

The SOBANE strategy applied to the management of psychosocial aspects



Février 2008



SERIE STRATEGIE SOBANE
GESTION DES RISQUES PROFESSIONNELS

Direction générale Humanisation du travail

Cette publication a été réalisée avec le soutien de l'Union européenne - Fonds social européen

THE SOBANE STRATEGY APPLIED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS

J. Malchaire, A. Piette, W. D'Horre, S. Stordeur

Unité Hygiène et Physiologie du travail

Université catholique de Louvain

Jacques.malchaire@uclouvain.be

www.deparisnet.be

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Acknowledgment

Strategy SOBANE is a strategy of risk prevention including four levels of intervention: Screening, Observation, Analyze, Expertise.

The guides of Observation, Analysis and Expertise were developed and published with regard to the 15 following fields of risk:

1. Social facilities
2. Machines and hand tools
3. Safety (accidents, falls, slips...)
4. Electric risks
5. Explosion or fire hazards
6. Work with VDU
7. Musculoskeletal disorders
8. Lighting
9. Noise
10. Thermal environments
11. Dangerous chemicals
12. Biological agents
13. Whole body vibration
14. Hand-arm vibration
- 15; Psychosocial aspects

The guides were developed within the framework of the SOBANE research project cofinanced by the Belgian Ministry of Labour and the European Social Fund and directed by the Prof. J. Malchaire, director of the Unité Hygiène et Physiologie du travail of the Université catholique de Louvain in Belgium.

This document presents the SOBANE prevention strategy applied to the psychosocial aspects (work dissatisfaction, stress, burnout, harassment...). It presents the guides to be used on the two first levels Screening and Observation of the strategy.

The whole of the partners wishes to thank all the collaborators for the various services like all the companies and all the workers who took share with the project. The contacts with these companies and the validation of the methods on the ground could be concluded thanks to the assistants of the various External Services of Prevention and Protection partners.

For more details relating to this document and the strategy SOBANE, consult the web site: www.sobane.be in French and Dutch or the site www.deparisnet.be in other languages

I. Introduction

The framework European Directive (3) requires that the employer ensures the safety and health of the workers in all the aspects related to work by implementing the general prevention principles: avoid the risks; evaluate the risks which cannot be avoided; fight the risks at the source; adapt the work to workers ...

The application of these principles in the field raises many problems. One of them is the coordination between Occupational Health (OH) practitioners (occupational physicians, safety engineers, ergonomists, psychologists...) and the industry, in particular in small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

The guides presented hereafter were developed as part of the research project SOBANE directed by Prof J. Malchaire.

It is the adaptation to the management of psychosocial aspects of work, of the general strategy presented in details in the first document of the collection of the booklets of strategy SOBANE.

The work circumstances may be very different from one enterprise to another, or even from one situation of work to another inside the same company. Therefore, the user, namely the OH practitioner and the coordinator have to adapt the Screening guide as well as the Observation guide (mainly the vocabulary and, to a lesser extent, the contents) to the characteristics of the situation of work concerned.

In order to understand correctly these guides and before using them, it is essential to adhere to the basic principles which underlie the SOBANE strategy. For this purpose, it is advised to read in details the section "Basic principles" of the second version of the booklet of introduction to strategy SOBANE, available on the web site www.deparisnet.be.

These basic principles are briefly described hereafter.

II. Concepts

II.1. Workplaces or work situations

By «workstation », one generally understands, in a restrictive way, the place and conditions (noise, heat, dimensions, spaces...) in which an operator performs a stereotyped task. This concept is obsolete owing to the fact that, in the new forms of work organization, operators no longer work at a specific worksite day after day, but in a "work situation" where they interfere with workers from a set of workplaces. The expression *work situation* refers to all the physical, organisational, psychological and social aspects of the life at work, which can influence the behaviour and well-being of the worker and the efficiency at work.

II.2. Occupational Health practitioners and Experts

We will designate by *OH practitioners* the persons, such as safety officers, occupational physicians, industrial hygienists, ergonomists..., trained in safety and health at the work to recognize, prevent, evaluate and reduce the risks. The training and the competence of these people can be variable, but no distinction will be made here between the different types of practitioners.

We will call *experts* the people, coming in general from specialized laboratories, with qualifications and methodological and technical means to look further into a particular problem. In general, however, these competences and means are limited to a particular aspect: electricity, toxicology, acoustics, mental effects, relational problems...

II.3. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

Large companies usually have well trained internal OH practitioners and the social dialogue works rather well.

The situation is clearly different in the SMEs where 60 to 80% of the workforce reside and the rates of accidents and occupational diseases are about twice as large. A part-time internal OH practitioner is sometimes present, but is often isolated. These SMEs must rely on external prevention services to fulfil the missions that they cannot effectively accomplish in-house.

The methods of risk assessment and furthermore of risk prevention must be developed primarily for these SMEs, taking account of their limited resources in occupational health and safety.

II.4. Quantification vs. qualification of the risks: measurements vs. evaluation

A large number of methods are available to "assess" the different occupational risks. Many of them were developed by researchers whose responsibility and interest lie in the establishment of the general relations between constraints and effects, rather than in the solutions of problems in a particular work situation.

That is particularly true for the environmental factors and the musculoskeletal problems^(5, 7, 11, 13, 14). These methods are, most of the time, badly used, because difficult, complex and expensive. It is also true for the psychosocial factors for which many models and questionnaires have been developed⁽²⁾.

From experience in the field, it should be concluded that the representative and correct quantification of the exposure and of the risk is very difficult and expensive and that the majority of measurements performed in industry have little value.

It is thus necessary to encourage the OH practitioners who are measuring systematically and the employers who are asking for such quantitative data, to think about the real interest of these measurements, their validity, their cost and to encourage them to "quantify" better and more validly, but advisedly, according to explicit objectives.

This conclusion is much the same as the standpoint of Goelzer in her Yant lecture in 1996 (4), saying "It is not unusual to see more attention given to exposure assessment and monitoring than to hazard prevention and control. The fascination exerted by sophisticated equipments and numbers is, for some reason, greater than the interest in designing pragmatic solutions to prevent exposure". It is also similar to the point of view of the participants in the *Control Banding* workshop held in London in November 2002 (1). As underlined by Oldershaw (12), "A single simple personal sample may cost more than \$400: three quarters of the members states of WHO spend less than this per capita and per year in their health systems."

III. SOBANE strategy of Risk management

The number of risk factors and the number of work situations are so large that it is impossible to study them all in details. Actually, it would be useless since, in the majority of the cases, prevention measures can be taken right away on the basis of simple "observations" by the people directly concerned and who know in details the work situations day after day.

A detailed analysis can prove to be necessary when the work situation remains unacceptable once the obvious solutions have been implemented, and the participation of experts become essential only in some particularly complex cases.

This procedure is adopted spontaneously and logically in most cases. Following a complaint, a visit (*Screening*) of the work situation is done and obvious problems are corrected. If it is not the case, a meeting (*Observation*) is organised to discuss it more in details and identify solutions. If it cannot be solved directly, an OH practitioner is called for help (*Analysis*) and, in cases particularly difficult to solve, resorting to an expert is the relevant option (*Expertise*).

This spontaneous procedure remains however non systematic and in general not very effective due to, mainly, the lack of efficient tools to guide these *Screenings* and *Observations* and the fact that, frequently, the problems are transferred by the people of the field (workers and their management) to the OH practitioners and the experts and that these specialists take full responsibilities of the studies and recommendations.

It is therefore necessary to develop *Screening* and *Observation* tools for the people of the field and ensure the complementarity of the partners.

This is the objective of the risk management strategy described below.

This strategy, called *SOBANE* (*Screening, Observation, Analysis, Expertise*), follows the criteria defined in table 1.

Table 1: Characteristics of the four levels of *SOBANE* strategy

	Level 1 <i>Screening</i>	Level 2 <i>Observation</i>	Level 3 <i>Analysis</i>	Level 4 <i>Expertise</i>
When?	All cases	If problem	In difficult cases	In complex cases
How?	Simple observations	Qualitative observations	Quantitative observations	Specialized measurements
Cost?	Very low 10 minutes per factor	Low 2 hours	Average 2 days	High 2 weeks
By whom?	People of the company	People of the company	People of the company + OH practitioners	People of the company + OH practitioners + Experts
Qualifications • work situation • health at work	Very high Low	High Average	Average High	Low Specialized

III.1. Level 1, Screening

The objective at this level is only to identify the main problems and solve immediately the simple ones, such as a hole in the ground, a container containing a solvent and left abandoned, a computer screen turned towards a window...

This identification must be carried out internally, by people of the company who know perfectly the work situation, even if they have little qualification in safety, physiology or ergonomics. These people are the workers themselves, their immediate technical management, the employer himself in the small companies, with an internal OH practitioner, if available, in a medium-sized or large company. The tools must be simple and quick to understand and use and must be adapted to their industrial sector.

