



## Particularly dangerous jobs

**Particularly dangerous jobs are those involving an increased hazard or those performed in difficult conditions. A list of such types of work can be found in Chapter 6 of the regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy on the general regulations on occupational health and safety of 26 September 1997.**

The list of particularly dangerous types of work performed on the site is open and it is the employer's duty to set out and regularly update such a list.

In organising particularly dangerous work, extraordinary safety measures must be taken. The employer's duty is to set out detailed OHS requirements, and in particular to ensure:

- Direct supervision over such work by designated individuals;
- Adequate protective measures;
- Employee instruction including in particular:
  - Individually assigned tasks;
  - Sequence of task performance;
  - OHS requirements for each activity.

Moreover, the employer must ensure that access to the place where such works are being performed was only given to authorised and properly instructed individuals.



## Safe walks. Beware Sosnovsky's hogweed

**Sosnovsky's hogweed is a burning plant, and even staying close to it represents a significant danger to humans. Burning can even be caused without prior direct contact with the plant as the volatile oils issued by it can propagate through the air as far as a dozen or so metres.**

Sosnovsky's hogweed can be found all around Poland. It is one of the largest herbs in the world capable of reaching 3.5 m in height. Its appearance is similar to that of dill with the characteristic white flowers grouped in large canopies and purple stain-covered stem.

The most common symptom in those having had contact with the plant are skin irritations, often arising after more than ten hours. These include burning, i.e. rash, reddening, swelling or ulceration. Those having contact with the hogweed have also reported: nausea, vomiting, headaches, and injuries to the respiratory system, eyes and even an anaphylactic shock.

**In the event of burning**, wash the skin with warm water with soap as soon as possible. It is also recommended to wash all items and clothing that have had contact with the hogweed. In case of serious blisters that have not yet burst, apply corticosteroid ointments or creams.

Eyes that have had contact with the plant must be thoroughly rinsed with water, protected against light and advice of an ophthalmologist should be sought.



## Ecology in the office

**Scientists have been ringing the alarm bells about the issue of environmental protection.**

**Humanity should undertake all possible and immediate action in order to avert a catastrophe. Therefore, ecology in the office is not merely a vogue, but rather a necessity.**

**Limit paper use.** Above all, one should always bear in mind the ever important rule to not use a printer unless necessary. And also: Implement an electronic flow of documents, purchase recycled paper, use the double-side printing option and reuse single-side printed sheets.

**Limit the use of electricity** In order to do that, it is worth: replacing LED lights for standard fluorescent lights or bulbs; investing in motion detectors (e.g. in corridors); turning off printers and photocopiers while not in use and fully turn off all devices at the end of the working day.

**Get rid of plastics and sort your waste.** Limit, and preferably avoid using disposable cups or plates; provide adequate waste sorting containers in places designed for rubbish bins.

**Office furniture.** Another good idea is providing the office with furniture made of natural materials.





## **The ZUS has started accepting applications for co-funding enhancing OHS conditions**

**Since 15 July of this year, the ZUS has been accepting applications from businesses for co-funding the enhancement of occupational health and safety at their facilities.**

Support can be granted to projects aiming at reducing accident or occupational disease rates, and reducing the harmful impact of hazardous factors.

Every contribution remitter can apply for funding under the Programme who jointly meets certain requirements, including not being in arrears with social security contributions and health insurance contributions, and taxes.

The levels of financing are as follows:

- Micro businesses (1-9 persons) – 90% of the budget for the project being co-financed, with a cap at PLN 140,000;
- Small businesses (10-49 persons) - 80%, max. PLN 210,000;
- Medium-sized businesses (50-249 persons) - 60%, max. PLN 340,000;
- Large businesses (250 persons and more) - 20%, max. PLN 500,000.

**The deadline for the applications is 16 August 2019.**



## **Occupational diseases – carpal tunnel. Prevention.**

**The disease called the carpal tunnel syndrome is caused by long-lasting, repetitive, monotypic motions of the wrist in various planes. It affects a broad category of people: from athletes, to production line and office workers to pregnant women. The disease has been recognised an occupational disease.**

Tingling and numbness in the area of the wrist are common symptoms of the condition. Treatment of the disease and reablement is a long-lasting process and can prevent an employee from performing his/her professional activities for several months. Adequately adjusted workstation and preventative exercises, which are very easy and can be done during breaks from work, provide efficient prevention against the disease, argues Hanna Nieścior, a physiotherapist of Twoje Centrum Fizjoterapii in Wrocław.

1. Drop your arms along the trunk, stretch out and join your fingers together. Repeat 10 times.
2. Raise your hands, clench your fist with an effort and stretch the fingers. Repeat 10 times.
3. Circle your wrists, 10 times inward and 10 times outward.
4. Put your hands together in front of your chest; by pressing fingers against fingers tilt your hands to the right and to the left alternately. Repeat 10 times.
5. Drop your relaxed arms along the trunk and shake them several times.



