Module 14 **Ensuring compliance with legislation on psychosocial risks**
1. Concept and scope of psychosocial risks at work

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(2010) adapted from Cox (1993), [9] which was included in the SLIC Guide (2018), [10] and the classification included in ISO 45003. There follows an approximate matching of the two:

► **1) Organizational factors**

ESENER – COX		ISO 45003	
Job content	Lack of variety or short work cycles, fragmented or meaningless work, underuse of skills, high uncertainty, continuous exposure to difficult clients, patients, pupils, etc.	**Job demands**	Underuse of skills, continual work exposure to interaction with people (e.g. the public, customers, students, patients), having too much to do within a certain time or with a set number of workers, conflicting demands and deadlines, unrealistic expectations of a worker's competence or responsibilities, lack of task variety or performing highly repetitive tasks, fragmented or meaningless work, requirements for excessive periods of alertness and concentration, working with aggressive or distressed people and exposure to events or situations that can cause trauma
		Job security and precarious work	Uncertainty regarding work availability, including work without set hours, possibility of redundancy or temporary loss of work with reduced pay, low-paid or insecure employment, including non-standard employment and working in situations that are not properly covered or protected by labour law or social protection
		Remote and isolated work	Working in locations that are far from home, family, friends and usual support networks (e.g. isolated working or "fly-in-fly-out" work arrangements), working alone in non-remote locations without social/human interaction at work (e.g. working at home,), working in private homes (e.g. providing care or domestic roles in other people's homes)

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[9] *European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks: Managing Safety and Health at Work* (ESENER-1), European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, 2010, (Bibliography 87); and Stress Research and *Stress Management: Putting Theory to Work*, Cox, T., HSE Books, Sudbury, 1993, (Bibliography 88).

[10] (Bibliography 90).

Workload and work pace	Work overload or too little work, machine pacing, high levels of time pressure, and continual deadline pressure	**Workload and work pace**	Work overload or underload, high levels of time pressure, continually subject to deadlines, machine pacing and high level of repetitive work
Working time	Shift work, night shifts, inflexible work schedules, unpredictable hours, and long or unsociable hours	**Working hours and schedule**	Lack of variety of work, shift work, inflexible work schedules. unpredictable hours, long or unsociable hours, fragmented work or work that is not meaningful and continual requirements to complete work at short notice
Control	Low participation in decision-making, lack of control over workload, pacing, shift working, etc.	**Job control or autonomy**	Limited opportunity to participate in decision-making, lack of control over workload, low levels of influence and independence (e.g. not being able to influence the speed, order or schedule of work tasks and workload)
		Organizational change management	Lack of practical support provided to assist workers during transition periods, prolonged or recurring restructuring and lack of consultation and communication about workplace changes, or which is of poor quality, untimely or not meaningful
Role in organization	Role ambiguity, role conflict, and responsibility for people	**Roles and expectations**	Role ambiguity, role conflict, duty of care for other people, scenarios where workers do not have clear guidelines on the tasks they are expected to do (and not do), expectations within a role that undermine one another (e.g. being expected to provide good customer service, but also to not spend a long time with customers), uncertainty about, or frequent changes to, tasks and work standards and performing work of little value or purpose

► **2) Social factors**

ESENER – COX		ISO 45003	
Organizational culture and function	Poor communication, low levels of support for problem solving and personal development, poor managerial support; lack of definition of, or agreement on, organizational objectives	**Leadership**	Lack of clear vision and objectives, management style unsuited to the nature of the work and its demands, failing to listen or only casually listening to complaints and suggestions, withholding information, providing inadequate communication and support, lack of accountability, lack of fairness, inconsistent and poor decision-making practices and abuse or misuse of power
		Organizational/workgroup culture	Poor communication, low levels of support for problem-solving and personal development, lack of definition of, or agreement on, organizational objectives, inconsistent and untimely application of policies and procedures, unfair decision-making
		Recognition and reward	Imbalance between workers' effort and formal and informal recognition and reward and lack of appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of workers' efforts in a fair and timely manner
		Support	Lack of support from supervisors and co-workers, lack of access to support services and lack of information/training to support work performance
		Supervision	Lack of constructive performance feedback and evaluation processes, lack of encouragement / acknowledgement, lack of communication, lack of shared organizational vision and clear objectives, lack of support and/or resources to facilitate improvements in performance, lack of fairness and misuse of digital surveillance
Interpersonal relationships at work	Social or physical isolation, poor relationships with superiors, interpersonal conflict, lack of social support, harassment, bullying, poor leadership style, and third-party violence	**Interpersonal relationships**	Poor communication, including poor information sharing, poor relationships between managers, supervisors, co-workers, and clients or others that workers interact with, interpersonal conflict, harassment, bullying, victimization (including using electronic tools such as email

