

Good Practices in Safety and Health in Forest Enterprises

Results of an analysis in selected small and micro enterprises in Germany

Edgar Kastenholz ¹ Joachim Morat ¹ Ute Seeling ¹

with contributions from:

Henrik Habenicht ² Jana Kampe ² Karl Klöber ³ Silke Paritschkow ³
Francesca Zahnreich ⁴

¹ Kuratorium für Waldarbeit und Forsttechnik e.V. (KWF)

² Friedrich- Schiller Universität Jena, Arbeits-, Betriebs- und Organisationspsychologie

³ Technische Universität Dresden, Professur für Arbeitswissenschaft

⁴ RAL-Gütegemeinschaft Wald- und Landschaftspflege

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**Kuratorium für Waldarbeit und Forsttechnik e.V.
(KWF)**



**Friedrich-Schiller Universität Jena, Arbeits-,
Betriebs- und Organisationspsychologie**

Lehrstuhl für
Arbeits-, Betriebs- und
Organisationspsychologie



**Technische Universität Dresden,
Professur für Arbeitswissenschaft**



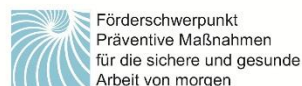
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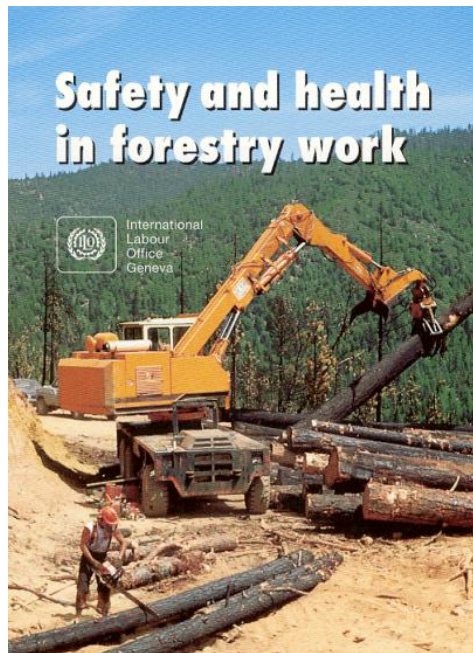


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Target group: Forest enterprises – mainly small and micro enterprises – are most vulnerable due to

- **their limited management and economic capacities**
- **their limited access to information and support**
- **continuing economic pressure**

This presentation is based on interim results of the project **proSILWA**

The first project phase:

To assess the actual situation in forest enterprises towards identifying connecting factors for effective prevention measures

The objective of the analysis leading to this presentation is to identify:

To which extend are **good practices** in safety and health applied in forest enterprises?

Extensive interviews in 12 forest enterprises including entrepreneurs and workers

Partner enterprises were selected based on their willingness to

- Partake in an extensive assessment of the health and safety situation in the enterprise
- Participate in testing different prevention measures
- Contribute to the evaluation of the effectiveness of prevention measures

The enterprises are exemplary for the diversity of the sector

- Size: from one-man companies to an enterprise with 30 workers
- Task areas: from motor-manual work to mechanised harvesting
- Locations: scattered all across Germany

Risk Awareness

- Most workers and entrepreneurs are well aware of risk connected to their tasks.
- Risk assessment in a systematic way is rather rare
- Health risks of long machine working times are recognised but not seen as being severe
- Risk acceptance seems to be rather high among some workers, which leads to engagement in unsafe acts.
- Health promotion measures (e.g. sports and diet) could not be identified.

Organisation of Safety and Health

- Safety organisation at work-sites is in place – mostly in an informal way.
- Systematic safety and health management is not applied in our partner enterprises.
- Mandatory safety and health service (only for enterprises with employees) is used – mostly to the extend to fulfil legal requirements

Competences

- Most workers and entrepreneurs are appropriately trained for their tasks.
- Where skills deficits occur, there is mostly a willingness to provide training.
- **Management skills, particularly regarding safety and health generally are rather poor.**

Technique

- State of the arts technology is commonly used
- Workers are quipped with effective and up to date PPE
- Felling is often supported by cable and winch systems
- Radio communication (helmet with radio) can be found in some enterprises

Technology – also with attention for safety and health seems to be the strength of German entrepreneurs.

Communication

- Communication within the enterprises is rather good, often in a friendly manner.
- Clear and structured communication protocols are rather rare.
- Entrepreneurs underline that communication about risks and information about risks in particular contracted tasks has enormous deficits.

Communication – particularly between forest owner representatives and entrepreneurs is a weakness.

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- The most critical dimension and hence the most important connecting factor for improving safety and health is **communication and cooperation**. This accounts both for communication within enterprises and between entrepreneurs and the contracting forest owners.
- One of the major deficiencies in enterprises, but also in safety and health research and prevention activities in general, still is that the focus tends to be narrowed to accidents and accident prevention. **Health protection and furthermore health promotion still lacks attention and action.**

Prevention measures which shall be effective and durable have to

- **Be individualised to the enterprises´ situation**
- **Meet actual needs**
- **Fit to an enterprise´s strengths and deficits**
- **Build on good practice which is already in place.**
- **Have a convincing cost-benefit-ratio.**

The next step in the project proSILWA will be to test and evaluate such tailor-made prevention measures together with the 12 partner enterprises.

<http://prosilwa.kwf-online.de>

contact:
edgar.kastenholz@kwf-online.de



Kuratorium für Waldarbeit
und Forsttechnik e.V.
Spremberger Str. 1
64823 Groß-Umstadt

Tel.: +496078-785-00
Fax: +496078-785-39

info@kwf-online.de
www.kwf-online.de

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Bundesministerium
für Bildung
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