



Dutch Working Conditions Act The Framework for Workplace Safety in the Netherlands

The Dutch Working Conditions Act, also known as the Arbowet, is crucial Dutch legislation that establishes general principles for ensuring the health, safety, and well-being of employees and self-employed individuals at work. This law, which was last substantially amended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, lays the foundation for managing workplace safety and health in the Netherlands.

Scope and Structure

The Arbowet applies to all sectors where work is performed for wages or on commission, including home workers, temporary workers, volunteers, and self-employed individuals without personnel (ZZP'ers). The Working Conditions legislation consists of four parts:

1. The Working Conditions Act (Arbeidsomstandighedenwet)
2. The Working Conditions Decree (Arbeidsomstandighedenbesluit)
3. The Working Conditions Regulation (Arbeidsomstandighedenregeling)
4. The Working Conditions Policy Rules (Arbobeleidsregels)

Key Aspects of the Arbowet

Employer Responsibility: Employers are obliged to ensure the safety and health of employees and to implement a policy aimed at the best possible working conditions.

Risk Inventory and Evaluation (RI&E)

Employers must document in writing the risks that work poses to employees, including an action plan.

Preventive Measures

The law promotes taking measures to prevent or limit risks.

Company Emergency Response

Employers must provide adequate company emergency response.

Information and Instruction

Employers must provide sufficient information and instruction to employees.

Cooperation and Consultation

Employer and employees work together to improve working conditions.

Prevention Officer

All Dutch companies are required to appoint one or more (internal) employees as prevention officers.

Occupational Health Services

Since 2005, mandatory affiliation with an occupational health service has been abolished, but there remain tasks for which a company doctor must be engaged.

Impact and Enforcement

The Dutch Labor Inspectorate checks whether employers and employees comply with the working conditions rules. In case of violation, various measures can be imposed, ranging from a warning to a fine or even suspension of work.

The Arbowet remains an essential part of Dutch policy on safety and health at work, providing a common basis for the protection of workers throughout the country.