The method at this level 1, *Screening*, must seek to identify the problems in all work circumstances, and not at a given moment.

III.2. Level 2, Observation

A problem unsolved at level 1, *Screening* must be studied more in details.

The method must still be simple to understand and implement, quick and inexpensive, so as to be used as systematically as possible by the workers and their technical staff, with the cooperation of an internal OH practitioner when available.

The objective is again to lead these people to discuss the problem in order to identify prevention solutions as soon as possible. As at level 1, the *Observation* requires an intimate knowledge of the work situation under its various aspects, its options, the normal and abnormal operations. The depth of the study at this level 2, *Observation* will vary according to the risk factor and according to the company and the qualifications of the participants.

The method should not require any quantification and therefore any measurements, so as to remain applicable even when these qualifications and techniques are not available.

III.3. Level 3, Analysis

When the *Screening* and *Observation* levels did not allow bringing the risk to an acceptable value or when a doubt remains, it is necessary to go further in the *Analysis* of its components and in the search for solutions.

This stage requires the assistance of OH practitioners who have the necessary qualification, tools and techniques. These will often be external OH practitioners, intervening in close cooperation with those who conducted the stage 2, *Observation*, (and not in their place), to bring to them the necessary qualification and means.

The method can use more sophisticated terms and concepts. It can require simple measurements with common instruments, measurements however made with explicitly defined objectives of confirmation of the problems, investigation of the causes and optimisation of the solutions.

III.4. Level 4, Expertise

In particularly complex situations, a study at level 4, *Expertise* might be required, with the additional assistance of an expert. Sophisticated or specific measurements will sometimes be necessary to optimise appropriate solutions.

The *Déparis* method presented hereunder intends to fulfil the needs for the *Screening* level. The methods for the *Observation*, *Analysis* and *Expertise* levels were developed and validated with regard to noise (Malchaire et al. 2000), thermal environments of work (Malchaire et al. 1999), lighting (Malchaire et al. 1998), whole-body vibration (Malchaire et al. 1998), hand-arm vibration (Malchaire and Piette 2001) and musculoskeletal constraints (Malchaire and Piette 2002). Additional methods were developed for the following aspects: chemical agents; biological agents; safety (falls, slips ...); fire and explosion hazards; electric safety; machines safety and work on VDU.

This document presents the strategy applied for the management of psychosocial aspects of work.

IV. Level 1: the Screening guide: the Déparis guide

IV.1. Introduction

The tool of participative screening of the risks (**DÉpistage PARTICIPATIF des RISques, Déparis**) is devised to be used by the workers and their management in order to take stock as objectively as possible of the work situation which is theirs daily and which they are the only ones to know intimately. They are thus ideally in the centre of the action of prevention, not to give their opinion or to answer questions, but to discuss the practical details that would make it possible to perform the work under the optimal conditions, for them and for the company.

It is presented in the form of 18 tables, given in appendix 2, approaching 18 aspects of the work situation: 1. Premises and working areas; 2. Work organization; 3. Work accidents; 4. Electricity, fire and explosions; 5. Controls and signals; 6. Work material, tools, machines; 7. Work postures; 8. Efforts and handling operations; 9. Lighting; 10. Noise; 11. Chemical and Biological risks; 12. Thermal environments; 13. Vibration; 14. Autonomy and individual responsibilities; 15. Work content; 16. Time constraints; 17. Relationships between workers and with the hierarchy; 18. Psychosocial environment

The order of these tables was studied so as to correspond as much as possible to the way one logically approaches a work situation, going from the general aspects to the more specific ones, considering the general organization (n° 1 and 2) before the work sites (n° 3), the safety (n° 4) and aspects for work (n° 5 to 9). The environmental factors (n° 10 to 14), often dealt with in first place, were deliberately pushed back. The psycho-organisational factors (n° 15 to 18) were kept in the last position realizing, in a pragmatic way, the persistent hesitation of many industries to deal with these fundamental aspects.

Déparis proposes for each item a short description of the ideal situation and a list of aspects to be discussed. Next to these descriptions, the table includes a space where the coordinator (see below) will note what can be made in practical terms to improve the situation. Within the third frame of each table, the coordinator will note the aspects that require a more thorough study (by an OH practitioner), to give shape to the solutions considered during the discussions (for example, to choose a

particular seat or a more adapted tool, to re-examine the work organization, to re-distribute the responsibilities among the workers in the development for the product...). Lastly, the group leading the study makes an assessment (indicator) of the priority with which the modifications are to be brought. The determination of a numerical score was avoided by choosing an intuitive figurative system of colours and smiles:

- ☺ Green light: satisfactory situation
- 😊 Amber light: average and ordinary situation, to improve if possible
- ☹ Red light: situation unsatisfactory, likely to be dangerous and to improve necessarily.

At the end of the 18 tables, the actions and complementary studies proposed during the discussion are summarized in a table with the determination of «who" does "what" and "when". This table makes it possible to elaborate the action plan at short, medium and long terms.

There is a partial redundancy between various tables: for example work postures are mentioned as aspects to discuss on several occasions. This was avoided as much as possible in order to arriving at rather complementary headings. However, a total separation is neither possible nor desirable, because the work situation constitutes a whole and is lived by the workers as this whole, where the various aspects interfere and reinforced or neutralized each others.

IV.2. Procedure of use of Déparis

1. The employer informs the workers and the management about his objectives and his OH committee to take account of the results of the meetings and the studies.

The process can be profitable only if it is developed in a climate of sincere cooperation. Certain conditions must be filled so that it is the case, namely:

- a clear and unambiguous position of the employer, declaring its objectives of safety and health and committing himself to take account of the results.
- a scrupulous respect of the committees where labour and management discuss the health and safety problems in the company.

The health and safety committee in the company, if it exists, must keep and play fully its role, more specifically here by promoting the follow-up and the harmonious development of the local actions.

2. The work situation is identified, made of a coherent set of workplaces interfering with each others. The number of workers concerned may vary, but should not exceed ten (by team, in the case of shift work), otherwise heterogeneous workplaces would be considered simultaneously.
3. The employer designates a coordinator, with the agreement of the workers. The coordinator will have to organize the meetings, to lead them and bring back the results. He must know the work situation perfectly: it could be a foreman, the head of section or a local OH practitioner when available.

This coordinator is the main actor of the procedure and all parties must accept him unreservedly.

4. The coordinator adapts the tables of the Déparis method to the work situation by modifying terms, eliminating some irrelevant aspects, transforming some others or adding new ones.
5. A working group is formed with key workers of the work situation, designated by their colleagues and their representatives and some technical supervisory staff, designated by the employer.

It is essential also that the choice and the representativeness of the participants be accepted, by the worker as well as by the hierarchy.

In SMEs, it can be a group of 2 or 3 people only. In a larger company, it could be a more significant group including 2 or 3 workers, a foreman, a production engineer, a person from the engineering and design department, another one from the purchase or maintenance department, an OH practitioner... The number of people taking part in the meeting should be about 3 to 7, neither too large – on pain of being too expensive -, nor too small – on pain of being not very representative.

These people must be key-persons of the work situation, knowing particularly well the activities, the physical and social work conditions and accepted by their colleagues. They must not speak in their own name, but be able to express, as much as possible, the opinions and expectations of the group of workers.

When the work situation concerns at the same time men and women, the participation of at least a male and a female representative is essential.

Experience indicates that the group must be local and include workers living the work situation day after day. This is not contradictory with the presence and the participation of representatives of the workers who are likely to bring in complement their more general knowledge of the company and to ensure the coherence between the various interventions of this type in the company.

6. A meeting of the working group is organized in a calm room, close to the workplaces. The meeting must be held close to the workplaces in order to be able to see the workplaces and the operations and to go there, if necessary, to discuss on the spot the possible changes. Experience shows that it is very difficult to hold it while the participants are working and must supervise and intervene on the process. It thus asks that the participants stop working.
7. The coordinator leads the meeting. He clearly explains the procedure and proposes, one after the other, the points to discuss, using the tables in appendix 2. These tables could, for example, be projected by a transparency on a wall or distributed to the participants. The tables are reviewed one by one. The discussion is launched, trying to concentrate on the aspects included under the table, not to give a score, but, to determine:
 - what it is possible to do simply, directly and in practical terms (with the details of realization) to make the situation more flexible, more effective and more pleasant
 - for what factor it is necessary to spend more time to search further for solutions (level 2, Observation).

Although that is difficult and not always reliable, the participants are invited to consider the cost of the solutions they propose and the impact that they can have on the quality of the product and the productivity. They are invited to quickly assess the solutions in term of "no" (0), "little" (€), "moderately" (€€) or "very" (€€€) expensive, taking account of the criteria: direct cost, quality of work and productivity.

At the same time, they are invited to seek who could implement each solution, how and when.

