

# HEALTH AND SAFETY REPS SITUATION IN SPAIN

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## Presentation

This report mostly summarizes methods and results from the study “Análisis de las tareas y percepciones de los delegados y delgadas de prevención en España” [Analysis of tasks and perceptions of safety reps in Spain] carried out by ISTAS (Spanish Trade Union Institute of Work, Environment and Health) in 2004 and available (in Spanish) at <http://www.istas.ccoo.es/descargas/informenacional.pdf>. Other available sources of information regarding safety reps in Spain (Spanish Surveys on Working Conditions) are also briefly reviewed.

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## 1. METHODS

### 1.1. Objectives

The study “Analysis of tasks and perceptions of safety reps in Spain” was carried out by ISTAS in 2004 with the aim of gaining knowledge on the following subjects:

- **Personal and occupational characteristics** of safety reps in Spain
- **Activities** of safety reps in the development of their duties as OHS (occupational health and safety) representatives
- **Occupational risks** perceived by safety reps in their workplaces
- Perceptions of safety reps regarding **health and safety management** in their workplaces
- **Obstacles and supports** perceived by safety reps in the development of their duties as OHS representatives
- Perceived situation and expectations of safety reps regarding their **information and training** for the development of their duties as OHS representatives
- Perceptions of safety reps regarding available **trade union resources** for the development of their duties

In order to accomplish these objectives, two complementary approaches were applied: a qualitative study with discussion groups and a survey over a national representative sample of safety reps.

### 1.2. Qualitative study

Twelve discussion groups were programmed designed to include participation of safety reps from different activity sectors, from different sized workplaces and including an only-women group. Finally, eleven discussion groups were completed with the following features:

Code	Location	Sector	Workplace size (workers)	Participants	Age (years)	Time as HSR (years)
DG1	Barcelona	Industry	30-100	8 (m)	30-60	1-10
DG2	Almería	Agriculture	N.A.	3 (m) 1 (w)	23-55	1-15
DG3	Madrid	N.P.	N.P.	7 (w)	30-55	N.A.
DG4	Madrid	Services	< 30	2 (m) 4 (w)	25-50	0-3
DG5	Valencia	Services	> 100	9 (m) 3 (w)	30-55	1-9
DG6	Valencia	Construction	< 30	7 (m)	30-55	N.A.
DG7	Sevilla	Industry	> 100	6 (m)	30-57	> 1
DG8	Sevilla	Construction	N.A.	7 (m)	35-55	1-10
DG9	Sevilla	Administration	N.A.	6 (m) 1 (w)	40's	1-10
DG10	Sevilla	Services	> 50	1 (m) 3 (w)	30-55	N.A.
DG11	Sevilla	Services	> 100	1 (m) 5 (w)	25-50	0-10

HSR: health and safety representative

N.A.: not available

N.P.: not pertinent

(m): men

(w): women

Discussion groups were organised and cited by local staff from CC.OO. trade union. All the participants in the groups were representatives from CC.OO. trade union. All of them were guaranteed about confidentiality and anonymity of provided information. All

of them participated in a fully voluntary basis. The groups were conducted in CC.OO. local premises. Discussion groups lasted between 1hour15minutes and 1hour45minutes. All the groups were carried out in October-November 2004.

Discussion was stimulated and guided through four main questions openly exposed to participants:

- Why did you become safety rep?
- What do you like the most from your work as safety rep?
- What do you like the less from your work as safety rep?
- How do you think your duties as safety rep can improve or be more effective?

Experimented social researchers were in charge of conducting, recording and transcribing the discussions and preparing a final report of the qualitative study. Conductors of the groups were previously informed about the objectives of the study.

The results from discussion groups analysis were presented in a final report in which selected transcriptions of opinions expressed in the groups are reproduced, analysed and organised in main conceptual areas.

### **1.3. Survey**

A specific questionnaire was designed to get information regarding objectives of the research. The questionnaire was partially based in a questionnaire previously used in a meeting of CC.OO. trade union health and safety representatives (Garcia AM, Gadea R, Rodrigo F. Prevención de riesgos laborales en las empresas: percepciones de los delegados de prevención [Occupational risk prevention in workplaces: perceptions of health and safety representatives]. Arch Prev Riesgos Labor. 2005;8:139-46). The questionnaire was revised by ISTAS and CC.OO. technicians and it was proved in a limited pilot study (n=9). Several different versions of the questionnaire were developed before the final one used in this research.

The questionnaire was structured in five sections:

- Personal data
- Activities
- Conditions and attitudes in the workplace
- Information and training
- Resources and supports

Most of the items were answered through closed options, including Yes/No, and three degree scales for agreement (A lot / Something / A little-Nothing), intensity (High / Moderate / Low-Null) and frequency ( Ever-Almost ever / Sometimes / Almost never- Never). An English translation of the questionnaire is included in the Annex.

To select safety reps to be interviewed CC.OO. data bases were used. In these data bases information from trade union elections in workplaces is registered, including location data for elected representatives.

