



EXOSKELETONS

Content



© Festool GmbH

Lead topic

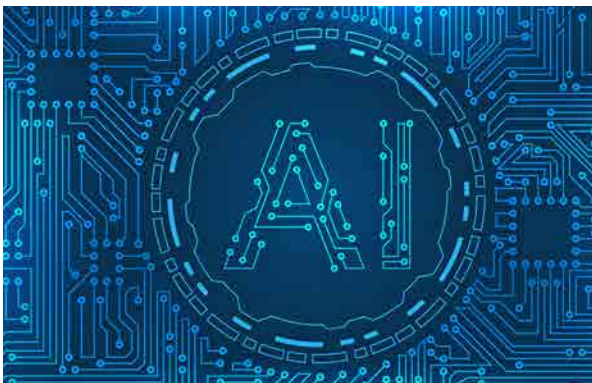
- 04** Safe use of exoskeletons as work equipment:
KAN's position paper

Themes

- 06** Three questions for: Kai Schweppe, chair of KAN
07 KAN study: OECD Test Guidelines and the scope
for influencing them
09 EUROSHNET Conference 2026
11 Navigating the OSH rules and information jungle
13 Effective internal supervision to ensure
the success of standardisation work



© Kanusommer - stock.adobe.com



© -MadDog- - stock.adobe.com

14 In brief

KAN report on standardisation in workplace and
building regulations

Digital Omnibus on AI

ELINYAE joins EUROSHNET

EU news flash

Changes among the KAN membership

15 Events



Also available in digital form:

With KANMail, we keep you up to date four times a year by
delivering the latest edition of the KANBrief straight to your
inbox.

Subscribe to KANMail now:

www.kan.de/en/service/kanmail



© Südwestmetall

Kai Schweppe

Chair of KAN

Unternehmer

Baden-Württemberg (UBW)

Exoskeletons: focus on product safety

The example of exoskeletons demonstrates the potential complexity of interests in standardisation. Through KAN, the German stakeholders in occupational safety and health have formulated a joint position paper that highlights the significance of standardisation for the placing of exoskeletons on the market. The position paper has the purpose of ensuring that only products that are safe and not detrimental to health are used in the workplace.

In addition, KAN draws attention in the position paper to aspects that must be addressed by standards containing product requirements for exoskeletons. Besides ergonomic requirements, these aspects also concern the requirements to be met by the exoskeletons' mechanical function, and methods by which this can be tested. In this context, we have set out clearly that standards must not govern any aspects of the safety and health of workers at work.

The diversity of standardisation with a bearing upon occupational safety and health can be seen from the examples of climate change and the digital transformation. The associated risks were discussed by over 100 experts at the ninth EUROSHNET conference in Helsinki. For KAN and the other organisations attending the conference, the relevance of networking throughout Europe has grown steadily, not least because a large proportion of the standards relevant to us are developed at European level. Networking of the European occupational safety and health community is imperative, and EUROSHNET makes an important contribution here. Against this background, we are very pleased to note the entry of ELINYAE, the Greek occupational safety and health institute, to EUROSHNET in the lead-up to this year's conference.

«

Safe use of exoskeletons as work equipment: KAN's position paper on the standardisation of exoskeletons

Exoskeletons have the potential to provide workers with relief and support during activities that are muscle-intensive or involve constrained postures. Standards organisations are currently conducting projects to formulate product requirements for exoskeletons. KAN has published a position paper on the standardisation of exoskeletons¹. This now serves as a basis by which the perspective of occupational safety and health stakeholders can be presented during development of the standards.

The DGUV defines exoskeletons as technical systems worn on the body and exerting a force upon it through mechanical coupling. Their purpose is to support the musculoskeletal system during physical work. These systems are increasingly used as work equipment in companies. In addition to providing relief during muscle-intensive work, exoskeletons provide support during activities involving forced postures, such as work performed above shoulder level. The occupational safety and health community aims to ensure that only products that are safe and not detrimental to health are used in the workplace. Furthermore, exoskeletons should be used to reduce physical stress, and not solely to increase productivity. Their use in the workplace must always follow the "TOP" hierarchy of measures, i.e. technical solutions must take precedence over organisational and personal measures.

Many of these objectives could be achieved through high-quality safety standards. To date, the standards organisations DIN, CEN and ISO have not yet published any product standards addressing exoskeletons. However, work on a DIN technical specification (DIN/TS 33442, Exoskeletons – General requirements and test methods) is nearing completion. This document is the first to set out requirements for design and instructions for use, and establishes a framework for testing exoskeletons' technical and functional properties. Formulating such uniform descriptions presents a challenge, as the wide variety of exoskeleton designs and areas of their application makes uniform assessment difficult. It should also be noted that exoskeletons meet the definitions set out in European legislation relating to machinery, medical devices and personal protective equipment (PPE) and may therefore fall within any of the corresponding legal frameworks, depending on how the manufacturer defines their intended use. Together, these aspects prompted KAN to formulate a position agreed between the German stakeholders in occupational safety and health on the standardisation of exoskeletons, with a view to influencing the content of the relevant standards and ensuring that only exoskeletons that are safe and not detrimental to health are placed on the market.