For these two evaluations, the advantage does not lie only in the evaluations of cost or assumption of responsibility, but, more subtly, in the fact of taking these economic and feasibility criteria in account. Thus, the working group learns how to manage its proposals of solutions in a realistic and practical way and these proposals are likely to be more realistic and to become implemented.

During the discussion, the coordinator is brought to manage the fact that items from different tables are dealt with at the same time: the discussion about a machine can approach the aspects of control, signals, tools and material, noise, vibration. To refuse to deal with these aspects in order to stick strictly to the sequence of the tables would be an error. Conversely, it remains necessary to deal with the various aspects in an organized way.

8. After the meeting, the coordinator writes a synthesis. A fair copy of the result is prepared with the tables used and the detailed information arising from the meeting, the list of solutions proposed with the indication of who does what and when and the list of the aspects that need to be studied more in details, with the priorities.
9. Ideally, this synthesis is presented to the participants. A second meeting is often difficult to organize. It appears however particularly rich in confirmations, in additions.... It also demonstrates the educational effect of Déparis, namely that, after the first meeting, some participants looked at their work situation more thoroughly, with different eyes, in search of more permanent control measures. In the absence of such a meeting, a presentation of the results to each participant individually is already enriching.
10. The synthesis is finalized
11. It is presented at the employer and the discussion committee
12. The study is carried on for the unsolved problems. Factor by factor, the methods of level 2, Observation of strategy SOBANE or equivalent methods are used to search further for relevant solutions or to give shape to the proposals made on the level of Déparis.
13. Action plans at short, medium and long terms are decided and implemented. The table summarizing who does what when, as well as the financial implications (0, €, €€, €€€) makes it easier to determine what can be implemented immediately, what must be planned, what must be budgeted for. It also makes it possible to follow the evolution of the actions and to evaluate the results and the progresses.
14. Periodically, the operation is repeated as the improvement of the work situation cannot be done at once and is never final.
 - The first time that a method such as Déparis is used, the majority of the problems raised are relatively specific: deteriorated grounds, machines too noisy, damaged tools, signals badly posted, autonomy too low ... and the solutions for one "problem" hardly have an influence on another one.
 - If the method is used a second time, the problems raised concern more basic aspects, such as the policy of maintenance of the workspaces, the choice of adapted tools, the nature of the signals, the temporal organization...
 - If it is used a third time, they concern the work organization, the collaboration between services, the staff management...

The process of improvement is thus continuous, provided that, between the successive uses, the recommendations were carried out and that the situation did not regress towards the former state.

Periodically and after an appropriate lapse of time function of the circumstances, the operation must be repeated: the general condition of the work situation is re-studied by the same main actors and the action plans are updated.

IV.3. The Déparis guide

1. Premises and working areas	
<p style="text-align: center;">To be discussed</p> <p>Workshops, offices and working areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Of average size and nobody is isolated <p>Circulation paths (for people and vehicles)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Broad enough, well delimited by lines ✦ Not obstructed with objects, boxes, pallets... ✦ Good visibility <p>Accesses to the working areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Easy, direct and of sufficiently broad (> 80 cm) <p>Obstruction appropriate storing and tidiness</p> <p>Storing spaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Sufficient (binders, cupboards...) and easily accessible <p>Technical maintenance and house keeping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Working areas well and regularly maintained, pleasant <p>Waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Sorted and evacuated correctly ✦ Enough containers, well located and appropriate <p>Floor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ In good condition, level, secure, not slipping <p>Social premises</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Showers, toilets, changing-rooms, canteen... ✦ Appropriate size, comfortable and well equipped <p>Emergency exits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Not obstructed, quite visible ✦ Signalled with appropriate pictograms 	<p style="text-align: center;">Who can do what in practice and when?</p>
Aspects to study more in detail	



2. Work organization	
<p style="text-align: center;">To be discussed</p> <p>Work organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Clear and appropriate ✦ Allows to work safely ✦ Work planning appropriate in time and space ✦ Work procedures clear and applied <p>Work circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ The places, tools, materials, stocks, unforeseen events, external requests, time... ✦ Allow applications of the usual work procedures and make possible a work of quality <p>The supply of the workplaces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Stocks neither too large nor too small <p>Independence between the neighbouring workstations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Neither too much, nor too little <p>Interactions and communications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ During work between workers of the various workstations ✦ Easy and free <p>Means of communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Voice, phones, computers... appropriate and pleasant 	<p style="text-align: center;">Who can do what in practice and when?</p>
Aspects to study more in detail	



3. Work accidents

To be discussed	Who can do what in practice and when?
Working clothes and personal protective equipments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Appropriate, available, used, maintained, put away ✦ Dangerous products: masks, safety glasses, gloves ✦ Machines: glasses (against projections, splashes), gloves ✦ Work at height: helmet, safety harness... 	
Falls from height <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Handrails, anchorages, maintenance of the work at height equipment, lifting devices for people Falls on the ground: condition of the floor, tidiness, cleanliness... Falls or projections of objects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Safety of the operations, storing of the tools and the material... 	
Mechanical risks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Shocks, dragging, crushing, cuts, punctures, burns... ✦ From lack or neutralization of barriers, pulley covers; use of syringes, cutters, sources of heat 	
Procedures in case of an accident <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Clear, known and applied Analyses of the work accidents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Systematic, complete, used First care first-aid room, first-aid kits, first-aid workers... well located and appropriate	
Aspects to study more in detail	



4. Electricity, fire and explosions

To be discussed	Who can do what in practice and when?
<p style="text-align: center;">Electricity</p> The general wiring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Circuit breakers, fuses, grounds, signposting, protection The material wire, cables, extensions, earth... The equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Connections, emergency stop, earth, maintenance, insulation, batteries. 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Fire and explosion</p> Inflammable or explosive materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Quantity, storage, ventilation, supply... Sources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Flame, spark or sources of heat (static electricity...), signposting Fire fighting devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Automatic fire detection and extinction, fire extinguishers, hose reels, hydrants..., signposting Compartmentalisation of the areas, stairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Technical shafts, fire doors (condition, obstruction), filling in of the holes (cables, pipes...)... The internal intervention team: trained, available Instructions in case of fire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Evacuation plans, fire alarms, emergency exit and gangways, meeting point, tests of evacuation... Signposting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Storage sections, fire fighting devices, emergency exits and escape lighting, plans by floor... 	
Aspects to study more in detail	



5. Controls and signals

To be discussed

Work orders: clear forms, lists...

Signals (screens, lamps...) and **controls** buttons, levers, pedals...

- ✦ In good condition

Localization

- ✦ Near and facing the worker, neither too high, nor too low
- ✦ Well located on the control board (number and colours of the buttons, lamps...)
- ✦ Emergency stop system (buttons, cables...) available and easily accessible

Characteristics

- ✦ In accordance with the stereotypes: needle moving from left to right, green = work...red = stop, direction of the controls...
- ✦ Level of loud alarms or appropriate light intensity
- ✦ Size, form and dimensions (buttons, indicators...)

Force

- ✦ No excessive pressure with the finger or the foot...

Who can do what in practice and when?

Aspects to study more in detail



6. Work material, tools, machines

To be discussed

The material, tools and machines

- ✦ Hammers, pliers... fixed, portable, or lifting machines...
- ✦ Inventory available

Appropriate for each operation

- ✦ Isolated in a safety area (for dangerous machines)

Maintenance

- ✦ In good condition
- ✦ Regular maintenance, thorough annual checking
- ✦ Put away in case of problems (damaged cable, cracks, tears, general wear...)
- ✦ Cleaned up and put away according to the needs, in places easily accessible around the workstations

Dimensions and forms

- ✦ Easy to grab safely
- ✦ Easy to use without tiredness of the hands or arms
- ✦ Right or curved handles, not too long or too short, not too thick or too thin, not too rough or too smooth

Adapted to the worker and safe

- ✦ No parts that could wound
- ✦ Not too heavy; no vibration
- ✦ Adapted to the left-handers

Training

- ✦ On the safest and most efficient use of the material and machines

Who can do what in practice and when?

Aspects to study more in detail



7. Work postures

To be discussed

The repetition of the same gestures not continuously

Work postures: comfortable

- ✦ Straight back: no flexion nor torsion of the back
- ✦ Straight head: no flexion, extension nor rotation
- ✦ Shoulders relaxed: not raised
- ✦ Arms close to the body; not outspread nor raised
- ✦ Hands in a normal position: not bent
- ✦ Feet on the ground or on a rest-foot
- ✦ No work kneeled down or in crouching position
 - If not, knee support, cushion... available
- ✦ No repeated or uninterrupted unfavourable positions

Work heights (tables, desks, shelves, machine-tools...)