It was decided to get a total sample size of 1200 interviews representative at the national level in Spain. According to available data, this sample accounts for 0.8% of total of safety reps in Spain. The sample was designed to include in a 60% safety reps from CC.OO. trade union and in a 40% safety reps from other trade union, also according to available information on the distribution of workplace representatives among Spanish trade unions. The sampling process was also designed to include a sufficient number of safety reps from the different main activity sectors (agriculture, industry, construction, services and public administration) and from workplaces with different sizes (<30, 31-50, 51-100 and > 100 workers). Distribution of expected number of interviews according to these conditions was as follows:

		Administration	Agriculture	Construction	Industry	Services
CC.OO.	≤ 30 workers	36	36	36	36	36
	31-50 workers	36	36	36	36	36
	51-100 workers	36	36	36	36	36
	>100 workers	36	36	36	36	36
No	≤ 30 workers	24	24	24	24	24
CC.OO.	31-50 workers	24	24	24	24	24
	51-100 workers	24	24	24	24	24
	>100 workers	24	24	24	24	24

For some combinations of trade union, sector and workplace size, the number of available safety reps was not sufficient. Then, the distribution of interviews finally done was as follows:

		Administration	Agriculture	Construction	Industry	Services
CC.OO.	≤ 30 workers	36	36	36	36	36
	31-50 workers	46	7	39	36	36
	51-100 workers	42	5	24	36	36
	>100 workers	40	14	18	36	37
No	≤ 30 workers	24	24	24	24	24
CC.OO.	31-50 workers	14	4	21	24	24
	51-100 workers	14	5	15	24	24
	>100 workers	20	5	8	24	24

Personal phone interviews were carried out by a private company. A list with the names and contact address of selected safety reps was provided, together with up to four substitutes for each index subject included, with the same characteristics regarding trade union, sector and workplace size.

Mean required time for each interview was 24 minutes. Interviews were carried out with the technique CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview). Interviews were conducted from September to December 2004.

Next table shows the results from the interviewing process.

	n	%
Successful interviews	1201	6.5
Not completed	602	3.2

Refusals	688	3.7
Postposed (not done)	8145	43.7
No effective contact	7117	38.2
Wrong number / data	879	4.7
<i>Total number of contacts</i>	<i>18632</i>	

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#### **1.4. Analysis**

Data from the qualitative study were structured through text analysis into main areas of interest and presented in an internal report.

Data from the survey, once coded and registered, were analysed with Stata Statistical Package (v.7.0.). Simple descriptive analysis was carried out.

#### **1.5. Publication and diffusion**

Results from this study and from the previous report on safety reps in which the questionnaire was based has been published and presented in different supports, as follows:

CC.OO. trade union:

García AM. El riesgo más extendido, el estrés [Main occupational risk: stress]. Por Experiencia. 2004; (24). Available at: <http://www.porexperiencia.com/>

An abstract of main results and conclusions from the research was prepared to be distributed among CC.OO. representatives and technical staff (more than 100.000 copies were printed and distributed). Available at: <http://www.istas.ccoo.es/descargas/DDPPsituacion.pdf>

Web report:

García AM, Rodrigo F, Dudzinski I, López-Jacob MJ. Análisis de las tareas y percepciones de los delegados y delegadas de prevención en España [Análisis of activities and perceptions of safety reps in Spain]. Available at: <http://www.istas.ccoo.es/descargas/DELTA.pdf>

Scientific journals:

García AM, Gadea R, Rodrigo F. Prevención de riesgos laborales en las empresas: percepciones de los delegados de prevención [Occupational risk prevention in workplaces: perceptions of health and safety representatives]. Arch Prev Riesgos Labor. 2005;8:139-46.

García AM, Rodrigo F, Dudzinski I, López-Jacob MJ. Activities, supports, obstacles and needs of safety reps in Spain. Int J Health Serv. [to be submitted].

Scientific Meetings:

García AM, Rodrigo F, Dudzinski I, Lopez Jacob MJ. Evaluación de riesgos laborales a través de una encuesta a delegados de prevención [Occupational risk assessment in a survey on safety reps]]. XXIII Reunión Científica de la Sociedad Española de Epidemiología [Spanish Epidemiological Society]. Gaceta Sanit. 2005; 19 Supl 1: 25.

García AM, Rodrigo F, Dudzinski I, Lopez Jacob MJ. Encuesta a delegados de prevención del estado español: perfiles, actividades y necesidades [Survey on safety reps: characteristics, activities and needs]. Jornada de Salud Laboral 2005 de la Societat Catalana de Seguretat i Medicina del Treball y la Sociedad Española de Medicina y Seguridad en el Trabajo [Catalonian Occupational Health and Safety Society and Spanish Occupational Health and Safety Society]. Gaceta Sanit. 2005; 19 Supl 1: 217.

## **1.6. Critical evaluation of methods in this study**

Qualitative study:

- If qualitative study is to be carried out, experts on qualitative research are needed to conduct and analyse the results.
- Some related tasks, such as organization of the groups or transcription of the recordings, can be done with local resources.
- However, it is important to have an expert guide in order to organize the groups strictly respecting methodological requirements to guarantee their validity.
- In our case, discussion groups were carried out in CC.OO. local premises. According to expert criteria, it would be preferable to conduct the groups in a neutral place, no related to the trade union.
- Because of practical reasons, our groups only include safety reps from CC.OO. If the objective is to gain knowledge on safety reps at a national level, an effort should be done in order to include in discussion groups representatives from all the different trade unions and safety reps situation in the country.

