

Summary

The building industry in Germany is one of the country's key sectors and is as such a motor for both the economy as well as growth. As a result of the relatively short-term nature of building sites, comprising as they do of temporary, non-stationary workplaces, and also as a consequence of continuously changing climatic influences and the setting of key conditions relating to occupational safety and health by parties outside of building companies, i.e. project principals and planners during planning phases prior to actual execution, workers in the building industry are subjected to a great many risks and burdens. This background also explains the frequency of accidents in the building industry, which is more than twice as much as that of industry as a whole.

The Work Programme Bau (prepared by the Joint German Occupational Safety and Health Strategy (GDA)) is therefore primarily intended to reduce the frequency and seriousness of accidents at work. The two main focuses are the accident hotspots of "scaffolding" and "demolition and decommissioning work". The contents of the work programme are structured to reflect amongst other things the fact that the majority of accidents have their causes in the organisational area. The work programme concept therefore targets improvements in the systematic perception of protection at work, properly planned and co-ordinated work procedures for construction and assembly work, raising the safety awareness of all involved and reducing the psychological burdens on employees.

The planning, preparation and implementation of the work programme as implemented from 2009 to 2012 involved input from the state labour inspectorates, institutions responsible for the accident insurance scheme, the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA), and the collaboration of co-operating partners, such as the industrial trade union Bauen-Agrar-Umwelt, employer federations, trade organisations, manufacturers and professional associations. The core content of the associated prevention concept, in turn based on a large number of existing instruments, involved a coordinated and standardised assessment of building site situations and the coordinated further processing of deficiencies identified. A traffic light concept was used for building site assessments, while also specifying those accountable for significant deficiencies on site. This also included further development of necessary collaborative procedures and the exchange of information between the project partners to further adoption.

A significant factor, in particular with respect to scaffolding, was that during the preparatory phase the institutions responsible for the accident insurance scheme and the state labour inspectorates stipulated a common attitude in regard to "falling" as a risk factor. Furthermore the necessary measures to safeguard against falls were also defined.

From July 2010 to June 2012 some 65,573 companies were assessed by supervising personnel from the parties involved using standardized documentation forms in the building site review process. Data acquisition was via the respectively available IT systems. Whenever follow up was required in areas outside of the party's direct area of responsibility, all relevant data was transferred to the responsible partner after a

case by case review (agenda setting). Deficits identified were then used to derive the most important causes which then were used as inputs when setting the agendas at 1,868 business meetings and 643 principal and co-ordinator sessions.

Target groups for the information and training events organised between June 2009 and June 2012 were the senior management of construction companies, principals and co-ordinators and employees of scaffolders/scaffolding suppliers as well as users of scaffolding. Overall around 19,393 employees attended 1,037 events for the various target groups.

Results available to date indicate a downturn in the number of occupational accidents on building sites during the project period, reflected in a reduction in accident costs relative to wages in the industry's scaffolders and demolition/decommissioning organisations.

These figures also document the functioning co-operation of the supervising officers of accident insurers and the state labour inspectorates with respect to building site reviews as well as the efficiency and efficacy of the dual system in terms of occupational safety in Germany.