- ✦ Make possible this ideal work posture

Seated or seated/standing posture

- ✦ Preferred
- ✦ Appropriate seats, stable and comfortable
- ✦ Support of the forearms on the desk or armrests adjustable in height
- ✦ No obstruction for the legs under the desk

If upright work posture

- ✦ No obstruction in the movements
- ✦ Comfortable support of the thighs and/or the arms on support at appropriate height

Help means

- ✦ Stepladder... available for working at height.
- ✦ Stable, solid, easy to use safely (falls)

Who can do what in practice and when?

Aspects to study more in detail



8. Efforts and handling operations

To be discussed

Gestures and efforts

- ✦ Not abrupt nor too strong, without fast or repeated movements

Hand efforts

- ✦ Moderated, without wrist torsions
- ✦ No knocking with the heel of the hand

Loads

- **Light and balanced** (liquids, size of the bags...)
- **Comfortable to grab:** good handles, no cutting edges, not slipping, not too hot or too cold...
- **At good height** grabbed and dropped at the level of the waist
- **No torsions or bending of the trunk**
- **Carried only on short distances**

Mechanical assistance devices appropriate

- ✦ Hoists, trucks (pushed rather than pulled)... for heavy or unstable loads
- ✦ Belts, conveyor belts... for frequent transport
- ✦ High standard, well located, easy and rapid to use

Training on how to handle loads, adapted to the work situation

Tiredness at the end of the day acceptable

Who can do what in practice and when?

Aspects to study more in detail



9. Lighting

To be discussed

General lighting of the premises and the work itself

- ✦ Neither too much nor too little: sufficient to see the details of work, but not too large

Daylight and view outside acceptable through clean windows

No shade on the work

No reflections nor glares

- ✦ On the tables, metal or glass surfaces, plastic sheets, windows, screens...
- ✦ Especially by the sun: windows with curtains, blinds or sun screen
- ✦ No direct sight of the light sources

Lighting uniformity of the working areas and gangways (staircases...)

Lamps cleaned regularly

- ✦ Defective lamps or tubes are quickly replaced

Work on VDU

- ✦ The worker does not stand facing or turning the back at a window or at a significant source of light

Who can do what in practice and when?

Aspects to study more in detail



10. Noise

To be discussed

In the workshops

- ✦ The ease to speak at a distance of 1 meter
- ✦ Personal protective equipments: Ear plugs, ear muffs... available and used when necessary

In the offices

- ✦ No discomfort, lapse of concentration
- ✦ Traffic, telephones, air conditioning, photocopiers, conversations...

Location of the workstations

- ✦ As far as possible from the noise sources

Means of communication: take the ambient noise into account

Noisy machines or installations: well maintained, equipped with hood

Holes, openings: In the walls between the premises, slots around doors

Who can do what in practice and when?

Aspects to study more in detail



11. Chemical and Biological risks

To be discussed

Chemical and biological risks

- ✦ Inventory of the products available and up to date
- ✦ Documentation on the risks available

Training on the procedures and the risks

Procedures

- ✦ Of use: clear and respected (mixtures...)
- ✦ In case of incident (spill, splash...): respected

Labelling: appropriate and well labelled containers

Stocks (toxic, corrosive, flammable, biological... products)

- ✦ stored in adapted, isolated and labelled spaces

Dusts, chips, oils, vapour...evacuated (ventilation, aspiration...) without setting in suspension or being dispersed

Chemical and biological waste

- ✦ Evacuated in a controlled way according to a known procedure
- ✦ In appropriate containers (dustbins)

Signposting: appropriate and respected: no smoking, risk areas...

Collective protections

- ✦ Showers, wash-hand basins, ocular showers... well located and in good condition

Personal protective equipments

- ✦ Gloves, masks, glasses, clothing...
- ✦ Appropriate, available and used

Sensitive personnel: women, pregnant or nursing women, young workers...

- ✦ Health monitoring

Vaccinations: in order

Hygiene

- ✦ Nobody eats on the workplace
- ✦ No fungi nor moulds

Air Renewal: sufficient; air fresh, pleasant to breathe, without odours

Smokers: smoking zones well located and ventilated

Who can do what in practice and when?

Aspects to study more in detail



12. Thermal environments

To be discussed

Temperature: neither too warm nor too cold, no significant variations

Humidity : not too dry nor too humid

No draughts: by the windows and the doors

Cold, heat and humidity sources: removed: water, vapour, machines, sun...

Clothing: comfortable: overalls, laboratory apron...

Protective clothing: quality, appropriate and comfortable

- ✦ If necessary (insulating, water-proof, anti-radiations...)

Drinks: available in case of conditions too hot or too cold

Who can do what in practice and when?

Aspects to study more in detail



13. Vibration

To be discussed

The vehicles (lifting trucks...)

- ✦ Appropriate for the work to be performed
- ✦ Floor, circulation paths, tires, suspensions, seats are in good condition

Vibrating machines (grinders, drills...)

- ✦ Appropriate for the work to be performed
- ✦ Not too heavy and without vibration
- ✦ In good condition and regularly maintained

Tools, bits, discs...: adequate and in good condition

Training

- ✦ Vehicles, machines and tools well used
- ✦ Good work postures, forces, work with 1 or 2 hands....

Who can do what in practice and when?

Aspects to study more in detail



14. Autonomy and personal responsibilities

To be discussed

Orders and expectations: no contradictions

Range of initiative

- ✦ Everyone can adapt the way he works without disturbing the team work

Autonomy

- ✦ Everyone can leave his workstation and take a short break (toilets, drinks) without disturbing the production

Freedom of contact

- ✦ Everyone takes himself the contacts considered as necessary with peripheral (maintenance, purchase, quality...) or external departments

Degree of attention: average according to

- ✦ The seriousness of the actions to be taken
- ✦ The unpredictable nature of the events

Decisions

- ✦ Limited number of possible choices
- ✦ Information available
- ✦ Decisions not too difficult to take
- ✦ Required speed of reaction normal

Responsibilities

- ✦ Neither too many nor too few
- ✦ Everyone knows his own responsibilities and appreciate them

Errors: Everyone can correct his errors by himself

Who can do what in practice and when?

Aspects to study more in detail



15. Work content

To be discussed

Work interest: interesting and diversified

- ✦ Preparation tasks, quality control, final improvement, maintenance...

Qualifications

- ✦ Everyone's work corresponds to his function and his professional capacities
- ✦ It makes it possible to use and develop these capacities

Information and training

- ✦ Of everyone (young, temporary and older workers)
- ✦ Specific to everyone's work
- ✦ About the procedures, the risks and the prevention methods
- ✦ When taking on the job and periodically thereafter

Emotional load: not too heavy (dramatic errors, environment (hospital)...))

Who can do what in practice and when?

Aspects to study more in detail



16. Time constraints

To be discussed

Work schedules and work program

- ✦ Received sufficiently in advance
- ✦ Allow everyone to organize his working day as he wants
- ✦ Flexible within given margins

Work rate: not excessive

- ✦ Lost production can be made up rapidly

Group autonomy: the group organizes himself concerning

- ✦ The work schedules and holidays
- ✦ The work distribution, breaks, rotations
- ✦ The production delays
- ✦ The overtime
- ✦ The peak and drop periods of work (short-time working)
- ✦ Additional and last minute work

Work interruptions: few unexpected events

Breaks : frequent and short

- ✦ Organized taking into consideration the workload, the postures hardness, the repetitive constraints, and the mental fatigue.

Who can do what in practice and when?

Aspects to study more in detail



17. Work relationships between workers and with the hierarchy

To be discussed	Who can do what in practice and when?
<p>Communications during work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Always possible, on matter related or unrelated to the work ✦ The work and spaces organization allows to see each other <p>Allocation of work: impartial within the group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Everyone knows exactly his work and his role <p>Mutual assistance between workers for work problems</p> <p>Consultation about the work : regular</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Between the workers, the departments and the hierarchy ✦ To define, plan and allocate the work ✦ To solve the problems <p>The hierarchy: known, appreciated and respected</p> <p>Relations with the hierarchy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Harmony, confidence, cooperation and good social climate ✦ No strained relations, no conflicts of interest... ✦ Support in case of work or personal difficulties ✦ Delegations... <p>Workers suggestions and remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Encouraged, heard and taken into account ✦ The problems are reported <p>Evaluations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Everyone knows how his work is evaluated ✦ When and how he is monitored ✦ Evaluation criteria and consequences are known ✦ Everyone is informed about his evaluation results ✦ Everyone's work is correctly appreciated 	
<p>Aspects to study more in detail</p>	



18. Psychosocial environment

To be discussed	Who can do what in practice and when?
<p>Promotions: possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ According to clear and unbiased criteria known and approved by all ✦ On the basis of the evaluations and according to the performances <p>Discriminations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ None according to age, sex, origins or personal characteristics ✦ Neither to be hired nor to be promoted <p>Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Stable ✦ Confidence in the company integrity and future ✦ Substitutions in case of diseases and the use of temporary workers are well managed <p>Salary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Correspond to the required capacities and work performed <p>Company council and safety comities: satisfactory</p> <p>Psychosocial problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Dissatisfaction, stress, harassment, personal problems... ✦ Support facilities and procedures exist and are used ✦ Information is given ✦ Preventive actions are carried on <p>Living conditions in the company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ Allow personal and professional development ✦ Compatible with private life (family...) ✦ All the workers are on the whole satisfied 	
<p>Aspects to study more in detail</p>	