Survey:

- The development of the questionnaire was done in base to previous experience on surveys to safety reps. It was strictly revised by experts from different settings. It was assayed in a pilot study. It mostly included closed answers (listings, two and three degrees options) in order to make easier recording and analysis of data.
- Several options were considered for the survey. Personal face-to-face interview, the preferred one, was too expensive for the aim of including a representative national sample of safety reps. Postal interview was another option. But phone interview was finally the chosen one. It was also a somewhat expensive approach, requiring the hiring of a company specialist in conducting surveys. This company carried out also the registry of data.
- Although registered refusals to participate in the interview were relatively few, the number of discarded interviews “postposed” or because of “no effective contact” could have introduced some bias (were people more easily found at home those more frequently interviewed?). Strict criteria for contacts and interviews should be fixed for field work if an external company is to be hired for this work.
- The availability of a register with data of safety reps is completely necessary in order to attain a representative sample. However, CC.OO. register showed some problems for this aim. First, safety reps from Catalonia were mostly excluded

from the national register (because Catalonia has his own register). Although Catalanian register was also used, the final representation of Catalanian safety reps in our sample was low. Secondly, data for CC.OO safety reps were much more complete and ready to use than data for reps from other trade unions. Although some attempts were done in order to access registers from the other principal trade union in Spain (UGT), these attempts failed. Through our strategy we have managed to include safety reps from other trade unions, but reps from CC.OO. are overrepresented.

- Analysis of data required the participation of an expert on database management and statistical analysis.

Other issues:

- Qualitative study and survey gave complementary, sometimes controversial insights into the same issues. In general, survey answers seem to be more “politically right”, while in discussion groups complains, demands and problems seem to be “exacerbated”.
- Diffusion of the results in different supports (trade union resources, scientific meetings and scientific publications) and to different publics (trade union staff, researchers) was also considered a priority of the study.

## 2. MAIN RESULTS

### 2.1. General characteristics

Distribution of Spanish safety reps according to main personal and occupational characteristics is as follows:

	n (%)		n (%)
Sex		Time in the company (years)	
	912 (75,9)		229 (19,1)
Men	289 (24,1)	≤ 5	287 (23,9)
			213 (17,7)
Women		6-10	170 (14,1)
	25 (2,1)		300 (25,0)
Age (years)	304 (25,3)	11-15	2 (0,2)
	445 (37,0)		
16-25	354 (29,5)	16-20	
	73 (6,1)		347 (28,9)
26-35		> 20	387 (32,2)
			270 (22,5)
36-45	73 (6,1)	Unknown	192 (16,0)
	1128 (93,9)		5 (0,4)
46-55		Time as safety rep (years)	
		0-1	
56-70			
		2-3	
Contract			
		4-6	
Temporal			
		> 6	
Fixed		Unknown	

According to discourses in discussion groups, many of them get to be safety reps through a mostly hazardous pathway, although also some of them report previous interest in safety and health issues:

“... I liked the subject and there were no other volunteers...” (DG5)

#### MAIN RESULTS:

Safety reps are mostly men, aged around 40's, with large time working in their companies (around 15 years) and with fixed contracts.

#### CRITICAL POINTS:

Are young workers less interested in health and safety issues?  
Are women and temporary workers underrepresented?



Is safety and health representation less valued than other representation positions?

In discussion groups women manifested some added difficulties for her:

“... I have pressure, but a lot of it, for being a woman ...” (DG3)

**CRITICAL POINTS:**

Do women suffer additional pressure as representatives?

On a three degrees scale, safety reps mostly report high interest in occupational and safety issues (72%), moderate level of training (68%), moderate level of experience (57%) –although mean time as safety rep is relatively high (4 years)- and moderate level of satisfaction with the development of their duties (55%). Reported level of interest increases with workplace size, but this characteristic seems not to be related with level of satisfaction with their duties:

Company size (workers)	“High” interest in health and safety issues	“High” satisfaction regarding health and safety duties
≤ 30	65.8	29.9
31-50	71.5	30.5
51-100	71.4	28.2
>100	83.7	31.9
	(p<0.001)	(p=0.948)

Also, safety reps from agriculture and construction reported highest satisfaction with the development of their duties, while reps from public administration reported the lowest.

**CRITICAL POINTS:**

Why interest on occupational safety and health is lowest in the smaller workplaces?

Why in sectors where risks are higher safety reps are more satisfied?

Reasons for dissatisfaction raised up in the discussion groups. In summary, safety reps reported their critical position faced to employers and also faced to workers:

“... to be forced to act every day with the company against you and with the workers against you...” (DG1)

“...we are the villains, always, for one of them and for the other of them, we are caught in the middle...” (DG4)

Satisfactions arrive after a long time of hard work, related to the capacity to solve problems to workmates and to force the employers to do things better. In fact, satisfaction increases with the number of years as safety rep (“highly satisfied”: less than 1 year as safety rep: 23%; 1-3 years: 30%; > 3 years: 35%).