			and social media), third-party violence, lack of social support, unequal power relationships between dominant and non-dominant groups of workers and social or physical isolation
		Civility and respect	Lack of trust, honesty, respect, civility and fairness and lack of respect and consideration in interactions among workers, as well as with customers, clients and the public
		Violence at work	Incidents involving an explicit or implicit challenge to health, safety or well-being at work; violence can be internal, external or client initiated, e.g. abuse, threats, assault (physical, verbal or sexual) and gender-based violence
		Harassment	Unwanted, offensive, intimidating behaviours (sexual or non-sexual in nature) which relate to one or more specific characteristic of the targeted individual, e.g. race, gender identity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability and age
		Bullying and victimization	Repeated (more than once) unreasonable behaviours which can present a risk to health, safety and well-being at work; behaviours can be overt or covert, e.g. social or physical isolation, assigning meaningless or unfavourable tasks, name-calling, insults and intimidation, undermining behaviour, undue public criticism, withholding information or resources critical for one's job, malicious rumours or gossiping and assigning impossible deadlines
Career development	Career stagnation and uncertainty, under-promotion or over-promotion, poor pay, job insecurity, and low social value of work	**Career development**	Career stagnation and uncertainty, under-promotion or over-promotion, lack of opportunity for skills development
Home–work interface	Conflicting demands of work and home, low support at home, and problems relating to both partners being in the labour force (dual careers)	**Work/life balance**	Work tasks, roles, schedules or expectations that cause workers to continue working in their own time, conflicting demands of work and home and work that impacts the workers' ability to recover

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► **3) Work environment and equipment**

ESENER – COX		ISO 45003	
Environment and equipment	Inadequate equipment availability, suitability, or maintenance; poor environmental conditions, such as lack of space, poor lighting, and excessive noise	**Work environment, equipment and hazardous tasks**	Inadequate equipment availability, suitability, reliability, maintenance or repair, poor workplace conditions such as lack of space, poor lighting and excessive noise, lack of the necessary tools, equipment or other resources to complete work tasks, working in extreme conditions or situations, such as very high or low temperatures, or at height and working in unstable environments such as conflict zones

1.4   Main consequences of exposure to psychosocial hazards

The most common outcomes or consequences of exposure to psychosocial hazards at work are stress and burnout, on the one hand, and harassment and violence, on the other, often with interactions between the two. Reactive labour inspection interventions are usually in response to these outcomes, normally as a consequence of complaints or work-related accident reports.

a) Work-related stress and burnout

Work-related stress is not one of the psychosocial hazards, but the main consequence of exposure to them.

Stress is a state of anxiety: the harmful physical and emotional response caused by an imbalance between perceived demands and the resources and abilities of a person to cope with them.

It occurs when the demands of the job do not match or exceed the capabilities, resources or needs of the worker.

It also takes place when an individual worker's — or a group's — knowledge and abilities to cope do not match the expectations of the organizational culture of an enterprise.

Work-related stress becomes a risk to safety and health when work exceeding a person's capacity and ability to cope is prolonged.[11]

We also need to consider the fact that stress can be caused by physical agents, such as noise and temperature, which are not considered psychosocial hazards.

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[11] EU-OSHA definition; see also Cox T., Griffiths A. and Rial-Gonzalez E. (2000), *Research on work-related stress*, Report to the Europea Agencyn for Safety and Health at Work, Luxembourg. (Bibliography 69).