- Moderated analysis workshops

It depends on the circumstances of the company, which method is suitable (i. e. size of the enterprise, type of activity, available resources).

Concrete manuals and instruments can among others be found on the websites of the Institutions for Statutory Accident Insurance and Prevention (DGUV) under www.dguv.de and the Federal Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA) under www.baua.de (topics from A – Z).

Design options for optimal mental stress

Through the following measures impairing effects of mental strain can be avoided:

- Configure activities with preparing, executing and controlling tasks.
- Create freedom of action and decision while conducting an activity (e. g. regarding methods and timely sequence).
- Create activities in a diversified way.
- Optimize the offer of information.
- Set up working time according to ergonomic knowledge.
- Deploy employees according to their qualification.
- Offer counselling and support with problems.
- Give feedback and pay tribute to employees.
- Design workplaces ergonomically and avoid negative environmental factors (e. g. heat, noise).
- Make decisions transparent.

More concrete measures can be taken from the mentioned literature.