



Netherlands Labour Authority
Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment

Working Conditions in the Netherlands 2024–2025

Monitoring compliance with
the Dutch Working Conditions Act,
exposure to work-related risks,
measures taken to counteract risks,
and healthy and safe work practices

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1 Summary: Key findings 2024–2025

Through its biennial Working Conditions monitor, the Netherlands Labour Authority reports on compliance with the Working Conditions Act. This report covers the period 2024–2025. It examines the implementation of the working conditions policy and the presence of occupational risks during work. It also considers the extent to which employers in the Netherlands take measures to protect employees against these risks. In addition, the report provides further insight into the relationship between compliance with occupational health and safety obligations and healthy and safe working practices in reality.

The findings of the monitor are based on company visits carried out by inspectors. Before each visit, the inspector reviews the required occupational health and safety documentation, if available—namely the Risk Inventory and Evaluation RI&E, the plan of action, and the basic contract—in order to get a clear view of the company's documented working conditions policy. During the visit, the inspector speaks with (a representative of) the employer and with an employee. Based on these discussions, together with a site visit, the inspector identifies the occupational risks present and the measures taken by the employer to address them. This makes it possible to assess the extent to which the employer complies with statutory and regulatory requirements on working conditions and whether work is carried out safely and healthily in practice. As a rule, inspectors do not take enforcement action during these visits, unless they encounter situations posing serious danger to individuals.

During 2024–2025, inspectors visited 2,070 companies. Any company in the Netherlands with at least one employee could be selected. It has been ensured that a sufficient number of companies were visited across all sectors and company sizes (ranging from 1–4 employees to more than 100 employees) to allow for reliable conclusions to be drawn. Based on the working conditions policy documentation, the site visit and the interviews with the employer and employee, the inspector completes the monitor questionnaire. These data are then statistically weighted to represent the full population of companies in the Netherlands, so that the percentages and findings in this report apply to all companies at national level. This produces an overall picture of working conditions in the Netherlands. Changes over time (compared with results from 2022–2023) are reported only if increases or decreases differ significantly from the last edition.

The main results of the monitor 2024–2025 are set out below.

Key findings:

1. Compliance with important occupational health and safety obligations

A working conditions policy aims to keep employees healthy and safe at work. Prevention plays a central role in that policy, with the focus on avoiding work-related accidents and illness. Four occupational health and safety obligations are discussed below, each of which is essential to a preventive working conditions policy.

The legislator regards the **risk inventory and evaluation (RI&E)** as the starting point for healthy and safe working. Employers are required to maintain an RI&E that identifies all occupational risks within the company and sets out measures to prevent or mitigate those risks. In 2024–2025, 68% of all employers had an RI&E. Between 2014 and 2021, this figure remained at around 50% in each edition of the monitor. The increase in employers with an RI&E observed in 2022–2023 did not continue in 2024–2025, although the percentage remained stable. The overall quality of RI&Es in 2024–2025 was assessed as sufficient or good in 70% of cases. This represents a small but significant increase compared with 2022–2023, when 64% of RI&Es were assessed as sufficient or good.

The **plan of action** forms a mandatory part of the RI&E. In this document, employers must specify which measures they will take—and within what timeframe—to address identified occupational risks. In 2024–2025, 68% of companies had a plan of action. This is a small but significant increase compared with 62% in 2022–2023 and with the 2014–2021 period, when the figure for each edition was consistently around 40%.

A **basic contract** is a mandatory agreement with a certified occupational health and safety service, a BIG-registered occupational physician, or a certified occupational health and safety key expert. The basic contract sets out the services for which the employer must engage a key expert. These include sickness absence management, assessment of and advice on the RI&E, and employee access to an occupational physician. In 2024–2025, the use of the basic contract increased significantly: 84% of all employers had such an agreement with an occupational health and safety service provider, compared with 80% in 2022–2023.

Closely related to this, the proportion of employers with a **written sickness absence policy** also increased significantly. A sickness absence policy is mandatory—sets out how the company deals with prevention, absence and returning to work. In 2024–2025, 60% of employers were able to provide a written sickness absence policy, compared with 52% in 2022–2023. This represents a small but significant increase.

2. Use of a recognised sector RI&E and/or a working conditions catalogue when preparing a RI&E is positively associated with the quality of the RI&E

A recognised sector RI&E instrument is a validated instrument developed by sector organisations for use within a specific industry. Where available, employers can use this instrument when preparing the RI&E and the plan of action. If such a recognised instrument is used, employers with 25 or fewer employees are no longer required to have the RI&E reviewed. The findings from this study show that RI&Es prepared using a sector-specific instrument are more often assessed as sufficient or good than those prepared without this support and review.