## 2.2. Activities

Activities, to be chosen from a closed list, reported by safety reps being developed during the last year with the highest frequency were:

	n	%
• To answer workers' consultations	1084	90.3
• To visit workplaces	954	79.4
• To expose health and safety problems to employers	917	76.4
• To examine available documentation on HS in the company	895	74.5
• Workers' information and/or training	888	73.9
• To ask workers for information on HS problems	839	69.9
• To participate in risk assessment in the company	787	65.5
• Meetings with workers	769	64.0
• Meetings or consultations with trade union staff	766	63.8
• Consultations with occupational health and safety service	747	62.2
• To participate in prevention planning in the company	730	60.8
• To attend Health and Safety Committee meetings	729	60.7
• To go with prevention technicians for risk assessments	707	58.9
• To participate in collective agreements	679	56.6
• To answer requirements from employers regarding HS issues	664	55.3
• Other activities	< 500	<40.0

HS: health and safety

More frequent activities did not vary substantially by sector, company size or time as safety rep. Frequency of activities developed was higher in greater companies and also higher for safety reps with more years of experience.

In discussion groups, some safety reps expressed their feeling of doing tasks that were not their responsibility, but employers' responsibility, such as workers' training and information about occupational risks. Also, they demanded more information to workers regarding their duties and activities as safety reps, frequently unknown or misunderstood.

Although it is established so by legislation, safety reps are consulted by employers regarding health and safety issues with relatively low frequency. This fact is also reported repeatedly in discussion groups:

"... nobody there has asked me about what risks do I see or how could those risks be controlled..." DG4

### MAIN RESULTS:

More frequent activities developed by safety reps are directly related to workers (assistance, visits, giving training or information...).

### CRITICAL POINTS:

Are safety reps really participating in and influencing over occupational safety and health decisions in the companies?

Implication of safety reps regarding environmental issues (chemical contamination, residues disposal, environmental noise, energy consumption, etc.) was also assessed in the questionnaire. Most of interviewees (94%) thought that safety reps should also be involved regarding environmental problems generated by their companies, but they also frequently thought that their capacity to influence in these aspects is very low or null (45%).

### 2.3. Risk perception

More frequently reported risks by safety reps are the following:

<b>By sector:</b>	<b>More frequently reported risks</b>	<b>By size (workers)</b>	<b>More frequently reported risks</b>
Construction	Inadequate postures Heavy lifting Pace of work	≤ 30	Inadequate postures Monotonous work Pace of work
Agriculture	Inadequate postures Repeated movements Temperature	31-50	Inadequate postures Repeated movements Pace of work
Industry	Repeated movements Inadequate postures Noise	51-100	Inadequate postures Repeated movements Pace of work
Public administration	Inadequate postures Pace of work Physical exertion	> 100	Inadequate postures Repeated movements Pace of work
Services	Inadequate postures Pace of work Repeated movements		

The risk for accidents in paradigmatic sectors such as construction is considered of lower priority than health problems related to ergonomic and organizational risks.

#### MAIN RESULTS:

More frequently reported risks in the workplace, independently of sector of activity or company size, are physical and psychosocial risks.

### 2.4. Health and safety management in the company

In the survey, most of the safety reps considered that health and safety of workers in their companies were sufficiently protected (71%). This positive perception was higher in construction and agriculture sectors, in smaller companies, by males, by safety reps with more years of experience, from trade unions other than CC.OO, with lower interest in health and safety issues and with higher satisfaction as safety reps. Level of training in occupational health and safety was not related with positive or negative perception regarding health and safety protection in the workplace.

However, in discussion groups several critics were expressed regarding bureaucracy of health and safety, small companies and economical arguments:

“... in my company we lack everything (...) everything is right in the papers (but) they fulfil nothing...” (DG3)

“... in small companies there is not any protection systems...” (DG1)

“... they say we are going to ruin the company. But the company is ruining our lives ...” (DG1)

When answers evaluating general protection of health and safety in the companies are distributed according to answers to specific problems related to health and safety management some interesting relationships appear. So, negative perception of workers' health and safety protection is higher in safety reps from companies not investing in health and safety, from companies having not carried out compulsory risk assessments or having not include all relevant occupational risks in their assessment, or from companies where workers or their reps have not participate in risk assessment or in planning of preventive actions.

#### MAIN RESULTS:

General perception of health and safety protection in workplace is positive. Most of safety reps consider that workers health is protected enough in their company, although safety reps point out problems related to bureaucracy of health and safety, protection levels in small companies and economical argumentations against health and safety investments.

#### CRITICAL POINTS:

Are general questions on occupational safety and health adequate to reveal safety reps perceptions regarding companies' attitudes?

Do safety reps consider that effects of ergonomic and psychosocial risks are negligible as health problems?

Why perception of safety reps regarding occupational safety and health protection in their companies is more positive in sectors and workplaces where traditionally safety and health problems are dealt more deficiently?

## 2.5. Obstacles and supports

Questions related to employer attitudes towards safety reps are in general positively valued: more than 75% of interviewees think that employers help to the development of their duties as safety reps, allow access to relevant documentation and are prone to negotiate with them. The item with less degree of agreement was about the implementation of safety reps recommendations: only 57% of interviewees agree about a positive attitude of employers regarding this particular relationship.