© Festool GmbH

Agreed occupational safety and health position on standardisation

In February 2026, representatives from all stakeholder groups represented within KAN met for an expert discussion to agree on the German occupational safety and health opinion on the standardisation of exoskeletons, and to set it out in the form of a KAN position paper. This also involved an exchange of views on the legal classification of exoskeletons within the European Single Market, as this may also have implications for standardisation.

The KAN position paper first lists aspects that must be taken into account by standards containing product requirements for exoskeletons. In addition to ergonomic requirements, it lists requirements relating to exoskeletons' mechanical function and the methods for testing it. A key focus lies on the instructions for use which are deemed necessary. It is important that the capabilities and limitations of the exoskeletons be communicated to users transparently. Manufacturers must, for example, provide information on what measures are required in the event of an emergency, and whether a vehicle can be driven by a person wearing the exoskeleton. Furthermore, KAN expects a product standard to require information with which users can compare different exoskeletons and select the product most suitable for their workplace situation. KAN's position also emphasises that standards must not govern aspects of the safety and health of workers at work.

A wide variety of exoskeletons exist: they support different parts of the body, and also differ in the workplaces in which they are suitable for use. Long-term studies always reflect individual situations and do not therefore lend themselves to generalisation. KAN concludes that standards must not contain blanket statements or requirements, for example regarding procedures for testing the effectiveness of the relief provided by the exoskeletons, the safety of the exoskeletons for the musculoskeletal system, or mental stresses associated with their use.

Exoskeletons may fall within the scope of various areas of European law. Depending on their design, they may meet the definitions for machinery, medical devices or personal protective equipment (PPE). KAN outlines various consequences for cases where exoskeletons are classified as PPE by the manufacturer and placed on the market within the European Union. One of these is that the risk against which the exoskeleton is intended to provide protection must be described. A further criterion for placing the product on the market is proof of its protective action. KAN also notes that no known exoskeleton is currently certified as PPE and that the responsible expert group of the European Commission has not classified any assessed exoskeleton as such. KAN concludes from this that at present, no need exists for standards that set out specific requirements concerning PPE in the form of exoskeletons. Care must be taken to avoid giving the impression that such standards could form the basis for certifying an exoskeleton as PPE.

Future standardisation activities

The KAN position paper was adopted in July 2026. The development of DIN/TS 33442, referred to above, was closely monitored by the occupational safety and health community. It meets almost all the criteria set out in the KAN position paper. DIN plans to submit an application for standardisation at ISO level for a product standard for exoskeletons. Although the DIN/TS technical specification will serve as the basis for this standard, it is anticipated that discussions with experts from around the world will result in significant changes to the text. The KAN position paper provides German stakeholders in occupational safety and health with arguments in this process. It can also be used to recruit allies from other countries and thus to exert even greater influence collectively on this standardisation project and any further projects, with the aim of producing exoskeletons for use as work equipment that are safe, ergonomic and suited to practical use.

*Dr Michael Thierbach
thierbach@kan.de*

¹ www.kan.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Dokumente/KAN-Positionen/en/2026-07-13_KAN-Position_Standardisation_of_exoskeletons-en.pdf

Three questions for: Kai Schweppe, chair of KAN

The chair of KAN rotates every two years between representatives of employers, employees and the state, respectively. In April this year, Kai Schweppe (representative for the employers' side; Baden-Württemberg Industry and Employers' Association, UBW) assumed the chair.



© Südwestmetall

Four years have passed since the end of your last term of office, which ran from 2020 to 2022. What developments in the field of occupational safety and health and standardisation do you consider the most significant during the period since then?

The OSH and standardisation ecosystem has been in a state of flux over the past four years. My last term of office was marked primarily by technical topics. Since then, by contrast, occupational safety and health concerns in standardisation have become considerably more politicised. One of the key drivers of this change has been the “Malamud ruling” regarding free access to harmonized European standards, which has considerably increased the pressure on standards organisations. It has also led to an appreciable backlog in the listing of harmonised standards in the Official Journal of the EU. ISO and IEC standards adopted as European standards are particularly affected by this backlog. As a result of the intense pressure on the standardisation system to deliver results more quickly, the European framework is undergoing revision. Examples are the EU Standardisation Regulation and a streamlining of the standards organisations' internal structures.

Concurrently with these developments, ongoing standardisation work in the field of artificial intelligence (AI) is a key focus. Underpinning the AI

Regulation is currently one of the European Commission's key priorities. Policymakers are calling for standardisation activity to be accelerated considerably in order to create legal certainty; this is, however, a complex and delicate undertaking. A faster pace of standardisation must not result in the opportunities for stakeholder participation being restricted.