In a working conditions catalogue, employer and employee organisations jointly set out how they give effect to the target provisions established by the government for healthy and safe work. Companies that use a working conditions catalogue when preparing their RI&E are more likely to produce RI&Es of sufficient or good quality (87%) than companies that do not use such a catalogue (64%).

3. The use and quality of the RI&E are positively associated with risk control in practice

This study examines the relationship between the extent to which employers comply with obligations under working conditions legislation and to which employees work safely and healthily in practice. Data from both the 2022–2023 and 2024–2025 periods were used, strengthening the robustness of the findings.

The presence of an RI&E is significantly positively associated with healthy and safe working in practice, measured as the proportion of risks that are controlled. Moreover, companies with an RI&E of sufficient or good quality control more risks than companies with an RI&E of insufficient quality.

The presence of a designated health and safety officer, information and instruction, and the exercise of supervision are also significantly positively associated with risk control. Companies that comply with these working conditions obligations perform better in terms of healthy and safe working practices than companies that do not have a health and safety officer, information, instruction and supervision.¹

¹ It should be noted that this reflects correlation. The study is not aimed at establishing causal relationships (cause-effect).

4. The majority of employers do not demonstrably provide information and instruction on or supervise healthy and safe working conditions

Employers are required to provide effective information and instruction on the risks associated with the work and on the measures taken to prevent or mitigate those risks. They must also ensure compliance with instructions and rules relating to healthy and safe working conditions through supervision.

The results above underline the importance of information, instruction and supervision in achieving better risk control. It also has a significant preventive effect in reducing accidents and work-related illness. In 2024–2025, 20% of employers demonstrably provided both information and instruction and supervised healthy and safe working.

In 2024–2025, this statutory obligation was assessed more critically than in previous editions of the monitor. In this edition, inspectors examined in greater detail how employers implemented information, instruction and supervision aimed at healthy and safe work in practice. Many employers reported that they provide information and instruction on or supervise healthy and safe working conditions; however, they were unable to demonstrate this or to provide specific examples (such as written instructions, courses, toolbox meetings or workplace inspections). In total, 73% of employers did not demonstrably provide information and instruction in 2024–2025. Among the employees interviewed, 46% report that they had not received information about healthy and safe working, which may indicate that information is provided informally. With regards to supervision, 68% of employers provide no supervision, or cannot demonstrate that they supervise compliance with instructions on healthy and safe working.

5. Working with hazardous substances remains worst controlled risk

Exposure to hazardous substances is one of the risks associated with the greatest health impact, with a significant proportion of the disease burden often only becoming apparent years later.² In 2024–2025, 26% of the companies in the Netherlands worked with one or more hazardous substances. Of these companies, 45% took no or insufficient measures to control the associated risks. This proportion is largely unchanged compared with 2022–2023.

To protect employees against hazardous substances, employers are required to maintain an inventory of *all hazardous substances* to which employees may be exposed during their work. Among companies working with hazardous substances, 65% do not have such an inventory of the substances to which employees may be exposed. Where there is a risk of exposure to carcinogenic or mutagenic substances, or to substances released during a carcinogenic process (CMR substances), employers must also maintain a register with the names of employees who are or may be exposed to CMR substances. Among companies working with CMR substances, 81% do not maintain such a register of employees who may be exposed.

Where one or more hazardous substances are present, the employer must also assess—or have a third party assess—the nature, degree and duration of the exposure, in order to determine the risks to employees. In 83% of companies working with hazardous substances, this assessment was not carried out. For work involving possible exposure to hazardous substances, the employer must also ensure that employees are offered a periodic occupational health examination, so that any harm to health resulting from work with hazardous substances can be detected at an early stage. Among all companies to which this applies, 78% do not offer such an examination.

6. Stress due to workload and external undesirable behaviour occur in around a quarter of the companies, and in a quarter of those cases are not, or not adequately, controlled

Psychosocial workload concerns all factors that trigger stress at work, including work pressure, internal and external undesirable behaviour (aggression and violence, sexual harassment and bullying) and discrimination. In 2024–2025, employees in at least 30% of the companies in

² [State of Healthy Work | Report | Netherlands Labour Authority \(nlarbeidsinspectie.nl\)](https://nl.arbeidsinspectie.nl/en/state-of-healthy-work-report)

the Netherlands experienced more than incidental stress due to workload. The proportion of companies in which internal undesirable behaviour (9%; undesirable behaviour by supervisors and/or colleagues) and/or discrimination (5%) occurred decreased slightly, but significantly, compared with 2022–2023. In at least 24% of all companies, employees have experienced external undesirable behaviour. This involves unwelcome behaviour by third parties, such as customers, clients, passengers or students. Around a quarter of the companies in which stress due to workload and undesirable behaviour occurred took no measures, or insufficient measures, to prevent or control these risks. In the case of discrimination, this applies to 42% of companies. The risk of stress due to workload is controlled significantly better than in 2022–2023.