## Fire protection plan

Fire protection plan is a document setting out the conditions for the fire protection of installations, building or its part, or another place where waste is being stored, agreed with a relevant Commander of the State Fire Service.

The obligation to draft the document stems from the Act on waste of 14 December 2012 (Dz. U. 2018, items 992, 1000, 1479, 1544, 1564, 1592). The regulations unambiguously stipulate the criteria for having the authority to draft a Fire protection plan. Hence it has to be drawn up by:

- Expert in fire protection measures as referred to in Chapter 2a of the act on fire protection of 24 August 1991 (Dz. U. 2018, items 620 and 1669) – where the competent authority is a Voivodship Marshal or Regional Environmental Protection Director,
- Person referred to in Art. 4(2a) of the same act – where the competent authority is the Starost.

The contents of the document are precisely defined and it has to comply with all formal requirements. One needs also to remember to update it regularly.

As regards fire safety, it is also important to scrupulously and thoroughly communicate the employees of a given site with the fire protection plan and post evacuation plans at points that are easily accessible and ensuring that they are easy to read and – in the event of fire - to use.





## What are employers' obligations with respect to protective vaccinations?

The Main Sanitary Inspectorate reminds that employers are under an obligation to ensure protective vaccinations to those employees who perform their duties in conditions that are conducive to certain medical conditions.

Recent years have seen a considerable rise in infectious diseases, particularly measles, as well as a significant fall in vaccination coverage levels.

Given that, the GIS reminds that employees employed in conditions exposing them to hazardous biological factors must be provided by the employer with all available means to eliminate the exposure, and where it is not possible, to limit the degree of exposure, making a proper use of the latest advances in science and technology.

Under Arts. 226 and 227 of the Labour Code, an employer is required to:

- **Carry out occupational risk assessment** in relation to the work performed, i.e. evaluate the likelihood of undesirable events occurring in relation with the work performed;
- **Apply necessary safety measures** preventing occupational diseases and other diseases in relation to the work performed, in particular by providing vaccinations.



## How to fight mobbing?

**An employer has multiple statutory and regulatory obligations towards his employees. One such requirement is prevention of mobbing, which is commonly carried out by drawing up and implementing an anti-mobbing policy.**

How to undertake effective anti-mobbing measures?

Above all, an anti-mobbing procedure should – according to Joanna Koczaj-Dyrda, a Legal Advisor, specialist in mobbing – be so constructed, implemented and monitored in the workplace that the staff are not afraid to follow it. It should be clear, ensure actual rights to the person making the grievance, i.e. a supposed victim.

A good employer that wishes to avoid his reputation being jeopardised can, and should, take action whenever an interpersonal problem occurs. He should himself care for eliminating mobbers. One cannot ignore any signals – particularly when someone makes a grievance. One should also bear in mind that mediation is a recommended way of solving problems in such situations, which alas is often underestimated.

Ms Koczaj-Dyrda's advice to those exposed to mobbing is to respond, fight, not allow others to destroy them, not escape, not wait for the situation to end, because it will not end, not hide their heads in the sand, but stand up for their rights. One must not be silent.





## Environmental decision issuance procedures to be simplified

In July of this year, the Council of Ministers adopted a bill on amending the act on sharing information on the environment and its protection, participation of the society in environmental protection and environmental impact assessment, and certain other acts.

The amendment aims above all to make the administrative procedures and proceedings relating to implementation of an investment project simpler and smoother.

The key elements of the draft include:

- In the event of investments where there is no obligation to carry out an environmental impact assessment, a designated authority **will issue an environmental decision**.
- In applying for an extension of the validity of an environmental decision, **it will not be necessary to demonstrate that the project is being implemented in stages**.
- One will be in a position to submit an excerpt from the land register in printed or electronic form.
- An important solution is lifting the requirement to submit to the environmental-decision issuing authority an excerpt from the land register, **where the number of pages exceeds 10**. Moreover, with such large number of pages, a decision or other activities can be announced by way of a public

announcement or by posting a letter in the Public Information Newsletter (the BIP) on the page of a relevant administrative authority.



## **The PIP makes an appeal to farmers to comply with OHS during harvest time**

**The State Labour Inspectorate (the PIP) has made an appeal to farmers to comply OHS rules during this year's harvest time and to ensure the safety of the children present on their farms. It has warned that the price for hurry, fatigue, distraction in performing works can be serious injury and even death. Casualties include children.**

Here are the principles of safe work:

- Ensure the safety of the machines and equipment used during harvest;
- Ensure the fire safety of the harvest works – equip all tractors and agricultural machines in hand-held fire extinguishers;
- Provide refreshments, especially during waves of heat, and make breaks from work;
- Work in work clothing and footwear.

Both legal liability and moral responsibility for the safety of children rest with adults. Thus:

- Never engage children in dangerous or harmful work;
- Do not assign them task that exceed their strength and/or capabilities;

- Ensure care and provide an safe playing ground away from working and passing machines;
- Do not allow children to independently operate a tractor or agricultural machines.