Efforts, at times far-reaching, have been and are being made by Germany to reduce bureaucracy. In this context, what benefit can standards contribute to occupational safety and health, and what role does KAN play?

Standards significantly reduce the pressure on the legislative process – but only if they are used judiciously. A classic example of the effective avoidance of bureaucracy is the New Legislative Framework, which keeps legislation streamlined. Technical product properties are addressed by harmonised standards, enabling adjustments to be made more swiftly and with greater flexibility.

At the same time, we must be vigilant if we are to prevent standardisation from creating a further regulatory layer. A risk exists of bureaucratic creep, particularly if standards include complex or excessive certification requirements. Where the safety and health of workers at work is concerned, responsibility lies primarily with the social partners and other OSH stakeholders. These parties are well placed to find solutions that are much better tailored to the specific requirements in companies than those that could be reached by generic standardisation activity.

KAN assumes an important function in this context, as it relieves the occupational safety and health stakeholders of some of their workload by continuously monitoring work items in standardisation and subjecting them to expert evaluation. The objective is to ensure at an early stage that standards impacting

upon occupational safety and health add genuine value and do not lead to unnecessary administrative hurdles.

Developments such as artificial intelligence and efforts to establish management system standards are just two examples of how KAN's remit has expanded significantly over the years. In what areas do you currently see the greatest challenges with regard to occupational safety and health and standardisation?

Developments in the area of AI and in management system standards highlight a key trend: the increasingly interdisciplinary nature of occupational safety and health. We are witnessing more and more aspects of occupational safety and health appearing in standards that did not include such aspects in their scope in the past.

In the first instance, this is a positive sign: it shows that occupational safety and health is firmly anchored in the collective consciousness and is consistently given consideration when new developments emerge. The fact that occupational safety and health is now viewed as an integral part of a range of specialist fields rather than in isolation represents significant progress. However, this presents a significant challenge for an occupational safety and health regime that is to be fully functioning. We must prevent the emergence of a thicket of conflicting regulations that only leaves users baffled. A coherent and comprehensible system is crucial if parties responsible for the safety and health of workers at work are to be given the reliable guidance they need for practical implementation.

This is precisely the area addressed by KAN's work. Our task is to coordinate the different strands of standardisation and to monitor them for consistency, in order to ensure the practicable and legally sound implementation of occupational safety and health across the board.

KAN study: The procedure for development of OECD Test Guidelines and the scope for influencing them

OECD Test Guidelines are globally recognised standards for the testing of chemical substances. They are closely linked to European chemicals legislation, and also indirectly influence occupational safety and health. A recent KAN study shows how these test guidelines are developed and how occupational safety and health perspectives can be presented during their development.

The KAN study, OECD Test Guidelines, Standardisation and Occupational Safety and Health, provides guidance for occupational safety and health experts in the form of general information on the OECD Test Guidelines and the process by which they are developed¹ within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In particular, the study highlights the opportunities available to experts to comment on and contribute to the test guidelines. It also explains the links between the OECD Test Guidelines and standardisation activity.

What relevance do the OECD Test Guidelines have to occupational safety and health?

The OECD Test Guidelines provide standardised test methods for assessing the physicochemical properties, toxicological and ecotoxicological effects and environmental behaviour of chemicals. The data collected by means of these methods is recognised by all OECD member states for regulatory purposes (Mutual Acceptance of Data)². Serving as they do as the basis for the assessment of hazardous substances, the OECD Test Guidelines are particularly relevant to occupational safety and health.

The relevant European chemicals legislation in this context is, in particular, Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 concerning the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH) and Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures (CLP Regulation). These regulations oblige companies to provide data, for example by means of safety data sheets, on the risks and properties of substances. EU law establishes standardised test methods for the assessment of chemical substances, drawing on many OECD Test Guidelines for this purpose. Many technical standards also refer to these guidelines. Consequently, OECD Test Guidelines frequently serve as guidelines for the acquisition of data.

The data generated in this way also serves as the basis for occupational safety and health measures, as it is used to analyse workplace hazards and determine protective measures. Consequently, the OECD Test Guidelines have an indirect impact on occupational safety and health regulations and workplace practice despite being referred to explicitly neither in the German Hazardous Substances Ordinance (GefStoffV), nor in the TR Technical Rules for Hazardous Substances. The German Recommendation 409 on hazardous substances, concerning use of REACH information for occupational safety and health³, describes in detail the interaction and interfaces between the REACH Regulation and German occupational safety and health legislation.



©Karusommer - stock.adobe.com

How are OECD Test Guidelines developed?

OECD Test Guidelines are developed within the OECD by means of a multi-stage process. Responsibility for coordination lies with the Working Party of National Coordinators of the Test Guideline Programme (WNT), a body comprising national coordinators from all OECD member states. In Germany, the national coordinators are appointed by the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) and the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR).