Attitudes of other agents implied in prevention were valued as follows:

	<b>Don't help to the development of my duties as safety rep n (%)</b>
<b>Supervisors</b>	182 (16,1)
<b>Occupational Health Service</b>	109 (11,7)
<b>Workers</b>	107 (9,1)
<b>Labour Inspection</b>	45 (8,1)
<b>Other trade unions</b>	40 (7,5)

However, in discussion groups greater disagreement was stated regarding cooperation from these different agents:

“... you say to a workmate that the company has spent in a protection measure and he says: ‘I would prefer an increase in my salary’...” (DG5)

“They are worse, the workmates than the bosses. It’s true. At least in my company...” (DG3)

But some safety reps clearly see that workers attitudes are strongly determined by company attitudes:

“... if workers always found it [protection measures] there would arrive a time when they asked themselves for it when they didn’t find it ...” (DG6)

“... you ask a worker: why are you working like this? And he says: ‘because I’m paid by meters, and I can’t work in a different way...’” (DG2)

Employers are also blamed for stimulating bad relationships between workers and safety reps:

“... They [employers] try to put you against your workmates...” (DG4)

Negative attitudes of supervisors and prevention technicians are also reported in discussion groups. And safety reps demand more support from public administration.

Their own trade union is also positively evaluated by safety reps, with slightly lower agreement regarding training and information:

	<b>High degree of agreement n (%)</b>
My trade union adequately supports my training	640 (54)
My trade union gives me the information I need	685 (57)
My trade union complies satisfactorily my consultations	753 (63)
My trade union comes to my company if I need it	900 (75)

MAIN RESULTS:

Although a majority of safety reps felt support from other agents involved in risk prevention, supervisors and occupational health services are pointed out as obstacles with some frequency. Least frequently (<10%) some safety reps find that workers, labour inspection and other trade unions are obstacles too. Satisfaction with support from their own trade union is in general high, training and information being the lowest rated supports according to interviewees' opinion.

Perception of support from trade union varies according to companies' characteristics:

	Feeling enough level of support from own trade union n (%)
Sector	
	109 (55,3)
Construction	80 (65,0)
	215 (70,5)
Agriculture	202 (73,2)
	223 (75,9)
Services	<i>p&lt;0,001</i>
Administration	277 (62,7)
	166 (68,0)
Industry	171 (73,4)
	215 (77,9)
Company size	<i>p&lt;0,001</i>
≤ 30 workers	
31-50 workers	
51-100 workers	
> 100 workers	

#### CRITICAL POINTS:

Should trade unions increase their focus on sectors or companies covering the greater number of workers in our societies (such as services or small companies) and on sectors suffering from major health and safety problems (such as construction or agriculture)?

## 2.6. Time and training

Shortness of time is one of the major obstacles pointed out by interviewees. Only 37% of safety reps think they have enough time to adequately develop their duties. In

discussion groups the necessity of time and the misunderstanding by workmates of the time of safety reps as a favour situation were also commented.

On the other hand, a large majority of safety reps have received training on occupational health and safety (78%). Safety reps from construction and industry have received training more frequently than reps from other sectors. However, while in industry most of the training was imparted from trade unions, in construction training was mostly received from other sources, mostly from the company itself. Safety reps in agriculture exhibited the lowest frequency of training (65%, mostly from the trade union). Training is also much more frequent in big companies (>100 workers, 93% of safety reps have received training) than in small ones ( $\leq 30$  workers, only 70%). Training was related to satisfaction in the development of their duties: 68% of those feeling “low” satisfaction vs. 83% of those feeling “highly” satisfied had received training.

However, in other section of the questionnaire most of safety reps qualified their degree of knowledge in occupational health and safety as “moderate” (68%) or “low” (13%). It should also be noticed that more “training” and “information” were the more frequent demands from safety reps to their trade union. This necessity was also expressed in discussion groups. Safety reps felt overwhelmed with technical difficulties related to risk prevention:

“... my problem is that there are too many technical terms in the prevention plans presented by the company (...). We don’t have the knowledge of the occupational technicians developing these plans...” (DG5)

And more training was also demanded (although in the survey most declared to have received more than 30 hours of training):

“... it should be some kind of continuous training...” (DG6)

#### MAIN RESULTS:

Frequency and hours of training of safety reps are generally high, although they feel a shortness of training. And also a shortness of time.

#### CRITICAL POINTS:

Safety reps are not intended to be trained at the level of occupational health and safety technicians. Is the kind of training they are receiving suitable for the development of their duties as workers’ reps?

How can be more efficiently used time available for safety reps in the development of their duties?