In principle, *any* employee may be exposed to psychosocial risks. Wherever work is carried out, employees may experience stress due to workload, and wherever people work together, undesirable behaviour (including discrimination) may occur. Companies in which these risks have not yet arisen must therefore also take preventive measures. Looking at *all* companies in the Netherlands, we see that 31% do not control stress due to workload, or do not do so adequately. This represents a small but significant improvement compared with 2022–2023. Between 44% and 54% of the companies take no measures, or insufficient measures, to prevent undesirable behaviour and discrimination.

One of the measures available to control psychosocial risks is the appointment of a confidential adviser. A confidential adviser acts as a point of contact for employees in a company in relation to initial assistance, advice and support in cases of undesirable behaviour. The confidential adviser also identifies patterns and risks for the employer and contributes to providing information and prevention. In 2024–2025, 45% of all employers had appointed a confidential adviser.

7. A lack of knowledge and information is the most common reason for non-compliance with working conditions requirements

In assessing overall working conditions within companies, 76% of non-compliant employers in 2024–2025 were classified as ‘unaware’. These are employers who are not, or not sufficiently, familiar with the applicable laws and regulations and are unaware that they are non-compliant. In other words, they are willing to comply but lack sufficient knowledge of the rules and obligations set out in the Working Conditions Act. As a result, they do not have the knowledge required to meet their legal obligations.

Employers classified as ‘unable’ make up a relatively small proportion of non-compliant employers (12%). These are employers who are familiar with the rules and wish to comply but are unable to do so due to a lack of resources or practical means.

A further 12% of non-compliant employers are classified as ‘unwilling’. These employers deliberately fail to comply, for example because they consider that the costs of compliance outweigh the benefits, or because they disagree with the legislation.

2 About Monitoring Working Conditions in the Netherlands

To carry out its tasks, the Netherlands Labour Authority requires a clear understanding of developments and risks within the domains it supervises. To this end, the Netherlands Labour Authority conducts various monitoring projects, including this monitor.

For the monitor, which has been conducted since 1999, labour inspectors examine both the working conditions policy and the working conditions during company visits.³ The results of these visits are statistically weighted to represent the population of companies (approximately 340,000) and employees (approximately 8.5 million) in the Netherlands.⁴

What makes this monitor distinctive is that it (1) is not risk-driven and (2) is not based on self-reporting, thereby providing one of the most complete pictures possible of working conditions in the Netherlands.

1. Random sample: For reasons of efficiency, the Labour Authority usually targets specific sectors and companies for inspections based on risk-assessments and complaints about unhealthy or unsafe working conditions⁵ but the company visits conducted for this monitor form an exception. Any company in the Netherlands could be selected for participation. This allows conclusions to be drawn about the state of healthy and safe working across all companies in the Netherlands.
2. Not based on self-reporting: The data are collected by inspectors and are not based on self-reporting by employers or employees.⁶ By virtue of their expertise, inspectors are well acquainted with working conditions legislation and have a clear view of the risks that do and may arise in practice in the workplace.

The Working Conditions Act⁷ is a framework Act that sets out obligations for both employers and employees. Employers are required to ensure that their employees work under proper—that is, healthy and safe—working conditions. This employer's duty of care is detailed in a number of system-based provisions of the Working Conditions Act. These system provisions, which apply to all companies that employ staff whose combined working hours exceed 40 hours per week, regardless of the economic activity and the accompanying risks involved, are examined in the monitor.⁸ These include the risk inventory and evaluation (RI&E), the plan of action, and the contract with an occupational health and safety service provider. The monitor also examines potential occupational risks.⁹ During a company visit, the inspector assesses whether such risks are present, how many employees are exposed to them, and whether the employer has taken measures to control them.

The monitor results in a descriptive report on the state of working conditions in the Netherlands. It serves as an information source for the Netherlands Labour Authority's risk analysis and the policy of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.

³ For prior publications of this monitor, see:

[Arbo in Bedrijf 2019–2021 | Report | Netherlands Labour Authority \(nlarbeidsinspectie.nl\)](#), [Arbo in Bedrijf 2022–2023 | Report | Netherlands Labour Authority](#)

⁴ The populations mentioned in this report may differ from these overall figures because a several sectors not covered by the Labour Authority's supervision of the Working Conditions Act are excluded. See the first footnote in Appendix I for more information.