New projects or proposals for amendments to existing test guidelines are submitted by the national coordinators. Among the conditions for inclusion in the work programme are a need for regulation and a contribution to international harmonisation of hazard and substance assessment. Once a project has been included in the work programme, a lead country or a working group produces a draft.

This is followed by several rounds of consultation. First, expert groups review the draft. The members of these groups are appointed by national coordinators as experts, rather than representing national positions. The first review is followed by the WNT consultation. During this stage, the national coordinators contact experts in their respective countries in order to draw up national comments with these experts' support. In addition, selected external bodies such as the European Commission and the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) may also submit comments.

The draft is then adopted by the WNT. Following approval at higher level by the OECD Chemicals and Biotechnology Committee, the document is published and assigned an official TG number⁴.

How can the occupational safety and health community become involved?

Besides the national coordinators, the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA) plays an important role in Germany by monitoring the Test Guidelines programme with regard to its relevance to occupational safety and health. It also contributes actively to some of the OECD Test Guidelines and supports the involvement of researchers.

Although no provision is made as yet for occupational safety and health representatives to be involved systematically in the development of OECD Test Guidelines, various means exist by which technical expertise can be contributed to the process and occupational safety and health requirements submitted to it. Experts can support the national coordinators for example by applying to participate actively in an expert pool⁵. Alternatively, experts may also contact the BAuA. The development process, including the opportunities for participation, is summarised comprehensively on the 'NanoHarmony' project website⁶. Current drafts of OECD Test Guidelines can be found on the OECD website⁷.

The KAN study is available (in German; English version to be published shortly) at: www.kan.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Dokumente/KAN-Studie/en/OECD_Test_Guidelines_Standardisation_and_OSH.pdf

*Maja aus der Fünter
info@kan.de*

¹ www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/topics/policy-sub-issues/testing-of-chemicals/work-on-test-guidelines.pdf

² www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/testing-of-chemicals/mutual-acceptance-of-data-system.html

³ www.baua.de/EN/Service/Technical-rules/TRGS/EmpfGS-409

⁴ www.umweltbundesamt.de/themen/chemikalien/chemikalien-management/oecd-pruefrichtlinien-programm#wie-entsteht-eine-neue-pruefrichtlinie

⁵ www.bfr.bund.de/chemikaliensicherheit/internationale-massnahmen-zur-chemikaliensicherheit/pruefverfahren-fuer-die-gefahrenbewertung/ausschreibung-bfr-expertenpool-fuer-oecd-pruefrichtlinienprogramm

⁶ <https://testguideline-development.org>

⁷ www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/testing-of-chemicals/test-guidelines.html
Scroll down to "Public Consultations"

EUROSHNET Conference 2026: Digital and green innovations – Shaping the future of occupational safety and health

How should standardisation, testing and certification respond to the digital and green transitions so as to contribute to workplaces being safe and healthy? At the end of May, over 100 experts from across Europe met in Helsinki to discuss these questions at the 9th EUROSHNET Conference on Standardization, Testing and Certification in Occupational Safety and Health.

The conference focused on the two major transformational processes of our time: climate change and digitalisation. Both are having significant impacts on the world of work and present new challenges for regulation and standardisation. Raimo Antila, from the Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, emphasised that a single stakeholder alone is unable to cope with climate change and the digital transformation; close cooperation is called for between legislators, enterprises, the social partners, OSH institutions and standards bodies.

Occupational safety and health is a factor in competition. This point was made clear by Nikolaos Mitsouridis (Directorate-General for Employment of the European Commission) at the outset of the conference. He noted that occupational safety and health legislation in the EU is well established, but must be updated selectively where necessary.

The EU Standardisation Regulation is a key element of standardisation policy. The regulation's latest revision has the purpose of strengthening participation by relevant stakeholders in standardisation activity and of making standardisation processes more efficient, for example through new digital tools such as the Online Standards Development Platform (OSD) and the provision of standards in machine-readable form. However, Ewa Zielińska (Polish Standards Institute, PKN) made it clear during the discussion that speed must not be allowed to become an end in itself. Standardisation procedures need to be timely rather than fast. Otto Görnemann (SICK AG) reiterated that standards with a bearing on safety, in particular, require sufficient time for technical consultation, and that even digital tools are not able to change this fact.

Climate change

Climate change brings with it a multitude of new or heightened risks, such as an increase in heat stress and UV exposure, extreme weather events and the spread of infectious and allergic diseases. The low-carbon economy, the circular economy and alternative sources of energy are giving rise to new occupational safety and health requirements. The capacity of materials and electronic systems to function can also be impaired by environmental factors such as high temperatures.



© FIOH/TYÖTERVEYSLAITOS

Thomas Alexander (German Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) made it clear that numerous structures and tools are already available for tackling these challenges. He argued that above all, an integral approach – one covering all sectors and countries – must be pursued, rather than isolated solutions. Proven solutions to many problems already exist in other parts of the world, and could be adopted in Europe. This requires intensive international dialogue between the scientific community, the social partners and stakeholders in occupational safety and health.