IV.4. Synthesis

Report here the general appreciations of the headings, by colouring the box in green 😊 yellow 😐 or red 😞

Work situation			
1. Premises and working areas	😊	😐	😞
2. Work organization	😊	😐	😞
3. Work accidents	😊	😐	😞
4. Electricity, fire and explosions	😊	😐	😞
5. Controls and signals	😊	😐	😞
6. Work material, tools, machines	😊	😐	😞
7. Work postures	😊	😐	😞
8. Efforts and handling operations	😊	😐	😞
9. Lighting	😊	😐	😞
10. Noise	😊	😐	😞
11. Chemical and Biological risks	😊	😐	😞
12. Thermal environments	😊	😐	😞
13. Vibration	😊	😐	😞
14. Autonomy and individual responsibilities	😊	😐	😞
15. Work content	😊	😐	😞
16. Time constraints	😊	😐	😞
17. Relationships between workers and with the hierarchy	😊	😐	😞
18. Psychosocial environment	😊	😐	😞

Inventory of the proposed improvement measures and of the complementary studies to realize

N°	Who?	Does what and how?	Cost	When?	
				Projected	Realized

V. Level 2: Guide SOBANE Observation: Psychosocial aspects:

V.1. Introduction

V.1.1 Objectives

- To study the situation in general and *in the field*, concerning the psychosocial aspects of work.
- To determine immediate technical or organizational measures which can be taken to improve the working situation?

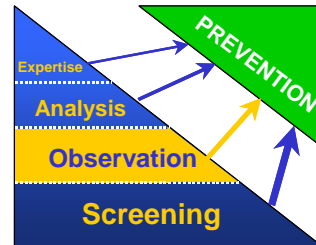
V.1.2 Who?

- Workers and their local management.
- People from the company (hierarchy, engineering and maintenance department, local OH practitioners) knowing perfectly the work situation.

V.1.3 How?

The procedure is similar to the one used for level 1, Screening, using the *Déparis* guide and the participants should be the same ones:

1. Definition of the small group of workplaces forming a "work situation".
2. Designation of a **coordinator**.
3. Preparation of the coordinator: he reads the Observation method in detail, train himself to use it and adapt the tool to the work situation.
4. Setting up of a working group with key workers and members of the supervisory technical staff. This group includes at least one man and one woman in case of a mixed group of workers.
5. Meeting of the working group in a quiet room close to the workplaces (during 2 hours on average).
6. Clear explanation by the coordinator of the goals and the procedure of the meeting.
7. Discussion on each item of the method while concentrating on:
 - What can be made **in practical terms** to improve the work situation, by whom and when.
 - For what the **assistance** of an OH practitioner will be necessary at the **Analysis** level.



The discussion relates to the work situation and takes into account the characteristics of the workers and, in particular, their gender, their age (in particular the young or older workers), their knowledge of the local language....

8. After the meeting, preparation of the synthesis of the results by the coordinator, using:
 - The sheets used to collect the detailed information during the meeting.
 - The list of solutions under consideration with proposals on **who** does **what** and **when**.
 - The list of the points to study more in detail on level 3, **Analysis**, with the priorities.
9. The results are submitted to the participants, the direction and the company prevention committee for revision, additions and decisions.
10. Pursuit of the study for the unsolved problems using the level 3, Analysis methods.

*When it is not possible to organize a meeting of 3 to 6 people, the coordinator carries the **Observation** alone or with one or two people and possibly at the workplaces themselves. This non-ideal solution remains useful since it will in any case contribute to the development of the idea of prevention and will prepare the possible recourse to an external OH practitioner.*

V.2. Points to be discussed

The *Observation* guide described hereafter approaches the following aspects:

1. Autonomy and individual responsibilities.
 - Degree of initiative, autonomy
 - Freedom of contact
 - Responsibilities
 - Errors
2. Work contents

- Role ambiguity
 - Role conflicts
 - Diversification and work interest
 - Level of attention
 - Decisions.
 - Abilities
 - Training
3. Time constraints
- Schedules and work durations
 - Work pace
 - Delays and interruptions
 - Group autonomy
 - Work breaks
4. Relationships within the personnel and with the hierarchy
- Relations between workers
 - Relations with the internal services
 - Leadership - hierarchy
 - Relations with the hierarchy
 - Personal performance evaluation meeting/interview
 - Professional evaluation
5. Psychosocial environment
- Employment
 - Future prospects
 - Wages
 - Harassment and discriminations
 - Social dialog
 - Social climate

All these aspects are not perhaps applicable to the work situation to *Observe*.

Thus, the first task of the coordinator will consist in choosing those that relate to the work situation.

- This must be made on the basis of the result of the discussions during the Déparis meeting. Indeed the items listed here above correspond to the last 5 tables of the Déparis guide. One will retain the aspects insufficiently approached at the Déparis level or those for which preventive measures could not be found or remain insufficient to reach an acceptable work situation.
- Will be eliminated the aspects which, without any doubt, do not have any relationship with the work situation: for examples, delays and interruptions if work is regular, overtime if it is never the case, wages if those are decided elsewhere (in the education sector for instance)....

It is advised to quickly consider carefully each aspect before selecting it or not, and not to base the choice only on the title of the section.

V.3. Terminology

V.3.1 Stress

The stress is a state perceived negatively by a group of workers, which is accompanied by complaints or dysfunctions at the physical, psychic and/or social levels and which is the consequence of the fact that the workers are unable to fulfil the requirements and expectations that are imposed to them by their work situation.

V.3.2 Mental workload

According to ISO 10075-2, the mental workload is function of:

- The requirements of the task: time constraint, complexity, speed, meticulousness, attention requested...
- The treatment capacities of the person charged to carry out this task.

V.3.3 Violence at work

Any situation where a worker or another person is persecuted threatened or attacked psychologically or physically at work.

V.3.4 Moral harassment at work

The abusive and repeated conduct of any origin, external or internal, in the company or the institution, which by behaviours, words, intimidations, acts, gestures or writings, appears to have as object or effect to attack the personality, the dignity or

the physical or psychological integrity of a worker during the execution of his work, to put in danger his employment or to create an environment intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.

V.3.5 Sexual harassment at work

Any form of verbal, nonverbal or body behaviour of sexual nature, by someone who knows or should know that it affects the dignity of a woman or a man at the workplace.

V.3.6 Discrimination

Any difference of treatment in particular based on gender, age, an alleged race, colour, ascent, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religious or philosophical beliefs, health status, handicap... without any objective and reasonable justification.

V.4. Guide for the Observation discussion

A Autonomy and individual responsibilities

A.1. The degree of initiative, autonomy

- Everyone is informed of his daily or weekly workload and can organize his work as he wants.
- Everyone can plan his work and decide in which order and when it will be carried out.
- Everyone can take initiatives and adapt his work method without disturbing the team work.
- The work procedures are not too rigid. Everyone can choose his own work rhythm without disturbing the team work, instead of having to follow the rhythm imposed by the machine or the team.
- Everyone can leave his workstation and take a short break (toilets, drinks) without disturbing the work.
- Each worker can reasonably take his days off when he wishes it.
- The localization of the people in the operating areas allows them a minimum of private life (to telephone...).
- The person in charge is involved in the choice of his collaborators (the decision is not taken solely by the direction).

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

A.2. The freedom of contact

- Everyone knows:
 - ◊ the problems that he can solve alone;
 - ◊ the assistance he/she must seek (or "benefit") to solve the other problems.
- Everyone takes himself the contacts he consider necessary with the peripheral services.
 - ✓ for the execution of their work;
 - ✓ in the event of problem.
- ◊ the entities to be contacted are well identified;
- ◊ their number is limited;
- ◊ they can answer quickly.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

A.3. Responsibilities

- The responsibilities are not centralized but are distributed in a clear and no ambiguous way between several people according to their competence.
- All the workers know and appreciate their responsibilities and all find them neither too light, nor too oppressive:
 - ◊ responsibilities with respect to other workers;
 - ◊ responsibilities with respect to customers;
 - ◊ responsibilities with respect to the material and for the equipment;
 - ◊ responsibilities with respect to the end products.
- The skills of each worker and the work organization enable him to ensure his responsibilities.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

A.4. Errors

- The consequences of the errors on the equipment, the production, the people... are not too important.
- The worker corrects himself his possible errors.
- In the case of an error, an objective analysis is carried out without searching for culprit.

