

Focus on IFA's work

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ZED central exposure database <https://zed.dguv.de>

Problem

Carcinogenic substances can be found at a wide range of different workplaces. Exposures to such substances cannot always be avoided. Exposure to these substances may lead to cancer, generally with long latency times of an average of 40 years. For this reason, since 2005, Article 14 (3) of the German Ordinance on Hazardous Substances has required employers to keep a record of employees who perform activities where there is a risk to health and safety resulting from contact with carcinogenic and/or mutagenic hazardous substances from categories 1A or 1B in accordance with Article 6 of the German Ordinance on Hazardous Substances. This record of exposure must contain information on the nature, level and duration of the exposure, and it must be retained for 40 years after the exposure has ended. The employee must be provided with the relevant part of the record when they leave the company. The purpose of this provision is to ensure the long-term preservation of evidence in relation to potential occupational diseases with long latency periods, which are typical for the diseases caused by the specified substance groups.

In Art. 14 (4) of the Ordinance on Hazardous Substances, the legislator stipulates that the employer may transfer their obligation to provide and archive the relevant exposure information to the responsible statutory accident institution with the consent of the worker.

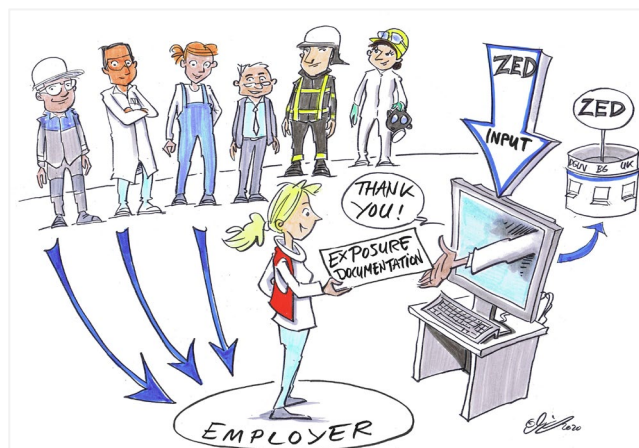


Image: DGUV, Artist: Michael Hüter

Activities

In collaboration with the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the raw materials and chemical industry (BG RCI), the Institute for Occupational Safety and Health of the German Social Accident Insurance (IFA) has created an online database in which companies can maintain their exposure record free of charge – thereby transferring the obligation to furnish and archive exposure information to the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV). The database is developed further and maintained in the IFA's ZED subject group in close cooperation with the BG RCI. This includes continuous communication with the database's users. The ZED is used by small, medium-sized and large companies from a wide range of industries. The observations made in discussion with the companies concerned and a number of bodies are used to continuously improve the database and to extend its functionality.

The BG RCI is responsible for the technical implementation of the database (programming).

Contacts are on hand at the accident insurance institutions to answer sector-specific queries concerning hazards.

Further development of the ZED database is supported by an advisory board, the members of which include the social partners.

Results and application

The ZED constitutes a database with which the companies can maintain the exposure record that is required by the regulator, update it continually and manage it conveniently.

Following registration, companies can map out their individual corporate structure and can enter the data for employees, enter information about the tasks they perform and describe their exposure scenarios in accordance with the Ordinance on Hazardous Substances. The data is entered and maintained by users specified by the company. These users can have different access rights. User-friendly, dialogue-driven recording of the data reduces the work involved in creating and updating the record. In addition to the mandatory fields that must be completed due to the documentation obligation, a range of further options are available to describe the exposure situation. Manual online input of the data is supplemented by an import via Excel for larger volumes of data.

Should they wish to do so, companies can also use the ZED database to submit the mandatory reports to the organisational service for post-exposure examinations (ODIN) and to the preventive healthcare body (GVS).

The DGUV assumes responsibility for archiving for 40 years when the ZED database is used. The workers concerned receive an excerpt of the data concerning them upon request. An application

form for this purpose and comprehensive further information can be found on the homepage of the ZED (<https://zed.dguv.de>).

Users

The ZED database can be used by all companies free of charge.

Further information (in German)

- Homepage of the ZED and access to the database: <https://zed.dguv.de>
- Schneider, A. G.; Zöllner, S.; Gabriel, G.; Schneider, G.: Entwicklungen der Zentralen Expositionsdatenbank (ZED), *Gefahrstoffe – Reinhalt. Luft* 79 (2019), No. 11-12, pp. 419-422
- Zöllner, S.; Gabriel, S.; Gross, B. K.; Stamm, R.; Wellhäußer, H.: Dokumentationspflicht beim Umgang mit krebserzeugenden Gefahrstoffen am Arbeitsplatz. *Gefahrstoffe – Reinhalt. Luft* 75 (2015) No. 11/12, pp. 450-456
- Stamm, R.; Ermer, A.; Gabriel, S.; Gross, B. K.; Wellhäußer, H.; Zöllner, S.: Ein Jahr Zentrale Expositionsdatenbank (ZED) bei der DGUV. *Gefahrstoffe – Reinhalt. Luft* 76 (2016) No. 6, pp. 227-229

Technical enquiries

IFA, Exposure and Risk Assessment Department

Literature requests

IFA, Interdisciplinary Services Department