



**Karolinska
Institutet**

Instructions for systematic work environment management

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Instructions for systematic work environment management

Purpose

Determine and describe how Karolinska Institutet (KI) organizationally and practically conducts systematic work environment management that contributes to good working and study conditions.

The present instructions also constitute the routines for the work environment management that the Swedish Work Environment Authority's regulations *AFS 2001:1 Systematic work environment management* demands.

Scope

The instructions apply to all KI's operations. Managers and other persons with delegated work environment tasks shall work according to these instructions. Safety representatives, student safety representatives and other employees/students involved in work environment management must be familiar with the instructions.

1. Structure & organization for work environment management at KI

Delegation (allocation) of work environment tasks

KI's management shall delegate (allocate) work environment tasks in writing to the head of department/equivalent. Further distribution to subordinate managers and employees may be made if needed. Heads of department and other managers within KI are responsible for conducting the practical, local work environment management. Everyone who receives a delegation of work environment tasks must participate in the work environment training that the employer decides. The content of these courses shall cover the work environment regulation, roles, responsibilities, collaboration, systematic work environment management in practice and organizational and social work environment. Managers who oversee laboratory activities shall also participate in the training on laboratory safety that the employer decides.

KI's delegation order also describes other roles, e.g. functional responsibility regarding chemical safety, fire safety and environmental and sustainable development.

Safety representatives

The safety representatives are appointed by union organizations that have collective agreements with KI. The main safety representatives shall work across different geographical areas (often Campus areas) and the local safety representatives shall work within their department/equivalent, with a defined safety protection area. Student safety representatives are appointed by the student unions. The safety representative shall be a partner to the employer representative and shall be able to take part and collaborate in the work environment management. KI shall regularly carry out basic work environment training for safety representatives and other employees/students who actively work with health and safety issues.

Work environment committee and work environment groups

A work environment committee, which is directly subordinate to KI's management, shall constitute the central cooperation body for work environment issues at KI. The committee, shall have the status of a safety committee, according to Chapter 6 in the Work Environment Act, and meet four times per year and extra meetings if necessary.

In the committee there shall be representatives for the employer, the employees (main safety representatives and union representatives), students, occupational health service and student health service. The departments/equivalent shall have work environment groups that initiate activities, follow and follow up on the local work environment management on physical, organizational and social issues. The work environment group shall be a resource and partner to the head of department/equivalent.

In these groups there shall be representatives of employers and employees/students (e.g. safety representatives and student safety representatives). Other representatives, e.g. representatives for equal treatment and chemical's representatives are also suitable participants in these groups.

Other important work environment actors at KI

The biosafety committee and radiation protection committees (within the university hospital) shall be other important actors in KI's overall work environment management. There shall also be an environmental council at KI that handles overall environmental issues. Work environment and environmental issues often have points of contact and affect each other.

Steering, supporting and reporting work environment documents

These instructions, as well as other steering, supporting and reporting work environment documents, must be easily available on the staff portal.

Steering documents are e.g. agreements, guidelines, rules, instructions, delegations, safety instructions and action plans. In KI's guidelines for work environment and health (which also constitutes KI's work environment policy according to AFS 2001:1), work environment goals are formulated. At departmental level/equivalent, there may also be specific local routine descriptions for working methods and handling of substances, agents etc.

Supporting documents are templates, forms, checklists etc. If necessary, the documents shall be revised by the HR office or locally by experts with a function responsibility.

Reporting documents are mainly local e.g. written risk assessments, results from employee surveys, safety inspection protocols, measurement protocols and protocols/memos from meetings in work environment groups. Examples of central reporting documents are KI-overall results for employee surveys, exit polls for doctoral students and protocols from the Work Environment Committee's meetings.

2. Methods/ways to investigate and assess risks in the work environment.

Managers or other employees who have received a delegation (allocation) of work environment tasks shall be responsible for ensuring that investigations and risk assessments are carried out in KI's education and research activities. Safety representatives and other relevant employees/students shall be invited to participate. Below are examples listed of procedures, tools and working methods that shall be used in the risk assessments.

a) Before implementing changes

- In the event of planned changes in the business, risk and impact assessments shall be carried out with the aim of being able to prevent risks, psychologically and physically, in the new/altered organization, in the new/remodeled premises, with the new work equipment etc. This can be carried out e.g. in groups where both managers and co-workers are represented.

b) In existing activities (regularly and when necessary)

- Dialogue and risk observations on a daily basis. All managers, co-workers and students shall contribute to this.
- Development dialogues where individual work environment aspects are discussed, not least issues regarding amount of work, complexity, balance and recuperation at work.
- Targeted medical controls for employees and students that are/likely to be exposed to certain substances, agents, emissions.
- Risk assessments for laboratory activities (KLARA, BARA, HUMRA and GMM).
- Controls, periodic or when necessary, regarding work equipment and other technical devices such as pressurized devices and eye showers.
- Employee- and student surveys (based on questionnaires) with different intervals.
- Physical inspection rounds shall be conducted once a year at all departments/ equivalent using the digital KI check list. In addition to this, fire safety controls must be conducted with more frequent intervals according to the procedures for each organization (e.g. KI, Region Stockholm and SLSO).
- When measurements are needed regarding e.g. emissions, noise, lighting and air quality they shall be conducted "in house" and/or in collaboration with the landlord or external consultants, such as work environment engineers from the occupational health service.
- Managers and others with staff responsibilities shall continuously follow up sickness absence and initiate contacts, internal rehabilitation investigations etc. when there is a need for this.
- Exit interviews for employees (soon leaving KI) that have been employed for 6 months or longer.

c) If a near-accident or a work injury occur

- When a near-accident or a work injury occurs the causes shall be investigated together with an assessment of the risk (likelihood) for it to happen again.

If work environment risks or deficiencies are identified with the above methods/procedures, an estimate must be made of the severity level and a valuation of how quickly measures need to be implemented. Measures that cannot be implemented immediately shall be put in a written action plan. At KI there is a template where risk assessment and action plan can be written in the same document.

3. Work environment and health promoting measures.

Managers or other employees who have received a delegation (allocation) of work environment tasks are responsible for carrying out preventive and corrective measures when risks and/or deficiencies are identified. Below are ten examples of work environment measures.

- Work environment trainings (e.g. work environment legislation, first aid and CPR ergonomics, conflict management, victimization, equal treatment, laboratory safety and fire protection safety). Introductions for new co-workers and students are an important start.
- Group activities (team and leadership development, handling of conflicts, supervision etc.).
- Activities for physical and mental health (in collaboration with the KI Health Promotion Unit).
- New or altered routines and working methods.
- Optimize the staffing in the activities.
- Priorities of the responsibilities and work tasks.
- Procurement for better work and safety protective equipment, machines, furniture etc.
- New or remodeled premises.
- Cleaning out floor and work surfaces, chemicals, old equipment no longer in use etc.
- Individual adaptations and measures e.g. in a rehabilitation process.

KI managers are responsible for planning and taking action. Local measures shall be followed up in the work group, corporate management teams or work environment group/equivalent.

4. Annual follow up/audit on the systematic work environment management

Once a year the work environment groups shall conduct a follow up on the local work environment management at the department/equivalent. The KI work environment committee shall follow and follow up on this.

Applicable laws and provisions

Work environment act and Work environment ordinance
AFS 2001:1 Systematic work environment management

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