

Customer Information on Occupational Safety - April 2024

Online Safety Instructions

Available online in your Occupational Safety Folder (in German)

The Instruction Manager is part of our online support, with which you can quickly and efficiently provide legal compliance training to your employees. The following basic modules are available to you. They are included in our online support:

- Basic rules for safety and health at work (in German)
- Safe working in the office (in German)
- **Basic principles (in English)**

How to invite your employees to the online training

1. Log in at ospree-arbeitsschutz.de/my-account/ and select Trainings (**Unterweisungen**) from the menu.
2. Enter the email address of your employee and click on Send.
3. Your employee will receive an email with an invitation and a link to the online training (in German).



Certificate

Each online training includes comprehension questions. Upon successful completion, the employee can print a certificate or save it as a PDF. As an employer, you are obligated to provide proof that you have trained your employees. Therefore, we recommend that you request the certificates from your employees as evidence. Note that for legal reasons the certificate will be issued in German.

Preventing Commuting Accidents

Lack of Attention and Roadworthiness in Traffic



This year's focus campaign by the German Road Safety Council (DVR) addresses attention deficits and roadworthiness in traffic, aiming to reduce and prevent hazards during commutes to work and on business trips.

In 2022, there were nearly 290,000 traffic accidents involving personal injury. The German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV) recorded about 170,000 reportable commuting accidents during the same period, which are traffic accidents that occurred on the way to or from work. The 2024 focus campaign of the German Road Safety Council (DVR), professional associations, and accident insurance funds highlights the effects of distraction and fatigue as well as the influence of alcohol, drugs, and medications in traffic. For one's own safety and that of others, it is crucial to immediately stop driving if there are signs of impairment and, if possible, to let another person take over driving. Because only those who are mentally and physically capable of safely operating a vehicle are allowed to participate in traffic independently.

Materials for Insured Individuals and Businesses

To educate employees about attention deficits and roadworthiness in traffic, companies, municipalities, and public institutions have access to films, seminar materials, and presentations through a new, comprehensive media portal. The seminar guide is offered in a version for online and one for in-person seminars. Additionally, action brochures, posters, leaflets, and displays can be ordered. Insured members of accident insurance funds and professional associations can also participate in a quiz and a contest during the campaign period (February 1 to June 30, 2024), with many attractive prizes available.

Link: <https://www.schwerpunktaktion.de/medien>

Source & © DVR

The New Immigration Act 2024

The Essentials at a Glance - Impact on Occupational Safety

The law creates new pathways for the immigration of skilled workers from third countries (non-EU/EWR) and expands the opportunities for entering to have foreign professional qualifications recognized. It aims to attract qualified workers to Germany.

Key Points

- **Easier access for qualified professionals from third countries** (non-EU/EWR) to Germany by relaxing the conditions for granting a residence permit.
- **Recognition of foreign professional degrees** and improved processes for the recognition of foreign professional qualifications.
- Opening of the German labor market to **non-academic skilled workers** with qualified vocational training.
- **Accelerated procedure for shortage occupations** for visa issuance and recognition of qualifications.
- In the IT sector, **professionals without a formal university degree** but with proven practical experience and skills can immigrate more easily.
- The requirements for language **proficiency are clearly defined**, with different levels demanded for various professions and qualification levels.
- **Visas for job-seeking skilled workers** with recognized qualifications.

The New EU Blue Card

The EU Blue Card is a residence permit for highly qualified professionals from non-EU countries, allowing them to live and work in Germany. In implementing the requirements of Directive (EU) 2021/1883, the German legislature has redesigned and expanded the immigration options.

- **The salary thresholds will be significantly lowered.** In the future, a minimum salary of 45.3% of the annual contribution assessment ceiling in the pension insurance (in 2024: €41,041.80) will apply to shortage occupations and for those who are just starting their careers, and 50% (in 2024: €45,300) for all other occupations.
- **Career Starters** - For example, foreign academics who have obtained a university degree within the last three years can receive an EU Blue Card. This applies to both shortage occupations and regular occupations.
- **IT professionals** can now receive an EU Blue Card if they do not have a university degree but can demonstrate at least three years of comparable professional experience.
- **The list of shortage occupations** for the EU Blue Card will be significantly expanded. Full list: https://www.make-it-in-germany.com/fileadmin/1_Rebrush_2022/a_Fachkraefte/PDF-Dateien/3_Visum_u_Aufenthalt/2023_Engpassberufe_DE.pdf
- **EU Blue Card holders from other EU states** can come to Germany for a maximum of 90 days for the purpose of conducting business activities. No visa or work permit from the Federal Employment Agency is required for this short stay.

- After a minimum stay of twelve months with the EU Blue Card in another EU state, **long-term relocation to Germany** without a visa is possible.
- For holders of the EU Blue Card who have already lived in another EU member state with their family, **family reunification is given privileged treatment**.

Foreign Employees - Impact on Occupational Safety

The occupational safety for foreign employees in Germany who do not speak German or speak it very poorly must be carefully designed to ensure they are adequately protected. Here are some key aspects:

- **Multilingual Instructions:** Employers should ensure that safety instructions and work directives are available in the languages of foreign employees so they can understand the information.
- **Visual Aids:** Visual aids such as pictograms, diagrams, and videos can help convey important safety information, regardless of the employees' language proficiency.
- **Written Materials:** Work instructions, safety policies, and other important documents should be available in multiple languages to ensure that all employees receive the necessary information.
- **Awareness of Cultural Differences:** Employers should be aware that foreign employees may have different cultural backgrounds and work habits. It's important to show sensitivity to these differences and ensure that all employees feel respected and supported.

Our safety professionals have extensive experience dealing with foreign workers. Please contact your OSPREE representative. We are here to support you!

Ospree



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