- Control mechanisms are operating to locate the errors as soon as possible.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

B Work content

B.1. Role ambiguity

- Each worker knows exactly:
 - ✦ the nature of his work: what results are expected, the procedures and the material to use, the assigned time, the necessary documents;
 - ✦ his role in the work procedures;
 - ✦ his contribution to the completion of the goals;
 - ✦ the possible collaborators and the people resources, their availability, their own role;
 - ✦ the technical or procedural changes possibly brought to his work;
 - ✦ his responsibilities and the consequences of good or bad work performances (for himself, the product or the work group).
- Each worker has all the elements to perform his work correctly:
 - ✦ information are intelligible, complete and available at the right time;
 - ✦ the material is complete, functional and available when needed.
- There are few discrepancies in quantity and quality between the work as requested and the as performed.
- The workers and the hierarchy act jointly:
 - ✦ to define the tasks and the way of carrying them out (sequence, work rhythm...);
 - ✦ to equitably distribute the work in the group and according to the skills and competences of everyone;
 - ✦ to solve the problems encountered.
- The worker knows how to react in case of an emergency or an unforeseen event.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

B.2. Role conflicts

- Nobody must face contradictory orders or expectations:
 - ✦ the person in charge from the hierarchy is known.
 - ✦ work requirements (production, safety, health) are compatible.
 - ✦ the techniques and organizational resources provided to complete the tasks make it possible to carry them out while respecting these requirements.
- No competition is organized, exists, or is tolerated between the members of a work situation.
 - ✦ On the other hand, a healthy emulation between colleagues is stimulated.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

B.3. The diversification and interest of the work

- The work includes preparatory tasks as well as tasks of execution and support.
 - ✦ Preparatory tasks:
 - ✓ to analyze the situation and the task to be carried out;
 - ✓ to plan the tasks and the activities (intellectual preparation);
 - ✓ to seek the necessary material;
 - ✓ to check its operating condition.
 - ✦ Execution tasks.
 - ✦ Assistance:
 - ✓ preventive maintenance of the material (machines, tools, equipment...);
 - ✓ adjustment of the material;
 - ✓ repairing;
 - ✓ quality control;
 - ✓ data encoding;
 - ✓ transmission of information;
 - ✓ training and promoting of new workers.
- The activity leaves room for creativity (neither too repetitive, nor too monotonous).
- If the activity is repetitive, the workers regularly change tasks (rotation) in the same work group and context.

- The work brings an important value added to the end product.
- It is conceived so that the worker finds in it meaning, stimulation and fulfilment.
- Work is not emotionally exhausting due to:
 - ✦ the possible serious consequences of errors;
 - ✦ the nature of the tasks and the relations to the patients (hospital, homes...);
 - ✦ the contact with and the support to others (assistance jobs).

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

B. 4. The level of attention

- Work requires average attention and concentration, neither permanent nor too occasional, as a function of:
 - ✦ the seriousness of the actions to be taken;
 - ✦ the unforeseeable character of the events.
- In order to be carried out in safety and quality, the work requires neither too much nor too little of:
 - ✦ attention and judgment, and on a limited number of elements at the same time;
 - ✦ precision;
 - ✦ concentration especially when the disturbing interferences are numerous.
- Neither too much nor too few information to retain at the same time and for one long period (short-term memory).
- The worker can isolate himself to perform tasks requiring concentration.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

B. 5. Decisions

- The worker must take a certain number of decisions, neither too low nor too high.
 - ✦ the number of possible decision choices is limited.
 - ✦ the information needed is not too large and is available.
 - ✦ these decisions are easy to take.
 - ✦ the reaction speed needed is normal.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

B. 6. Qualifications

- workers were assigned to certain tasks on the basis of a description of function and taking account of their skills.
- The tasks correspond indeed to the function and competences of the workers.
- Work makes it possible for everyone to use and develop his skills and knowledge.
- All the workers take advantage of possibilities of personal and professional development.
- The older workers have the opportunity to transmit their professional skills and experiences to younger workers.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

B. 7. Training

- The training period was reasonable:
 - ✦ nor too short: it included the training to the preparatory or assistance tasks that were added;
 - ✦ nor too long: the work content is clearly delimited.
- During their training when hired:
 - ✦ the workers had the time and the possibilities to improve their skills and abilities;
 - ✦ they were sponsored by experienced people.
- All workers (young, older, temporary, subcontractors...) systematically receive information and training:
 - ✓ when they were first hired;
 - ✓ at the time of any change of function;
 - ✓ periodically (updating).
 - ✦ on the rules inside the company (house rules);
 - ✦ on the technical aspects specific to their job;
 - ✦ on the health and safety aspects, the risks and the prevention measures.
- The contents and the form of the training are adequate and satisfactory regarding:
 - ✦ the organizational aspects;
 - ✦ the tasks to be performed;

- ✦ the safety and health aspects.
- The modifications of the work processes are progressive: neither too frequent nor too rapid so that the workers can adapt.
- The company encourages the workers to go on a refresher course and improve professionally. It plans these training courses.
- Refresher and improvement courses can lead to evolutions of function and wages.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

C Time constraints

C.1. Schedules and work period

- Working hours are satisfactory with regard to:
 - ✦ duration per day;
 - ✦ duration per week;
 - ✦ hours of the start and end of work;
 - ✦ number of consecutive days off per week;
 - ✦ duration of uninterrupted work;
 - ✦ breaks during the day work.
- Schedules are flexible as far as possible and in determined margins, with regard to:
 - ✦ hours of beginning and end of work;
 - ✦ number of hours per day;
 - ✦ number of hours per week.
- Schedules are compatible with a satisfactory private life (family...).
- Rules concerning the work schedules are known, appreciated and respected by all.
- There is the least possible of cut schedule and night-work.
- Employees seldom work overtime.
 - ✦ only when that is absolutely inevitable.
 - ✦ according to a schedule imparted at least a week in advance.
 - ✦ overtime hours are recorded.
 - ✦ the workers can recover them freely or are paid consequently.
 - ✦ replacement of absent workers is well organized (support team, temporary workers...).
- If shift work is organized:
 - ✦ there is the least possible of work during the weekend.
 - ✦ the shifts start preferably at 7, 15 and 23:00.
 - ✦ the rotation system is: morning - afternoon - night - rest.
 - ✦ rotation is such as the number of consecutive nights to work is limited (ideally no more than 3).
 - ✦ the schedule is known 4 to 8 weeks in advance.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

C.2. The work pace

- The number of workers within the work situation is suitable and sufficient.
- Everyone knows his schedules and his work program sufficiently in advance.
- Speed of execution is neither too high, nor too low.
- Time assigned to the tasks makes it possible to realize in safety and quality the additional tasks of planning and maintenance.
- In the event of extra work, the worker can be helped by a qualified colleague.
- In the event of under load of work, the worker is appointed to long-term tasks (restoration, tidying, sorting, checking of material, maintenance...) that do not stop from performing the main task.
- Workers can carry out the routine and repetitive tasks in automatic mode without thinking constantly to his work.
- Resources (in personnel, material and stock) allow compliance to the fluctuations of the workload (sales, care...).

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

C. 3. Backlogs and interruptions

- The backlogs are easy to make up for.
- Work is seldom interrupted by circumstances on which the worker has no influence:
 - ✧ Operation incidents due to:
 - ✓ unexpected modifications in the production process;
 - ✓ breakdowns of machines or problems of hardware or software;
 - ✓ non-existent, missing or late information;
 - ✓ bad preparation of the work upstream;
 - ✓ bad coordination between workers;
 - ✓ stock shortages of material;
 - ✓ problems of synchronization (the material arrives too early or too late).
 - ✧ Telephone calls or visits of colleagues or customers;
 - ✧ Email.
- The problems (breakdowns, stock...) are generally solved quickly.
- The workers take themselves the contacts to solve them.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

C. 4. The group autonomy

- Each group organizes itself with regard to:
 - ✧ shifts, rotations;
 - ✧ schedules and vacation;
 - ✧ overtime and their recovery;
 - ✧ backlogs of work or production;
 - ✧ slack or peak periods of work (short-time working...).

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

C. 5. Breaks

- Each worker and/or the group as a whole can decide to take frequent and short breaks of recovery (rather than a long break) when the work circumstances are painful:
 - ✧ work with noise, heat or cold;
 - ✧ physically heavy work;
 - ✧ mentally tiring work;
 - ✧ awkward work posture;
 - ✧ repetitive and speedy work with an imposed rate.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

D Employment relationships within the personnel and with the hierarchy

D. 1. Relationships between the workers

- The composition of the work teams does not vary too often.
- The work group gets along well, everyone feels that he belongs to the group and nobody is socially isolated (no offensive remarks, excessive teasing, gossiping or rumours, social insulation or exclusion).
- A climate of trust and cooperation exists:
 - ✧ no mistrust, irritation, hostility;
 - ✧ no argument or difference in opinion;
 - ✧ no competitive spirit.
- The work conditions make it possible for the workers to effectively speak freely, as well for their job as about other subjects:
 - ✧ the noise level is not too high;
 - ✧ visual contact is always possible;
 - ✧ nobody works apart from the others.
 - ✧ breaks and meal can be taken jointly.
- The various activities (in particular unpleasant or little satisfying tasks) are equitably distributed between the various workers.