⁵ [2025 Annual Plan | Annual Plan | Netherlands Labour Authority](#)

⁶ As is common in other representative surveys of working conditions, for example the National Working Conditions Survey and Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research's Employers' Survey on Working Conditions.

⁷ [wetten.nl - Regulation - Working Conditions Act - BWBR0010346](#)

⁸ For a complete overview of system provisions examined in this monitor survey, see section 4.1 *Degree of compliance with system provisions*.

⁹ A total of 26 occupational risks that can occur within Dutch companies were examined. This risk selection is based on risks described in the Working Conditions Decree and a consultation with the Netherlands Labour Authority's Knowledge Centre.

3 Method – How are the results produced?

The units of analysis for the monitor are companies in the Netherlands. These companies were selected through a stratified random sample based on data from the Chamber of Commerce (*Kamer van Koophandel* in Dutch). Selected companies have at least one employee and are stratified by 14 sectors¹⁰ and 5 size classes.¹¹ In the period 2024–2025, inspectors visited 2,070 companies.¹²

Employers at the selected companies received an advance notification letter providing information about the monitoring study and participation in it.¹³ At the same time, they were asked to submit relevant occupational health and safety documentation, such as the Risk Inventory and Evaluation (RI&E).¹⁴ During the company visit, the inspector interviews the employer using a questionnaire and conducts a site visit. During this visit, the inspector assesses whether working conditions are healthy and safe and whether policy is implemented in practice. In addition, the inspector interviews an employee. Interviewing both the employer and an employee enables data triangulation, allowing different perspectives to be compared.

The employee interview focuses on the provision of information and instruction and on the organisational culture in relation to healthy and safe working. In 97% of the visited companies where this was feasible, the interview with the employee took place. In total, 2,000 employees were interviewed.¹⁵ While a single employee is obviously not representative of all employees within a company, it is not practically feasible to interview more than one.¹⁶ Nevertheless, speaking to one employee provides additional insights into health and safety practices at the company that would otherwise not be obtained.

During a company visit, the inspector assesses, for each identified and relevant risk, whether the company has taken measures to control that risk. This is a broad assessment, given the time available.¹⁷ For example, in a large company, it is not feasible to inspect all machines or hazardous substances. As a rule, inspectors do not take enforcement action during these visits—unless situations are encountered that pose a serious risk to individuals—but instead collect information on compliance with the Working Conditions Act and on the state of healthy and safe working practices. As such, a company visit is less in-depth than a standard inspection. Inspectors obviously do share their findings with employers and

¹⁰ (1) Agriculture, forestry and fishing, (2) industry, (3) energy supply, water companies, waste companies, (4) construction industry, (5) wholesale and retail trade, (6) hospitality, (7) transport and storage, (8) information and communication, (9) financial services, (10) business services, (11) public administration and public services, (12) education, (3) health and welfare, and (14) other services

¹¹ Size classes include 1–4, 5–9, 10–49, 50–100 and 100+ employees.

¹² In this study, we aim for 2,000 visits spread over two years. Appendix I shows how we arrived at this number.

¹³ Section 6.4 discusses in more detail the actual and possible effects of the announcement letter when it comes to employer compliance

¹⁴ The employer was asked to provide the RI&E, the plan of action and the contract with the occupational health and safety service or service providers prior to the visit.

¹⁵ See Appendix 1 *Data collection* for a description of the selection of employees spoken to during the company visit. In 85% of the employees spoken to, this was an employee on a permanent contract, while the remaining 15% were employees on temporary contracts, on-call contracts or hired temporary workers.

¹⁶ The inspector indicated whether the employee also had a role in the works council/staff representation, as a health and safety officer, emergency response officer or supervisor. Employees in these roles may be more knowledgeable than average about occupational health and safety within the company. All data based on a spoken employee response were also analysed without the responses of employees who had these roles. The results show almost no structural deviations.

¹⁷ On average, an inspector spends around five hours on a company visit, including the interview with the employer and employee.

provide guidance on how improvements can be made. To safeguard data quality, inspectors are provided with detailed instructions and a manual. All completed questionnaires are reviewed by researchers, who are also available to answer questions.

The results from the sample are weighted to represent the population of companies in the Netherlands. Because the sample is stratified, it is known how many companies in the population each sampled company represents in terms of sector and size class. All results presented in this report are weighted to reflect the population of companies in the Netherlands with at least one employee.

Colophon

Summary of Arbo in Bedrijf 2024–2025 (in Dutch):
[Arbo in Bedrijf 2024–2025 | Nederlandse Arbeidsinspectie](#)

Netherlands Labour Authority

July 2026