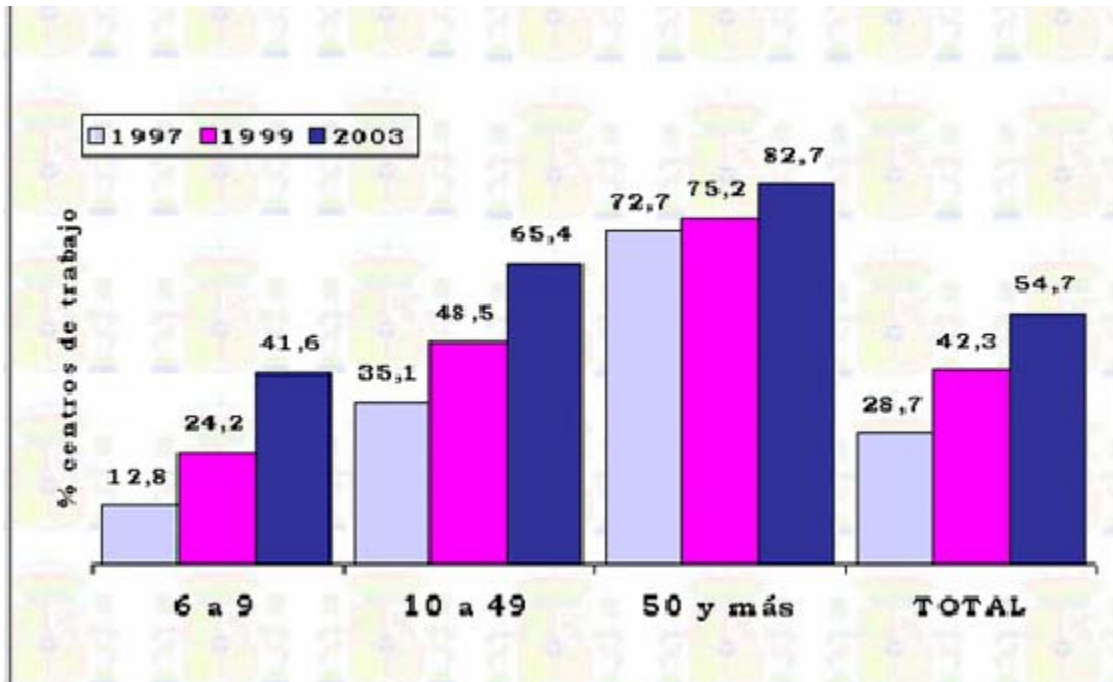
### 3. OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

#### 3.1. Spanish Surveys on Working Conditions

(Instituto Nacional de Seguridad e Higiene en el Trabajo, INSHT. Information on methods and characteristics of the surveys available at <http://www.mtas.es/insht/>)

##### 1. Survey of employers

Spanish Surveys on Working Conditions (1997, 1999, 2003):  
Percentage of working centers with safety reps by size



Source: [http://www.mtas.es/insht/statistics/5enct\\_op.htm](http://www.mtas.es/insht/statistics/5enct_op.htm)

According to the V Spanish Survey on Working Conditions (2003), the proportion of centers with safety reps was substantially higher in sector industry (65%) than in services (48%). These proportions increased in all sectors as compared to results from previous survey (1999). Also 87% of working centers with safety reps have the right number of safety reps established by legislation (Ley de Prevención de Riesgos Laborales art. 35).

According to the survey, most of the safety reps have received specific training for the development of their duties. Proportion of working centers in which all the safety reps had been trained was higher also in 2003 (91%) than in 1999 (82%).

##### 2. Survey of employees

In 2003, 72% of interviewed employees declared that there were safety reps elected in their companies. This proportion was notably lower in 1999 (54%).



### 3.2. Occupational Health Report. Spain 2004

Source: Durán López F, Benavides FG. Informe de salud laboral. Los riesgos laborales y su prevención. España 2004 [Occupational health report. Occupational risks and their prevention. Spain 2004]. Barcelona: Atelier; 2004. p. 194-195.

The “Occupational health report” is aimed to periodically describe the situation of occupational health and safety in Spain based on secondary data. A chapter of the report is devoted to “Participation in companies”, and data are provided in relation to safety reps in our country. The theoretical number of safety reps in Spain according to size and number of companies and workers and legal requirements was estimated as follows:

<b>Company size (workers)</b>	<b>Number of companies</b>	<b>Number of workers</b>	<b>Number of safety reps</b>	<b>Representation index<sup>a</sup></b>
1-5	897.416	1.823.900	0	-
6-49	266.688	3.773.100	266.688	14.1
50-249	22.451	2.162.600	44.902	48.2
250-499	2.153	744.300	6.459	115.2
500-999	973	666.300	3.892	171.2
1000 and more	786	2.931.400	4.716	621.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>1.190.467</i>	<i>12.101.600</i>	<i>326.657</i>	<i>37.0</i>

<sup>a</sup> Number of workers / number of safety reps

Source: Social Security data, 2002.

These are theoretical estimations of maximum numbers, but real situation could be well different. According to CC.OO. data base, there are 68.474 safety reps registered in this trade union. Distribution of trade union participation according to results from trade union elections in Spain in 2002 was as follows: 39% representatives from CC.OO., 37% representatives from UGT and 24% representatives from other trade unions (including safety reps and other representatives; CC.OO. has a higher proportion compared to other trade unions when only safety reps are considered).

**HEALTH AND SAFETY  
REPRESENTATIVES  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Financed by the National Foundation for  
Occupational Health and Safety**

**SURVEY CODE:** .....

**Personal data:**

Full name:

.....

Enterprise:

.....

Safety rep

( )

other ( )

**Survey information**

Date: ..... / ..... / 2004

Interviewer:

.....