- Workers assist each other:
 - ✦ they can freely call help from one or more colleagues in the event of overload or work problem;
 - ✦ they exchange advices, suggestions, experiences and train each other;
 - ✦ they speak about their work or personal problems without losing face or being ridiculed;
 - ✦ they are supported morally in the event of personal (death...) or related to work difficulties (accident, disease, evaluation...);
 - ✦ they can be replaced by a colleague in case of a transient problem.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

D. 2. Relations between internal services

- Relations between services are good (techniques, commercial...):
 - ✦ the objectives of the various services are compatible (e.g.: quality vs. speed...);
 - ✦ work pace and modes of organization are compatible;
 - ✦ conciliation meetings are organized to analyze the problems discreetly and to find solutions;
 - ✦ the various services help each other in the event of difficulties or backlogs;
 - ✦ maintenance or help services are able to solve the technical problems quickly.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

D. 3. The type of leadership - the hierarchy

- People at the various hierarchical positions are known by all the workers.
- They do not change constantly.
- They have the professional and social competences needed to exert these responsibilities.
- They show consideration for the workers.
- They collaborate between them and no conflict flashes back on the workers.
- They seek the dialog in an effective way (participative management).
- Their authority is recognized and appreciated by all.
- Workers recognize the integrity and the probity of their hierarchical superiors.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

D. 4. Relations with the hierarchy

- The work orders are clear.
- The person in charge gives the necessary information sufficiently in time and suggests how to complete the tasks.
- Workers take part in the decision making process concerning:
 - ✦ the work organization;
 - ✦ the daily life in the company.
- Team meetings are held regularly according to a planning. They are devoted:
 - ✦ to take stock of the work carried out and the efforts accomplished;
 - ✦ to redefine the roles, the responsibilities and the tasks of everyone in order to avoid role ambiguities and conflicts;
 - ✦ to plan and organize work;
 - ✦ to give information on the changes and to discuss them;
 - ✦ to analyze all the incidents of production or organization, to seek the causes and the remedies of these;
 - ✦ to analyze all the dissatisfactions, the differences in opinion and the role conflicts or interpersonal conflicts and to seek the remedies.
- Workers can make suggestions and criticisms, even towards their superiors without fear of reprisals.
- The person in charge takes sufficiently account of these opinions and remarks.
- The person in charge is accessible, available and approachable, when the workers need assistance.
- He/she seeks to solve the conflicts (and not to occult/hide them) by open and constructive discussions.
- He/she delegates his/her responsibilities when necessary.
- The persons in charge treat the workers without discrimination, as partners in the carrying out of the work:
 - ✦ they are not too interventionists;
 - ✦ the workers are not left too much to themselves.

- Each worker quickly receives a feedback (positive or negative) on his work:
 - ✦ this feedback relates to the quantity and the quality of work;
 - ✦ it is not presented nor felt like a control and helps each worker to improve his mastery of work;
 - ✦ the usefulness of his work and his contribution to the company are regularly acknowledged.
- Each worker sees his work explicitly and sufficiently appreciated.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

D. 5. Performance evaluation interview

- The meeting:
 - ✦ consists of a discussion (and not justifications);
 - ✦ makes it possible to the two interlocutors to emit criticisms;
 - ✦ leads to the research of the best operating system.
- The meeting allows:
 - ✦ to redefine expectations and objectives;
 - ✦ to consider with the worker his possibilities of career;
 - ✦ to increase the feeling of control of the work situation.
- The company provides the workers with tools enabling them to identify their weak and strong points and, their professional interests and objectives.
- The supervisory staff was trained to lead these performance evaluation talks.
- A report of the talk is prepared and signed by the 2 parts.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

D. 6. Professional evaluation

- Everyone knows when and how his work is evaluated.
- The evaluation is carried out by the nearest supervisory staff.
- Everyone knows and understands the evaluation procedure.
 - ✦ the evaluation criteria are clear, objective and are known by the workers.
 - ✦ the evaluation is not a continuous process but takes place periodically according to a known planning.
 - ✦ the evaluation does not comprise monitoring visual or by machine or computer.
- The supervisory staff was trained to lead these evaluation meeting.
- Everyone is informed of the results of his evaluation.
- Everyone knows the consequences of these evaluations concerning his salary, his employment, his promotions....

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

E Psychosocial environment

E. 1. Employment

- Recruitment criteria are clear, objective and are well adapted to the function and the tasks to be performed:
 - ✦ the qualification required is adequate (neither too weak, nor too important);
 - ✦ the track records required are relevant (neither too weak, nor too important).
- During recruitment, the workers are clearly and adequately informed about:
 - ✦ the mission, the goals and the shared values;
 - ✦ the organization of the company;
 - ✦ work contents;
 - ✦ working times;
 - ✦ wages, the gratifications and the extralegal advantages;
 - ✦ opportunities for promotions.
- Requests for change (between services or sites) by the workers are discussed.
- The company privileges permanent contracts.
- Few workers have fixed-term or short duration contracts.
- Vacant posts are quickly filled.
- Turnover remains weak and is not justified by the work situation.

- Job stability is guaranteed for at least 5 years:
 - ✦ no technological threat (automation, new machine).
 - ✦ no threat of reorganization.
 - ✦ no threat of delocalization.
 - ✦ no threat of bankruptcy.
- Workers are clearly and quickly informed:
 - ✦ collectively about the future of the company and/or their work situation;
 - ✦ personally about their own future.
- In the event of instability, the workers have the possibility of preparing themselves for another possible employment (outplacement or professional reclassification).
- The policy of resorting to subcontracting and temporary work is appreciated by all.
- There is no economic unemployment.
- In the event of partial economic unemployment:
 - ✦ unemployment is distributed in an objective way on all the workers;
 - ✦ work of the partially unemployed are not carried out by subcontractors or temporary workers.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

E. 2. Future prospects

- jobs are clearly classified and everyone knows the possibilities and the conditions of promotion.
- opportunities for promotion are neither insufficient nor excessive.
- promotion criteria are clear and objective:
 - ✦ they are known by the personnel;
 - ✦ they take account of the professional and social capacities;
 - ✦ they are respected by the company.
- Everyone has the possibility of orienting his career while following a training course or an additional training in connection with his current or future job.
- calls for candidates for vacant posts are communicated clearly and in priority to the personnel in place.
- The company supports internal promotion to occupy the positions of the first hierarchical level.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

E. 3. Wages

- Wages are competitive compared the other companies of the same sector or in the same geographical area.
- The workers know the objective bases on which the wages and gratifications are granted.
- These bases are respected in practice.
- Overtime, night-work, extraordinary services and travelling expenses are settled quickly.
- Wages take into account the qualification, the aptitudes and the experience of each worker.
- No system of premium exists for taking risks.
- Remuneration takes account of the painfulness of work.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

E. 4. Harassment and discriminations

- Neither case of sexual harassment, nor ambiguous situation of undesired intimacy is tolerated or exists.
- No discrimination exists explicitly and implicitly:
 - ✦ according to age, sex, origins, language, personal characteristics, disease...;
 - ✦ at the time of recruitment, during work, during the evaluations, for the wages and promotions.
- There is no misunderstanding or conflict of interest between workers of different statutes (temporary/fixed-term/permanent contract)
- The company regularly provides information and carries out preventive actions against stress, moral harassment, sexual harassment, discriminations.
- No tension exists between various groups (age, sex, origin, language, statutes...) in the company.

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

E. 5. The social dialog

- The company is committed to prevent the health-safety risks and problems of and not only to comply with the law.
- The management shows his commitment for health, safety and wellbeing with work.
- Relations between direction and trade unions are good and constructive.
- Workers are well informed of what occurs in the company.
- Trade unions are recognized by the direction and the workers and fulfil their role of control and support:
 - ✦ they have the means (local, time, posting...);
 - ✦ they tackle the problems in time;
 - ✦ they are well trained;
 - ✦ they represent all the workers (including subcontractors, temporary...).
- Consultation bodies address real problems and in a constructive way.
 - ✦ the direction representatives have a clear mandate to make decisions and to undertake to act in practice.
 - ✦ the meetings are well prepared and well led.
 - ✦ the climate is with the dialog, not with the claim or the conflict.
 - ✦ the company occupational physician attends the meetings.
 - ✦ some specialists or workers are invited for specific points when necessary.
- Consultation bodies deliver advices and training regarding the prevention of the psychosocial risks.
- At the request of these bodies (in SME), meetings of the personnel are organized to discuss the policy of the company and the health and safety problems.
- The company organized an effective information circulation system (newspaper, posting, meetings... for social plan, action plan...).
- The health-safety action plan is known and implemented and everyone knows his contribution to this plan.
- The trade unions have a real influence on:
 - ✦ house rules;
 - ✦ resorting to subcontractors, temporary workers and apprentices;
 - ✦ training policy;
 - ✦ work organization;
 - ✦ promotion policy;
 - ✦ working times;
 - ✦ introduction of new technologies;
 - ✦ introduction of bonus or perks;
 - ✦ introduction of short-time working;
 - ✦ introduction of overtime;
 - ✦ criteria in case of individual or collective lay-off;
 - ✦ job classification system;
 - ✦ organization of the days off;
 - ✦ introduction of control systems of working time;
 - ✦ recipients of career breaks;
 - ✦ measures against phoney medical certificates.