Personal protective equipment

New technologies also necessitate further development of the EU Regulation on Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Pilar Cáceres (INSST) set out how aspects such as the online retail trade, smart PPE, and the differing needs of older people, people with disabilities, neurodiverse individuals, and children, and psychological factors such as cognitive overload or changes in risk behaviour caused by new technologies, have been given little or no consideration to date.

The presentation by Natalie Wilson (Workwear Solutions International) highlighted the urgent need for greater inclusivity in standards and standardisation committees. She criticised the dependence of many standards and products upon outdated anthropometric data and their failure to take the needs of women and other user groups adequately into account. A particularly striking example is that the smallest glove size tested against the standard is too large for 86 per cent of women. Poorly fitting PPE often leads to workers altering their own PPE themselves, which poses additional risks to safety and health. A study by the European Commission identified 76 PPE standards which, owing to their inadequate inclusivity, pose a safety risk and are in urgent need of revision.

Digitalisation and artificial intelligence

Health and safety regulations are not drawn up with consideration for artificial intelligence; conversely, AI systems do not necessarily take account of safety and health requirements. Nastazja Potocka-Sionek (University of Luxembourg) emphasised that gaps in regulatory provisions currently exist, particularly in the field of algorithmic management, and that further research is needed into the links between AI and risks to safety and health.

The participants of a panel discussion called for a balanced regulation addressing artificial intelligence. Above all, legal certainty is required, by manufacturers and users alike. At present, the requirements are in some cases inconsistent, and are interpreted in very different ways. The European AI Regulation must therefore be urgently translated into sector-specific provisions.

Digitalisation is closely linked to the issue of cyber security. Losses resulting from cyber attacks on businesses amounted to over €200 billion in 2023 in Germany alone. Jonas Stein (DGUV) and Jean-Christophe Blaise (INRS) outlined the relationship between the EU Machinery Regulation and the EU Cyber Resilience Regulation and called for greater attention to be paid to this issue, which is often neglected.

The future of standardization

Finally, the conference turned its attention to the future of standardisation. Kathrin Behnke (European Trade Union Confederation) emphasised that Europe has a particularly high standard of protection in the field of occupational safety and health and should also assert its values in international standardisation activity. At the same time, she pointed out that standardisation is not an appropriate tool for every social problem. Nor can or should it replace legislation. The participants were in agreement on one particular point: standards are an indispensable tool for promoting safety, interoperability and international trade.

EUROSHNET (the European Occupational Safety and Health Network) has been an important European platform for over 20 years, facilitating exchange between experts in occupational safety and health institutions, standards organisations, testing and certification bodies, the social partners, businesses and government bodies. EUROSHNET organises a European conference approximately every two years; the next conference is scheduled to be held in 2028 in Seville.

Information on EUROSHNET, images and presentations from the 9th EUROSHNET Conference can be found at: www.euroshnet.eu

*Sonja Miesner
miesner@kan.de*

*Michael Robert
robert@kan.de*

Navigating the OSH rules and information jungle

Documents concerning occupational safety and health take numerous forms, with each form having its own particular degree of binding legal force. This article provides an overview of the basic laws, rules and agreements governing safety and health at work.

Documents setting out the essential provisions governing occupational safety and health exist at the international, European and national levels. A distinction is drawn between two areas of legislation: product safety legislation, and that governing the safety and health of workers at work.

On the international level:

conventions concerning OSH; standards as a source of information

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is a specialised agency of the United Nations (UN). Its functions include drawing up legally binding **conventions** for its members. The conventions set out basic principles and rights in the workplace, such as the elimination of forced labour and child labour and assurance of a safe and healthy working environment.

Specific organisations exist in some cases for occupations in which workers' activity takes them across national borders. An example is the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), which serves seafarers. Like the ILO, the IMO is a specialised agency of the UN. One IMO convention is SOLAS, which addresses the safety of human life at sea.

No requirement exists for international standards developed by ISO or IEC to be adopted at either European or national level. Their incorporation into the European or national bodies of standards is possible, however, and may include modifications to the text. The application of standards is voluntary, except where explicit reference is made to them in legislation.

European level: product safety and minimum requirements for the safety and health of workers at work

Regulations and directives of the European Union constitute binding legislation. Regulations apply directly in all Member States; directives must first be transposed into national law by each Member State.

EU directives and regulations fully harmonise the safety of products (e.g. machinery, PPE or medical devices) within the EU and are supported by harmonised **European standards**. Within this structure, the European legislation sets out general objectives of protection. These are translated in harmonised standards into requirements for individual products or product groups that are suitable for application in practice. The harmonised standards are drawn up in response to a European Commission mandate and listed in the Official Journal of the EU. They give rise to a presumption of conformity: where a product manufacturer has observed the harmonised standards, market surveillance authorities are obliged to assume that the requirements of the underlying European legislation are met. The burden of proof is thus reversed.

