



Chemical factors

FINLAND

- > **DURATION:** March 2020 – December 2023
- > **SECTOR:** educational establishments and other workplaces where exposure to chemical agents may occur, including construction companies using epoxy resins
- > **NUMBER OF INSPECTED ENTITIES:** 2323
- > **NUMBER OF INSPECTORS ENGAGED IN THE CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES:** 69



OVERVIEW OF THE CAMPAIGN

The main aim of the inspections carried out as part of the campaign was to raise awareness among workers and employers of the risks associated with chemical agents, by targeting inspections to check the preparation and implementation of occupational risk assessments in this area. The inspections confirmed that about one third of employers had fully complied with this obligation. About one fifth did not carry out a written risk assessment. Irregularities such as not taking into account all exposure factors or incorrect (not in accordance with SDS requirements) selection of protective equipment were found in half of the cases.



PLANNING OF THE CAMPAIGN

The priority area of the campaign was chosen based on an analysis of the inspectorate's own database on occupational diseases, and information at the disposal of the Rescue Department of the Ministry of the Interior, which in Finland registers reports of all types of safety incidents, was also taken into account. Data from the Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency, which is the authority that certifies and supervises the safe production and use of chemical agents, as well as information from the KemiDigi register of chemical substances and compounds and plant protection products and biocides, and data from the ASA register of use of carcinogenic substances were also used. Information on the number of days of sickness absence and data on occupational and other diseases caused by chemical agents when they did not cause absences were also included.



ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Inspections were carried out throughout the campaign. The duration of inspection activities carried out at an inspected entity was no longer than 2 hours. The duration of activities carried out at the labour inspection office was similar. Approximately one-fifth of all labour inspectors were involved in campaign inspections. Among other things, the labour inspectors had at their disposal: descriptions of tasks to be carried out, checklists, specialised materials on the inspection topics, examples of reactive actions that can be taken when specific irregularities are identified. All the inspectors used IT tools both at the stage of preparing the inspection (access to information about the entity and its inspection history), carrying out inspection activities (documenting findings and drawing up the protocol) and at the stage of summarising the campaign.

CAMPAIGN ASSESSMENT

The effectiveness of the activities was assessed primarily by referring to the quality of the occupational risk assessment, which took place both during the campaign inspections and during the follow-up inspections. Employers with irregularities that were not inspected again provided information on the corrective actions taken, which, like the inspection data, are recorded in the inspection databases and are used in the preparation of the final report. In the case of the campaign in question, it was not a separate document but formed part of the report on the institution's activities in the area of control and supervision of working conditions.