Location:

Home

( )

Enterprise

( )

Other

( )

(explain)

.....

Starting time:

..... : ..... hours

Finishing time:..... : ..... hours

**Observations**

No

( )

Yes

( )

explain:


## 1. Personal information

Year of birth: 19.....

Gender: Male ( )  
Female ( )

Union: CC.OO.  
( )

UGT

( )

Other

( ) (explain)

.....

Not unionized

( )

Municipality:

.....

.....

Type of contract: Temporary ( )  
Permanent ( )  
Fixed term ( )

Working in the enterprise for: ..... years

Safety rep for :

..... years

Number of workers at the worksite:

30 or fewer

( )

Between 101 and 500

( )

Between 31 and 50

( )

Between 501 and 1000

( )

Between 51 and 100

( )

More than 1000

( )

How would you rate your **interest** in occupational health and safety issues?

High ( )      Moderate ( )      Low ( )

How would you rate your **expertise** regarding your duties and activities as a health and safety representative (HSR)?

High ( )      Moderate ( )      Low ( )

How would you describe your level of **experience** regarding your duties and activities as a HSR?

High ( )      Moderate ( )      Low ( )

How would you describe your **degree of satisfaction** regarding your duties and activities as a HSR?

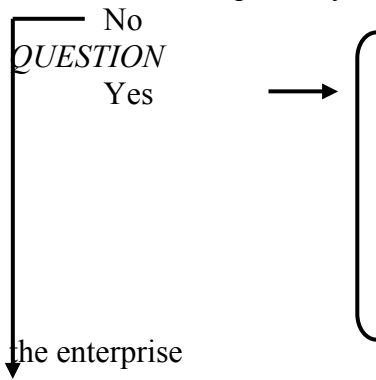
High ( )      Moderate ( )      Low ( )

## 2. ACTIVITIES

From the following OHS activities which have been and which have not been carried out by you **in the last year**:

	YES	NO
• Answering workers consultations	( )	( )
• Asking workers information about OHS problems	( )	( )
• Meetings with workers	( )	( )
• Protest or complain actions (demonstrations, etc.) with workers	( )	( )
• Visiting worksites	( )	( )
• Consultation, meetings or activities with your union on OHS issues	( )	( )
• Consultation, meetings or activities with other unions on OHS issues	( )	( )
• Workers' training and information activities (debates, posters, brochures, individual information, etc.)	( )	( )
• Participating in the investigation of work accidents	( )	( )
• Attending Health and Safety Committee meetings	( )	( )
• Answering the consultation from the managers/employers on OHS issues	( )	( )
• Answering the consultation from the managers/employers on environmental issues	( )	( )
• Participating in the development of the enterprise's preventive plan	( )	( )
• Participating in risk assessments in the enterprises	( )	( )
• Participating in preventive activities related to temporary workers	( )	( )
• Participating in activities related to external and subcontracted workers	( )	( )
• Reporting OHS problems to supervisors/managers	( )	( )
• Checking the available documents in the enterprise on OHS	( )	( )
• Reporting to the labour inspection OHS violations	( )	( )
• Accompanying labour inspectors during their visits	( )	( )
• Consulting with preventive services	( )	( )
• Accompanying OHS technicians during risk assessments	( )	( )
• Submitting a proposal to halt work activities due to clear imminent risks	( )	( )
• Participating in collective bargaining	( )	( )
• Other:		
.....	( )	
	( )	
	( )	
.....		
.....		

As a health and safety representative (HSR): Have you carried out any activity regarding the environmental impact of your enterprise?



( ) *GO TO THE NEXT*

( )

What kind of action?

Requesting information from

( )

Consultation with unions

( )

Informing workers

( )

Presenting proposals to the

( )

Lawsuit against the company

( )

Other:

.....

enterprise

for environmental violations

.....



Do you consider the activity of the enterprise you work for may have a **negative environmental impact** (for instance, release of fumes, polluting substances, waste, noise, depletion of scarce natural resources, energy consumption, etc.)?

Big ( )      Moderate ( )      Little/None ( )

Do you think a HSR may influence the practices of the enterprise to **avoid negative environmental effects**?

Strongly ( )      Considerably ( )      Slightly /No influence ( )

Do you think a HSR should involve in environmental activities regarding the problems caused by the enterprise as a part of his duties?

YES ( )

NO ( )

### 3. CONDITIONS AND ATTITUDES IN THE ENTERPRISE

How would you rate occupational risks in your enterprise regarding to the following problems?

	High	Moderate	Low/None
Risk of work accidents	( )	( )	( )
Exposure to dangerous or toxic chemicals (smoke, gases, vapors, aerosols, etc.)			( ) ( ) ( )
Risk of contracting an infectious disease (contact with bacteria, viruses, etc.)	( )	( )	( )
High and uncomfortable levels of noise	( )	( )	( )
Inadequate temperature	( )	( )	( )
Intense physical efforts, fatigue	( )	( )	( )
Handling heavy loads	( )	( )	( )
Repetitive movements	( )	( )	( )
Strenuous postures for long periods of time (sitting, standing, bent, etc.)			( ) ( ) ( )
Intensification of work	( )	( )	( )
Monotonous, boring or isolated work	( )	( )	( )
Working schedules and shifts	( )	( )	( )
Job insecurity	( )	( )	( )

In your view, is OHS adequately addressed in your enterprise?