The EU sets out minimum requirements in directives for the safety and health of workers at work. Member States are required to transpose these directives into national law; in the process, they may also adopt more far-reaching provisions than those of the EU. As a result, European standards do not have the same status with respect to the safety and health of workers at work as they do with respect to the Single Market.

All members of the European standards organisations CEN and CENELEC must adopt European standards unchanged in their national bodies of standards and withdraw any national standards that conflict with the content of these standards.

National level (Germany):

a dual system for the safety and health of workers at work

In Germany, the safety and health of workers at work is governed through a dual system involving interplay between the state and the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions. On the state side, the regulatory framework as a whole

comprises laws and regulations, which are binding, and a subordinate body of technical rules, which give rise to a presumption of compliance. Technical rules are drawn up by government committees and support the requirements of the occupational safety and health regulations (ordinances). An example of these are the Technical Rules for Workplaces (ASRs), which support the requirements of the German Workplace Ordinance (ArbStättV).

The **German Social Accident Insurance** issues legally binding DGUV Regulations (accident prevention regulations). The body of DGUV rules and regulations subordinate to these DGUV Regulations comprises DGUV Rules, DGUV Informative publications and DGUV Principles. These documents are available to employers and insured persons, and serve as guidance to them in fulfilling their obligations with respect to safety and health.

Purely **national standards and technical specifications** published by DIN are now few in number, existing only in areas for which European standards are not available.

Fast-track standardisation documents

To keep pace with technological developments or for the rapid standardisation of research findings, standards organisations publish special fast-track standardisation documents. At national level in Germany, these documents include DIN SPECS, VDE SPECS and VDE Application Rules; at European level, CEN/CENELEC Workshop Agreements (CWAs); and at international level, International Workshop Agreements (IWAs) and ISO Publicly Available Specifications (ISO/PASs). However, the essential principles of standardisation do not apply in full to these fast-track standardisation documents (for example, a public enquiry and the involvement of all stakeholders are not mandatory). KAN's view is that wherever possible, only standards in the strict sense should be used to define requirements or recommendations relevant to occupational safety and health, and that fast-track standardisation documents are generally unsuitable for this purpose.¹

Other standard-setting bodies

In addition to the institutions and standard-setting bodies mentioned above, a multitude of other organisations exist at both international and national level that develop rules for occupational safety and health. Some of these organisations cover a broad range of topics. Examples are the World Health Organisation (WHO guidelines), the Association of German Engineers (VDI guidelines) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD Standards and Test Guidelines). Other organisations specialise in the setting of technical standards for specific sectors (such as the DVGW for gas and water technology in Germany).

*Katharina Schulte
schulte@kan.de*

*Katharina von Rymon Lipinski
vonrymonlipinski@kan.de*

¹ www.kan.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Dokumente/KAN-Positionen/en/2024-05-22_KAN-Position_normungsaeahnliche_Dokumente-en.pdf

Further information

European standardisation policy

www.kan.de/en/topics/what-we-do/standardisation-policy/european-standardisation-policy

Leaflet issued by the German Social Accident Insurance Institution for the public sector in Hesse (UKH), providing an overview of occupational safety and health regulations (in German)

www.ukh.de/fileadmin/Medien/Medien/UKH/1-023_UKH_Flyer_Regelwerk_Arbeitsschutz.pdf

Effective internal supervision to ensure the success of standardisation work

To fulfil its mandate within the sphere of standardisation, the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV) does not only second experts to the standards committees. Through the position of standardisation officers, it has created internal structures which reinforce its effectiveness, both at the technical and administrative level.

Participation by the various stakeholder groups in standardisation activity is becoming increasingly relevant, as technical standards are growing in number and significance across all sectors. The field of occupational safety and health is no exception. On the one hand, the number of topics and sub-topics being standardised continues to rise. The need for further standards is not driven solely by new technologies and products; existing topics are also being expanded, giving rise for example to whole series of standards. At the same time, issues of technical policy and strategy are becoming increasingly important in standardisation. This is evident, for example, in Germany's national standardisation road maps – numbering around a dozen – on future-oriented topics such as AI, the circular economy and Industry 4.0.

The administrative overhead is also increasing, as participation in the development of standards not only requires a strategic overview of which topics are relevant and on which committees participation is justified. Membership of standards committees requires financial and human resources to be allocated. For example, secondment to a standards committee entails more than merely filling out an authorisation form. An assessment must first be performed of whether the relevance of the topic justifies an additional appointment. Based on an internally maintained register of all secondments, the German Social Accident Insurance subsequently checks the invoice for all memberships on standards committees for factual and numerical accuracy. The DGUV currently seconds experts to around 800 roles on German standards committees alone; further personnel are seconded by the individual accident insurance institutions.

Furthermore, the DGUV procures DIN standards for itself and its member institutions and organises their use. The purpose here is for the DGUV to take account of technical standards relevant to and useful for occupational safety and health, as part of its statutory prevention mandate. One means by which the DGUV achieves this is by incorporating discrete provisions contained in standards into its body of regulations. This requires the DGUV and DIN to reach agreements to this effect and manage their outcomes.

Standardisation officers are indispensable for the DGUV's standardisation activities

For tasks in standardisation activity to be addressed, internal structures must be put in place for the individuals involved in standards development. As a key stakeholder in standardisation, the DGUV has therefore supplemented the existing administrative structures of its expert committees with creation of the position of standardisation officer. The standardisation officers of the expert committees (15 in total) perform both technical and administrative tasks. They have become an indispensable part of the DGUV's standardisation activities.

The tasks of the standardisation officers particularly include:

- Coordinating standardisation work on their respective DGUV expert committees
- Serving as internal points of contact for standardisation work
- Providing regular feedback to the DGUV's administration on the authorisation of personnel on standards committees
- Contributing to a harmonised body of rules and regulations within German occupational safety and health, in accordance with the policy paper on the role of standardisa-



tion in the safety and health of workers at work

These varied and sometimes time-consuming tasks are conducted by the standardisation officers in addition to their other duties. Furthermore, when external requirements change, the tasks demand a certain degree of flexibility. For example, the comprehensive new funding model for standardisation work, introduced by DIN in 2025, requires administrative processes to be restructured and expanded. The standardisation officers work closely with the DGUV's administration on this and many other issues, and are in regular dialogue with each other. The standardisation officers' role is purely internal.

The German Social Accident Insurance is convinced that standards can make an important contribution to safety and health at work and that involvement in standardisation activity is worthwhile. The contribution visible to the outside world, i.e. participation on standards committees, is only one part of this commitment, and must always be underpinned by internal structures.

Finja Meyer
finja.meyer@dguv.de

KAN report on standardisation in workplace and building regulations

Overlap and conflicts may arise between standardisation within the scope of German building regulations law on the one hand and the body of subordinate regulations under German workplace law, including the relevant standards, on the other. KAN has commissioned and published a legal opinion by the law firm Redeker Sellner Dahs, which sheds light on this area of potential conflict. In particular, the legal opinion discusses the consequences for users of standards (e.g. employers, building owners, architects/planners) in cases where standards in the area of building regulations law conflict with German occupational safety and health regulations (such as the Technical Rules for Workplaces (ASRs)) or standards setting out requirements for workplace premises.

The legal opinion shows that the problem of inconsistent requirements exists primarily at the subordinate regulatory levels. In practice, such conflicts are the exception rather than the rule. On the rare occasions where they do occur, however, they may have far-reaching legal consequences, particularly for the user of the body of standards and regulations.

The results of the legal opinion are intended to support positions, particularly during committee work, and to assure even greater coherence in the body of standards and regulations.

Link to the report: https://t1p.de/KAN-Gutachten_Bau-Arbeitsstaetten

Digital Omnibus on AI

On 24 July, the Digital Omnibus on AI was published in the Official Journal of the EU. This EU Regulation amends several aspects of the EU AI Act. The provisions governing the high-risk AI systems listed in Annex III of the AI Regulation and those governing AI systems embedded in products, for example, will now not apply until 2 December 2027 and 2 August 2028 respectively.

An amendment presented at short notice and that long remained contentious was that in future, requirements concerning high-risk AI systems in machinery should be set out solely in the Machinery Regulation. To this end, the Commission is to lay down health and safety requirements for machinery that concern AI in a delegated act.

Furthermore, the Digital Omnibus on AI introduces new obligations for the marking of content generated by AI, and also a ban on applications that create non-consensual intimate material ("nudification applications").

ELINYAE joins EUROSHNET

ELINYAE, the Greek occupational safety and health institute, joined the EUROSHNET network for standardisation, testing and certification in occupational safety and health at the end of May, making it the network's eighth member. On the eve of the 9th EUROSHNET Conference in Helsinki, EUROSHNET chair Rena Bardani signed the updated partnership agreement together with the other EUROSHNET Steering Committee members.

"ELINYAE is proud to join EUROSHNET," said Bardani. "We look forward to a dynamic and fruitful cooperation with EUROSHNET and its distinguished members. Through this participation, ELINYAE strengthens its connection with leading European OSH institutions, gaining access to high-level expertise, knowledge exchange, and the latest developments in standardization, workplace safety, new technologies, and prevention practices."

www.euroshnet.eu

EU news flash

The European Commission has placed all information on the Digital Product Passport (DPP) on a central website. The European DPP Registry has also been launched. The registry stores a unique identifier and mandatory information on each product.

