



Netherlands Labour Authority  
*Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment*

# Work-related Accidents Monitor 2022

*Summary and  
conclusions*

The Netherlands Labour Authority wants to contribute to learning about work-related accidents, so they can be prevented in the future. To this end, we use information collected by inspectors during accident investigations. Based on this information, the Labour Authority creates information products that provide insight into the characteristics of accidents, which that are used for interventions aimed at increasing occupational safety. One of those information products is this annual Work-related Accident Monitor that provides structured insight into the completed accident investigations. It contains the numbers, trends and background characteristics of businesses and casualties. The numerical overviews in the appendix are used for occupational safety-related discussions with industries. In addition, the monitor contributes to knowledge about certain accident types (this year: hazardous substances) and accidents among vulnerable groups (this year: interns and students).

## Number of accident investigations

In 2022, the Netherlands Labour Authority initiated 2,418 accident investigations and 2,295 accident investigations were completed. A total of 2,357 casualties were involved, 40 of which were fatalities. This amounts to 27 casualties per 100,000 jobs. Most accidents per 100,000 jobs occurred in the water utilities and waste management sectors, construction, agriculture, forestry and fishing, and industry. The number of accidents per 100,000 jobs increased in all sectors compared to last year. In 2021, we saw a decrease almost across the board, but unfortunately this did not continue. In more than half of the work-related accidents investigated by the Netherlands Labour Authority, the casualty broke a bone. In 16% of all accidents, it led to an amputation. A third of work-related accidents led to permanent injury and more than half to non-permanent injury. A casualty died in 2% of the investigated situations .

## Differentiated approach and enforcement

The Netherlands Labour Authority is increasingly applying the so-called differentiated approach to accident investigation (hereinafter referred to as GAO). Within this approach, employers are in some cases allowed to conduct their own investigation into certain reportable work-related accidents.<sup>1</sup> To this end, they have to draw up a report and improvement plan, which the Labour Authority assesses. After approval of the employer report and the improvement plan, we may decide to conduct an inspection to assess whether the employer has sufficiently implemented the improvement plan. If the report or improvement plan is rejected, the Netherlands Labour Authority will conduct a full accident investigation. The purpose of using improvement plans for work-related accidents is to increase awareness of risks in a company and to take appropriate measures to reduce health and safety-related risks.

Enforcement takes place if the accident investigation by the Netherlands Labour Authority shows that the employer has been in violation of the law. In 2022, at least one violation was observed in 40% of all completed accident investigations<sup>2</sup>. The number of cases with observed violations is lower than in 2021, when a violation was found in 47% of cases. In 29% of completed accident investigations, the Netherlands Labour Authority drew up one or more penalty reports.

## Accidents involving interns and students

Because the Netherlands Labour Authority had received signals that the risk of work-related accidents among interns may be greater, this year, we specifically looked at the target group of interns and students in our registrations of reportable work-related accidents. However, the study shows that proportionately, the number of accidents involving interns and students is lower than that involving employed people.

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<sup>1</sup> The Netherlands Labour Authority always carries out an accident investigation itself in the event of a fatal accident, in the event of an accident involving a casualty under the age of 18 and when the casualty is a family member of the employer.

<sup>2</sup> Here, the term accident investigation is used both for cases that have been settled with the GAO and for cases in which we have conducted our own investigation. This percentage therefore relates to the total of the 2,295 cases completed in 2022.

The number of accidents involving young employed people is about as high as the number of accidents involving interns and students.

It does appear that interns and students are more likely to have an accident at work than employed people that is caused by coming into contact with work equipment or an object. However, we also see this pattern among young employees and people who have only recently been employed.

The sectors that see a lot of accidents are largely the same for accidents involving interns and students as for accidents involving employed people. The difference in accident types may be attributable to the type of work performed by interns or students. This can of course vary enormously within sectors, so the sector of the company certainly is not all-defining. Furthermore, the qualitative investigation shows that inexperience, sometimes combined with the absence of or inadequate safety instructions and supervision, is a recurring phenomenon in accidents involving interns and students.

Due to the inexperience of interns and students, it is particularly important that companies keep an eye on the occupational safety of this group of employees. The results seem to indicate that this is being done well at most companies, but not all. The Netherlands Labour Authority therefore wants to ask employers to pay extra attention to the occupational safety of this group.

## Accidents involving hazardous substances

Hazardous substances are among the accident types identified by the RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment). The Netherlands Labour Authority systematically reports on all accident types in the Work-related Accident Monitor. The order is based on how often an accident type occurs.

In this report, hazardous substances are defined as substances that can cause acute injury upon contact. These include toxic substances, irritants, hot or cold substances and substances under high pressure. In the period 2020 to 2022, the Netherlands Labour Authority investigated 122 reportable accidents involving hazardous substances. Of all accident investigations completed in 2022, 4% involved an accident with a hazardous substance.

We encounter this type of accident most often in the industrial (35%) and trade (16%) sectors. The share of accidents involving hazardous substances compared to the total number of accidents is highest within the hospitality sector (14%) and the culture, sport & recreation sector (8%).

Accidents involving hazardous substances lead to permanent injury in more than a third of cases. Typical injuries for accidents involving hazardous substances are burns or frostbite (61%). In 20% of these accidents, the result is poisoning or infection. Other accident types often involve bone fractures and, to a lesser extent, amputation.

Most accidents involving hazardous substances<sup>3</sup> that we investigated occurred with a liquid (45%) and not with a solid or gas. The liquids can be poisonous or toxic, irritating, under high pressure, or at a high or low temperature. This concerns very diverse liquids such as cleaning products, hot coffee, frying fat, liquid metal, or hot slurry that is created in large-scale industrial processes. The hazardous substance is an irritant in most investigated accidents (36%). The next highest figure is for substances that are hazardous because of the high temperature.

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<sup>3</sup> The definition of accidents involving hazardous substances in the Learning from Accidents Monitor is very broad, which means that accidents involving hot coffee, for instance, also fall under accidents involving hazardous substances. This differs from, for example, the definition of the risk of dangerous substances in the Risk Analysis of the Netherlands Labour Authority.

This is the summary in English of the Dutch report  
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Arbeidsinspectie \(nlarbeidsinspectie.nl\)](#)

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