YES ( )

NO ( )

Has the management assigned OHS duties and responsibilities along the chain of command?

YES ( )

NO ( )

Does your enterprise spend money to protect workers OHS?

YES, ENOUGH ( )

YES, BUT NOT ENOUGH ( )

)

NO ( )

Has the enterprise carried out a risk assessment?

NO

( )

*GO TO THE NEXT*

QUESTION

YES

( )

Have all the risks been covered?

YES ( )

NO ( )

Have workers and HSR participated?

YES ( )

NO ( )

Is there a planning and priority list on preventive actions?

YES ( )

NO ( )

Have workers and HSR participated in this planning?

YES ( )

NO ( )

Please indicate the frequency of the following situations in your enterprise (thick “Does not apply” if you never have experienced the case):

	Always/ Very often	Sometimes	Never	Does not apply
The management expedites my tasks as health and safety representative	( )	( )	( )	( )
The management implements my recommendations as HSR or those of the Health and Safety Committee	( )	( )	( )	( )
The managements grants access to all available OHS documents	( )	( )	( )	( )

The management is willing to discuss  
negotiate OHS issues with me

( )

( )

( )

( )

#### 4. TRAINING AND INFORMATION

Were you trained in OHS?

NO  
QUESTION  
YES

→

.....

( )  
*GO TO THE NEXT*

( )

Who provided training?

Union

( )

Employer

( )

Other

( ) (explain)

working hours?

Were you trained during

Yes, partly

( )

No

( )

Yes, totally

( )

have you completed?

How many hours of training

Less than 10 hrs

( )

Between 30 and 50 hrs ( )

Between 10 and 30 hrs  
( )  
More than 50 hrs  
( )

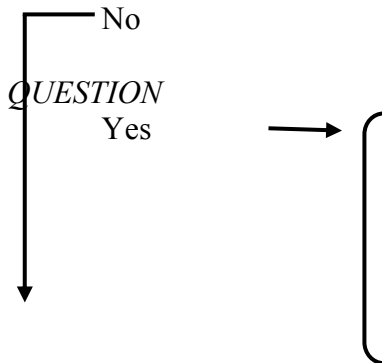
training after the basic courses?

Have you updated your

No  
( )

Yes  
( )

Did you undergo environmental training?



( )  
*GO TO THE NEXT*  
( )

Who provided training?

Union  
( )  
Employer  
( )

Other  
( )  
(explain)

.....

were completed?

How many hours of training

Less than 10 hrs

( )  
Between 30 and 50 hrs (

)

Between 10 and 30 hrs  
( )  
More than 50 hrs  
( )

Indicate if you are familiar with the following resources related to your tasks as HSR and if they prove useful for your activity:

**ONLY FOR CC.OO. SAFETY REPS:**

	<b>Familiar and useful</b>	<b>Familiar but not useful</b>	<b>Not familiar</b>
Trade union guides and brochures	( )	( )	( )
Por Experiencia magazine	( )	( )	( )
DAPHNIA magazine	( )	( )	( )
ISTAS website	( )	( )	( )
Trade union OHS advisors	( )	( )	( )

**FOR NON CC.OO. SAFETY REPS:**

	<b>Familiar and useful</b>	<b>Familiar but not useful</b>	<b>Not familiar</b>
Trade union guides and brochures	( )	( )	( )
Magazines	( )	( )	( )
Trade union website	( )	( )	( )
Trade union OHS advisors	( )	( )	( )

## 5. RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

How far do you agree with the following statements?

“I am **adequately trained** to perform my duties as health and safety representative (HSR)”

Fully agree (   )

Somehow agree (   )

Slightly agree (   )

“I do have the **necessary time** to perform my duties as HSR”

Fully agree (   )

Somehow agree (   )

Slightly agree (   )

“My **trade union** provides me with the necessary means for my **training** as HSR”

Fully agree (   )

Somehow agree (   )

Slightly agree (   )

“My **trade union** provides me with the necessary **information** to perform HSR duties”

Fully agree (   )

Somehow agree (   )

Slightly agree (   )

“My **trade union** provides useful **consultation** on aspects related to my HSR duties”

Fully agree (   )

Somehow agree (   )

Slightly agree (   )

“My **trade union** will **visit** my enterprise if I need it”

Fully agree (   )

Somehow agree (   )

Slightly agree (   )

“As a HSR I feel adequately **supported and represented** by my **trade union**”

Fully agree (   )

Somehow agree (   )

Slightly agree (   )

Indicate the disposition of the following agents towards OHS and your duties as HSR in the enterprise:

	Facilitate the performance of my duties	Difficult the performance of my duties	Neutral (no influence)	I've had no relation with them
Supervisor and intermediate managers	(   )	(   )	(   )	(   )
Mutual Insurance Agency or Preventive Service	(   )	(   )	(   )	(   )
Other unions in the enterprise	(   )	(   )	(   )	(   )
Labour Inspection	(   )	(   )	(   )	(   )
Workers	(   )	(   )	(   )	(   )

**THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION**