The Dutch approach on risk assessment: tool and process

SMEs: IT tool and sector approach
Gerard Reinders and Arie in 't Veld

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Who is who

- Gerard Reinders
  - Division manager Knowledge Transfer
  - Overall project manager Risk Assessment
- Arie in 't Veld
  - Team manager Information Management
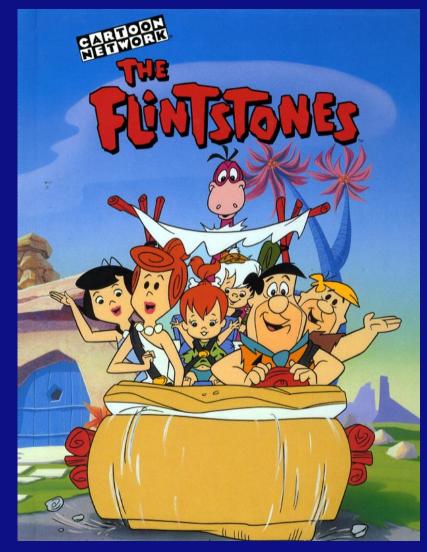 - IT-project manager Risk Assessment

Employers obligations on Risk assessment

- Assess the occupational safety and health risks in a systematic way
- Combat the risks at source
- Define measures
- Produce a plan
- Implement the plan

Stone Age Risk assessment tools

- Piles of paper
- Text … text …. text … and more ….. text
  - Example: "Inspection Plus Package" for labwork: 212 pages! Produced by TNO
- Too generic, not tailor made for employers
- Limitations in extra functions and/or information
- Perceived by employers as excessive administrative burden

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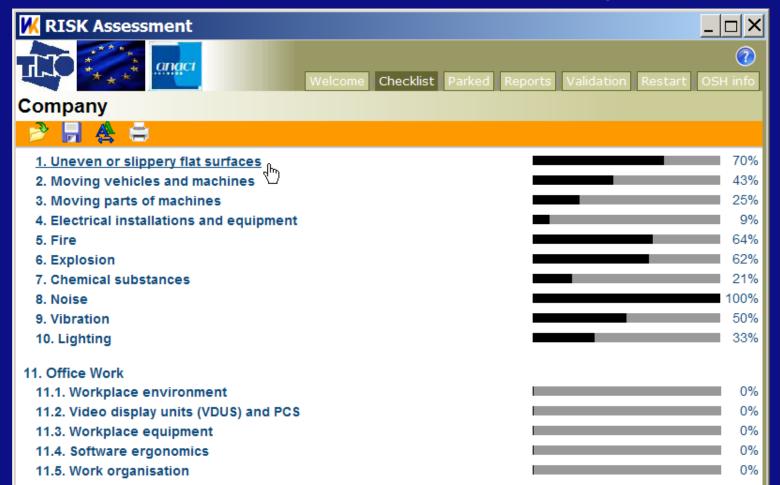
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Digital risk assessment

- Checklists with additional information if needed
- Tailor-made through so called filter questions
- Automatic generation of to do lists and plans of measures
- Inclusion of top priority risks in branch
- Best available techniques offered to combat the risks
- Connection possible to solutions database ('OSH Catalogue')
- Built-in risk evaluation
- At the moment, downloaded by 5.000 SME's every month

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Building the tool, using TNO Smartbox (CMS)

Checklist, overview of topics and progress

A certain question can filter out (hide) subsequent questions ...

... or activate subsequent questions; this view shows all questions within the topic

RISK Assessment

Welcome | Checklist | Parked | Reports | Validation | Restart | OSH info

Company

8. Noise

			P	
8.1	Can high noise levels arise as a result of work processes (e.g., metal-on-metal impact, engines)?	⦿ yes ○ no	☐	ⓘ
8.2	Can high noise levels arise as a result of ambient noise which penetrates buildings?	⦿ yes ○ no	☐	ⓘ
8.3	Can operating noise mask alarm signals?	⦿ yes ○ no	☐	ⓘ
8.4	Is the noise so loud that you would have to raise your voice to talk to people at your workplace?	⦿ yes ○ no	☐	ⓘ
8.5	Do you unintentionally raise your voice when you talk to people after leaving your workplace?	⦿ yes ○ no	☐	ⓘ

This view shows one question at a time, plus explanation, image, hyperlinks, progress bar

RISK Assessment

Welcome | Checklist | Parked | Reports | Validation | Restart | OSH info

Company

8. Noise

8.4 Is the noise so loud that you would have to raise your voice to talk to people at your workplace?

- ⦿ yes
- ○ no

Park question ☐

Explanation:

Effective communication is essential in the workplace, whether it is a factory, building site, call centre, or school. Good speech communication (5) requires a speech level at the ear of the listener that is at least 10 dB higher than the surrounding noise level.

The impact of noise at work
Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)

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room for legal references and a box for additional comments in case of special risks

Questions and answers are shown in a report, which also indicates problem areas

RISK Assessment

Welcome | Checklist | Parked | **Reports** | Validation | Restart | OSH info

Company

Problem needs to be solved.

8.2   Can high noise levels arise as a result of ambient noise which penetrates buildings?   yes
Noise is an unwanted sound; its intensity ('loudness') is measured in decibels (dB). The decibel scale is logarithmic, so a three decibel increase in the sound level already represents a doubling of the noise intensity. For example, a normal conversation may be about 65 dB and someone shouting typically can be around 80 dB. The difference is only 15 dB but the shouting is 30 times as intensive. To take into account the fact that the human ear has different sensitivities to different frequencies, the strength or intensity of noise is usually measured in A-weighted decibels(dB(A)).It is not just the intensity that determines whether noise is hazardous. The duration of exposure is also very important. To take this into account, time-weighted average sound levels are used. For workplace noise, this is usually based on an eight-hour working day.

Decibel scale showing the intensity level of some familiar sounds.

Problem needs to be solved.

Gera... ...ry 2017

Automatic Action plan, includes hazards, actions, sorting on priority, updateable status

RISK Assessment

Welcome | Checklist | Parked | Reports | Validation | Restart | OSH info

Company

8. Noise

8. Noise (*Company*)

	Hazard	Actions	Budget	Who	Prioriteit	When	Status
8.1	Can high noise levels arise as a result of work processes (e.g., metal-on-metal impact, engines)? {yes}	Determine workers' exposure; check compliance with the limits established in legal requirements.	eur 1.500	JM	1	21/10/2006 until 21/10/2007	to do
8.4	Is the noise so loud that you would have to raise your voice to talk to people at your workplace? {yes}	Provide appropriate hearing protection (in consultation with employees or their representatives).	eur 999	A.	1	23/10/2006 until 21/10/2007	started
8.2	Can high noise levels arise as a result of ambient noise which penetrates buildings? {yes}	Limit time spent in noisy areas. Action can be COMPLETED by the user him/herself!	eur 888	A.	2	03/10/2007 until 21/10/2008	halfway
8.5	Do you unintentionally raise your voice when you talk to people after leaving your workplace? {yes}	Ensure regular hearing checks for all workers exposed to high level noise.	eur 2.000	JM	3	04/10/2008 until 21/10/2008	nearly done

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Developments 1989 - 2004

- 1989: Framework Directive on health and safety 89/391/EEC; on stating various employers obligations (Article 9);
- 1992 – 1994: Implementation Framework Directive in Dutch Working Conditions Act;
- 1992 – 2002: *Printed* Risk Assessments tools (guidelines, handbooks etc.);
- 2003: *Digital* 'Base' Risk Assessment tool, committed by employer organisation SME Netherlands;
- 2004: Tailor-made digital risk assessment tools for more than 80 industry and service branches, fuelled by "marginal check" for SMEs to obtain Labour Inspection approval.

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The years before 2003

- OHS expert needed for each Risk Assessment
- Only general surveys available, in print
- No tailor-made assessments for sectors and SMEs
- Considered ' obligatory, bad for business'
- High cost, a lot of work, and many registry requirements
- Conflicting OSH and other legislation (e.g. Fire Regulations)

Risk Assessment, a high potential….

A study "Arbowet in beeld", ITS 2004
- Companies > 50 staff profit from use of R.A. tools
- Smallest companies (< 10 staff) fall behind, having trouble using available tools and information
- BUT: Risk Assessment and Action Plan prove to set SME Occupational and Health policy in motion!!!!!

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Ministery SZW conclusions

- Risk Assessment is an important instrument
- Employers and employees are activated

- BUT
- Downsizing costs (the check) and harmonizing regulations are needed
- Focus on SMEs
- Focus on major risks (Top 5)
- Focus on *solutions*, rather than *information*
- Focus on digital sector instruments

The Dutch digital practice

- www.rie.nl (2003)
- digital risk assessment tool for SMEs (medio 2004) www.arbo.mkb.nl
- Development of digital sector instruments (2004 – 2006)
- An easier check for SME's (lower costs) (2004 – 2006)
- Implementation means for sectors (2006)

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www.rie.nl

www.arbo.mkb.nl

Development of digital sector R.A. instruments

- Startup Conference
- PR campaign to engage new participating sectors
- Project plan:
  - Securing social partner commitment
  - Project team: participation experts outside TNO
  - Define common goals
  - The method
    - A contract
    - Preparation of workshops on content and major risks
    - Kickoff workhop: R.A. benefits, major risks
    - Collaborative content development
    - Results presented in workshops
    - Conversion of the results, editor training

- Digital tool development
- Development of 'light check' for SMEs
- Launch of Helpdesk
- Development of branche implementation tools

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Implementation tools to reach end users

A guide for development and implementation
www.brancheorganisaties.rie.nl

- Lay down goals, target groups, and means (including wives and pub mates!)
- Lay down communication: focus on language and issues of companies, employers, employees (articles, websites, meetings, events)
- Organise support (Good Practices, training, advice, workshops, helpdesk, FAQ, funds)
- Organise changes in company behaviour (commitment, define tasks and activities, priorities and deliver dates)
- Organise long term commitment for solutions@work (OHSpedia), e.g. through a Community of Practice

Results of the Dutch approach 2007

- Around 80 digital sector R.A. tools (70 sectors to go)
- 5.000 downloads each month
- Social partners collaborating on both R.A. and solutions
- Focus on major risks
- Cost and time reduction

- BUT… there is still a job to do in reaching end users

Results of the digital R.A. Practice

- "Vervolgmeting producten AP NL, 2006" (Survey by Ecorys)
- Increased instrument awareness: 24% (2005) to 31% (2006): more focus needed on SMEs
- Digital sector R.A instruments are popular thanks tot accessible language etc.

Depth interview statements from employers:
- "It used to be expert tools; nowadays instruments are used by us employers and employees"
- "We experience this as a valuable tool"
- "It's cheaper"
- "It's more readily useable"
- "One learns how to manage one's risks"