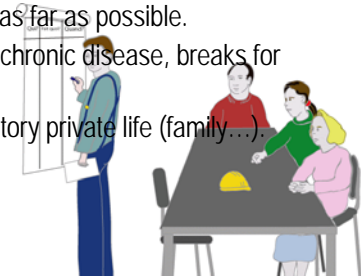
What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

E. 6. Social climate

- The personnel is all in all satisfied with the living conditions in the company.
 - ✦ there are few technical and industrial accidents or incidents;
 - ✦ absenteeism for work unrelated medical problems is low;
 - ✦ strike movements are very rare and settled quickly;
 - ✦ there are few complaints concerning the work conditions and relations;
 - ✦ there are few people with potential stress symptoms (alcoholism, tiredness, drugs...);
- All complaints are taken seriously into account.
- The cause of any stress symptom is investigated and a solution is searched.
- Workers have the feeling that the company treats them with justice and equity (no privilege).
- Settings and procedures exist to collect the personal problems (dissatisfaction, stress, harassing, tiredness...) and they are used:

- ✦ the trustworthy person and the psychosocial OH practitioner are known, available and appreciated by everyone;
- ✦ the procedures are clear and known.
- The economical and social brand images of the company are excellent.
- The social infrastructure (transport, day-care facilities, locker rooms, cafeteria, sport facilities, vending machines...) is quite satisfactory.
- workers take initiatives for social activities and get support from the company as far as possible.
- Spaces are arranged to get insulated when necessary (religion, treatment for chronic disease, breaks for pregnant or nursing mothers ...).
- The working conditions (time, tiredness, stress) are compatible with a satisfactory private life (family...).
- The company respects the private life of the workers.



What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

F Synthesis

F. 1. Judgment on the current conditions of work

On the basis of the Observation carried out above, the situation is:

- ✦ acceptable;
- ✦ to be checked by a qualified person (psychosocial OH practitioner).
- ✦ unacceptable and to be improved rapidly.

F. 2. Assessment of the preventive measures/improvement considered

- Listing of the measures considered in each section of the Observation.
 - Appointment of who does what and when and the priorities
- from the answers to the questions:

What can be done in practice to improve the situation directly?

What needs to be studied more in details?

F. 3. Judgment on the possible conditions of work when the preventive measures/improvement considered above will be implemented.

F. 4. Need for an extensive Analysis (level 3) taking account of

- ✦ the effectiveness of the preventive measures/improvement considered.
- ✦ the residual risk in the anticipated future state.
- On what matters.
- With which *urgency*.

G Short-term measures

- Individual care of the workers who are having problems (stress, burnout, harassment, discrimination...).
- Provisional modification of the work organization in order to avoid open violent conflicts (provisional assignment to another work station, temporary dismissing...).
- ...
- For how long?

V.5. Report of the Observation study

V.5.1 Summary of the results of the Observation

The report must make the synthesis of all the information gradually collected and of the solutions or improvements implemented or intended. It will include:

- A summary of the antecedents to the Observation.
 - ✦ how the problem appeared and was raised at the beginning.
 - ✦ broad outlines of the Screening with the operators and the technical staff.
- Results of the Observation and suggested solutions, using the model of report proposed hereunder.
- Overall justification of these solutions, showing that:
 - ✦ they are likely to solve the problems described previously.
 - ✦ they will not generate other problems for the operators.
 - ✦ they are compatible with the requirements of productivity and profitability of the company.
- Synthesis of the technical or organizational solutions and improvements with proposals of who does what, when, how and with what follow-up.
- If necessary, the aspects for which an Analysis is to be realized.
- A 1-page synthesis of this report listing the principal technical solutions.

*A more detailed description of how to prepare this report and to present it to the management and the operators is given in the general introduction of strategy **SOBANE**.*

V.5.2 The report

Framework of collection of the information to be adapted to the situation and used for the drafting of the report.

Company:

Work situation:

Coordinator:

People having taken part in the study:

Dates:

Factor	Observations	Prevention-protection
1. Autonomy and individual responsibilities		
• Degree of initiative, autonomy		
• Freedom of contact		
• Responsibilities		
• Errors		
2. Work content		
• Role ambiguity		
• Role conflicts		
• Diversification and interest of the work		
• Level of attention		
• Decisions		
• Qualifications		
• Training		

3. Time constraints		
• Schedules and work period		
• Work pace		
• Backlogs and interruptions		
• Group autonomy		
• Breaks		
4. Employment relationships within the personnel and with the hierarchy		
• Relations between the workers		
• Relations between internal services		
• leadership - the hierarchy		
• Relations with the hierarchy		
• Performance evaluation meeting		
• Professional evaluation		
5. Psychosocial environment		
• Employment		
• Future prospects		
• Wages		
• Harassing and discriminations		
• Social dialog		
• Social climate		

6. Synthesis

- Current risk: The present situation is:
 - ✦ acceptable;
 - ✦ to be checked by a qualified person (psychosocial OH practitioner).
 - ✦ unacceptable and to be improved rapidly.
- Who does what, when?

Who	What	When

- Residual risk after prevention
 - ✦ probable future state
- Need for an Analysis (level 3) thorough
 - ✦ Urgency?
 - ✦ Objectives?

7. Short-term measures

- What?, Who? When?
- For how long?

VI. Level 3: Analysis

Just as for the other fields of risk (electric risks, chemical risks...) and according to the general philosophy of strategy SOBANE, the assistance of a prevention adviser specialized in the field is required at the Analysis level: in fact, here, the prevention adviser specialized in the psychosocial aspects.

Contrary to the other fields however, the present brochure concerned with the prevention of the psychosocial problems does not describe an Analysis procedure, but refers to a series of tools developed in Belgium and elsewhere concerning the diagnosis of the situations with problems and the individual or collective treatment of these problems.

The SOBANE strategy applied to the psychosocial aspects presents tools of anticipation of the problems. In that, it is very different from the very many tools for the diagnostic or treatment of problems which were proposed during the 20 last years.

A great number of these tools are indexed on web sites of the Belgian ministry of Labour dedicated to these psychosocial problems:

- <http://www.respectophetwerk.be/toolkit/toolkit.php>
- http://www.respectautravail.be/toolkit_homepage.php

These tools can be coarsely classified in 3 categories:

- **Diagnostic tools based using questionnaires:**
In some cases these tools might have preceded the *Déparis* and *Observation* meetings. It is the case if a company wishes to make a general or local assessment a priori or following negative indicators (diffuse complaints, absenteeism...)
- **Discussion guides:**
These tools were developed with the same objectives as the SOBANE Observation guide describes in the present booklet. The characteristic of the SOBANE guide are however that:
 - It covers the whole of the psychosocial risk factors, without privileging any of them.
 - The SOBANE approach is a local approach, bringing together the partners of a work situation and trying to lead them to decide collegially new organisational practices.
- **Tools of intervention at the individual level:**
These tools exclusively concern the prevention advisers in charge of the psychosocial aspects and allow them to set up a preliminary enquiry about a harassment case.

The intervention on the Analysis level can be completely different from what these tools consider. The Observation level having highlighted deficiencies, for example concerning the technical or temporal work organization, the adequacy and the maintenance of competences, the organization of the pauses, the division of responsibilities..., studies should be undertaken to reform, optimize, and improve these aspects.

These more specific and more specialized studies are those which, in accordance with the philosophy of the SOBANE strategy, one would recommend to level 4, Expertise.

In the case of the psychosocial risks, it appears justified to gather levels 3 and 4 of Analysis and Expertise.

These studies of deepening specific points will often be undertaken by experts in organization and business management.

As for the other fields of risk, it is essential to stress that these experts must intervene following the Observation meetings and bring to the people having taken part in these meetings:

- the necessary methods of investigation;
- the competences for the search of particular solutions.

No guide is here presented, the study being a matter for experts who will adapt their methodology to the encountered case.

The Expertise report must however include:

- The justification of the techniques used;
- The recommended preventive or improvement measures;
- Proposals for Who does what and when.

This synthesis must again be established by the work groups which, since the *Déparis* meetings, pilot the study of the working situation.

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