

313 Occupational Safety and Health Impact Assessment; health, socio-economic and cost effects of excluding small low risk companies of the RIE-obligation

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Abstract

Objectives

Policy makers have an urgent need for quantitative data to support their decision-making process. More and more quantitative data are available, but the main problem remains how to construct useful information from all this data. The TNO Occupational Safety and Health Impact Assessment (OSHIA) ex ante tool helps policy makers with ex ante impact assessment in the field of occupational safety and health. This paper applies this method on a case example, the abolishment of the obligation to carry out a RIE for companies (1-9 employees) in low risk sectors in the Netherlands.

Method

A stepwise quantitative ex ante evaluation was carried out following the TNO OSHIA framework. To gain insight into the affected population, compliance with the current legislation, and the effect of (abolishment of) a RIE on work-related exposures, health (MSD, depressive symptoms), QALY's, and socioeconomic effects (sick leave, productivity). Data were used from the Netherlands Working Conditions Survey (NWCS), the Employers' Labour Survey (WEA), and the literature (QALY, productivity). A cost-benefit analysis was carried out to estimate the change in costs for employees, employers and society if the RIE would be abolished. The analysis was based on several scenarios of the change in exposure. Within each scenario a sensitivity analysis was included.

Results

The examined change in legislation would affect approximately 250,000 employees in approximately 65,000 companies. Of these companies, only 27% carried out a RIE in 2010. In most scenarios the health and socio-economic effects were small.

Conclusions

The stepwise approach of the ex ante impact assessment proved to be useful to estimate the consequences of a policy change in OSH. In particular, the use of scenarios and the analysis of the uncertainty provides insight that facilitates policy decisions.