<https://t1p.de/EU-DPP-website>

CEN/CENELEC have published the first European standards on the Digital Product Passport. Among the aspects addressed by these standards are data exchange, data storage, unique identifiers and access rights management. Six of the eight standards were listed in the Official Journal of the EU in July.

<https://t1p.de/DPP-standards>

Changes among the KAN membership

Two personnel changes took place at KAN in June this year. Dr Bärbel Wernicke stepped down, being succeeded by Dirk Kostmann (both from DIN). Says Kostmann: "Standardisation is undergoing a profound process of transformation. The voice of occupational safety and health is of great importance in this process, particularly in European and international standardisation work, to ensure an appropriate level of protection. I look forward to actively supporting the joint efforts of KAN and DIN."

On the employees' side, Markus Nöthen succeeds Katrin Willnecker (both from ver.di). Nöthen emphasises: "As head of the occupational safety and health department, I view the issue of assuring health at work as my top priority. Standardisation can make a valuable contribution here, particularly in the field of product safety, and can ensure that work equipment is safe. The safety and health of workers at work is regulated elsewhere, and the use of standards for this purpose is appropriate only in exceptional cases. At KAN, I'm now making a contribution in both areas, and look forward to working with everyone."

KAN has 17 members: five representatives each of employees, employers and the state (two for the federal government, three for the state governments), and one representative each of the DGV and DIN.

Events



05.-07.10.26 » Dresden

Seminar

Maschinensicherheit und Produkthaftung

DGUV Akademie

https://asp.veda.net/webgate_dguv_prod/#p5 (📍 570012)

07.10.26 » Online

Fachveranstaltung "Dresdner Treffpunkt"

Usability in der Mensch-Roboter-Interaktion (MRI) - Ein Experten-Tool nach ISO 9241-110

Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin (BAuA)

www.baua.de/DE/Angebote/Veranstaltungen/Termine/2026/10.07-Dresdner-Treffpunkt-Mensch-Roboter-Interaktion

13.-15.10.26 » Köln

International Conference (DE/EN)

EU-Maschinenbautage:

EU-Maschinenverordnung und Maschinenrechtstag

MBT

www.maschinenrichtlinie.de

20.-22.10.26 » Stuttgart

Messe

Arbeitsschutz Aktuell 2026

Hinter Messe

<https://arbeitsschutz-aktuell.hinter-messe.de/>

19.-23.10.26 » Montreal (CAN)

International Conference ISRP 2026

Respiratory Protection:

Risks, New Realities, and New Challenges

ISRP/IRSST

<https://event.fourwaves.com/isrpmontreal2026>

04.11.-05.11.26 » Essen/hybrid

Seminar

Auswirkungen der neuen europäischen Maschinenverordnung für Krananlagen

Haus der Technik

www.hdt.de/VA26-00256

09.-12.11.26 » Dresden

Seminar

Mensch und Arbeit: Grundlagen der Ergonomie

DGUV Akademie

https://asp.veda.net/webgate_dguv_prod (📍 570010)

14.-20.11.26 » Hamburg

90th IEC General Meeting

Global Development. Driven by Standards.

International Electrotechnical Commission

www.gm2026.iec.ch

16.-18.11.26 » Dresden

Seminar

Manipulation an Maschinen und Anlagen: Risiken erkennen, Maßnahmen ergreifen

DGUV Akademie

https://asp.veda.net/webgate_dguv_prod (📍 570089)

25.11.26 » Online

Arbeitsmedizinisches Online-Kolloquium

Lärm

Institut für Prävention und Arbeitsmedizin der DGUV (IPA)

www.dguv.de/ipa/lehre/fortbildung

01.-03.12.26 » Hybrid/Köln

Seminar

EU-Maschinenverordnung (EU) 2023/1230

MBT

www.maschinenrichtlinie.de/fortbildung/seminare/maschinenverordnung/

14.-17.12.26 » Sankt Augustin

Seminar

Sicherheitstechnik von Maschinen

Institut für Arbeitsschutz der DGUV (IFA)

<https://dguv.converia.de/frontend/index.php?sub=274>

Stay up to date:



@ **KAN** Mail

www.kan.de/service/kanmail



Gefördert durch:
 Bundesministerium
für Arbeit und Soziales
aufgrund eines Beschlusses
des Deutschen Bundestages

Impressum

Publisher

Verein zur Förderung der Arbeitssicherheit in Europa e.V. (VFA)
with the financial support of the German Federal Ministry of
Labour and Social Affairs

Editorial team

Commission for Occupational Safety and Health and
Standardization (KAN), Secretariat
Sonja Miesner, Tim Sausen
Tel. +49 2241 231 3450 · www.kan.de · info@kan.de

Responsible

Dr. Monika Maintz, Alte Heerstr. 111, 53757 Sankt Augustin, Germany

Translation

Marc Prior

Publication

published quarterly

ISSN: 2702-4024 (Print) · 2702-4032 (Online)