

# FCOS SELF PORTRAIT

Focusing on the prevention of  
occupational accidents and diseases

2017 edition



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Coordination Commission  
for Occupational Safety FCOS

PREVENTION  
OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

HEALTH PROTECTION

CONTROL  
COORDINATION



# Health and safety in the workplace

Measures for preventing occupational accidents, diseases and health complaints in the workplace are there to protect a company's most valuable assets: its people. The economy is reliant on healthy and efficient employees. Workers are thus the central focus of the activities of the Federal Coordination Commission for Occupational Safety (FCOS), and it is on their behalf that FCOS advocates. Occupational health and safety are prerequisites when it comes to maintaining the efficiency, productivity and competitiveness of the economy.

## Occupational safety pays off

Staff absenteeism costs a great deal of time and money. Studies show that the costs often amount to several times the sums paid out by accident insurance. Alongside the direct costs of treatment and daily benefits, the companies concerned incur high indirect costs for overtime, production downtime, rescheduling and many other factors. The prevention of occupational accidents and diseases is therefore not only a statutory obligation, but also includes an economic element which should not be underestimated.

Companies that maintain a good system for ensuring the health and safety of their employees reap countless benefits:

- Greater productivity as a result of fewer absences
- Lower costs
- More efficient staff
- A better working environment
- A more positive image

Moreover, effective prevention spares employees and their families the pain and suffering that would otherwise result from various accidents and diseases. Keeping people healthy and safe at work – in the interests of everyone involved – is therefore one of the most important principles of modern business life.

## Prevention

Prevention means using appropriate measures to avoid hazardous incidents or situations. Behavioural prevention is oriented toward the actions of people, while situational prevention deals with the design of working environments.



# Employee protection in Switzerland

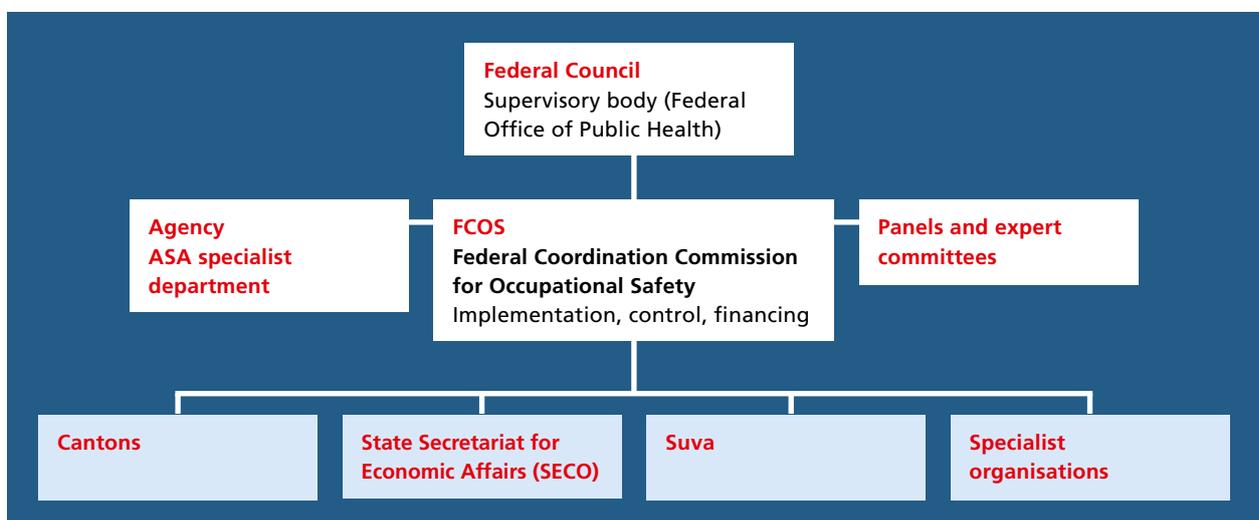
Health and safety in the workplace are currently governed by two regulations. Occupational safety, i.e. the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases, is governed by the Federal Act on Accident Insurance (AIA). The Federal Act on Employment in Business, Trade and Industry (also known as the Employment Act, or EmpA) includes the regulations on general health protection. The two laws each deal with circumstances governed under their respective aspects of protection, which overlap in some cases. The two sides of this legislation correspond to two parallel enforcement organisations with different funding methods and legal processes.

## Coordination is useful and necessary

In effecting the AIA in 1981, the Federal Council and Parliament recognised that the various implementation bodies charged with enforcing occupational safety within the meaning of this act would need a central information and coordination office. FCOS was therefore set up to harmonise the individual areas of implementation, ensure the uniform application of regulations in companies and coordinate prevention activities.

## Implementation bodies

The regulations in question are defined in the legislation. The monitoring and supervision of companies' compliance with occupational safety regulations are carried out by the statutory implementation bodies. These primarily include the cantonal labour inspectorates and Suva (the Swiss National Insurance Fund). SECO and various specialist organisations are also responsible for performing certain duties. FCOS is responsible for implementing, controlling and financing the activities of the implementation bodies.



## Protection

Effective protection aims to eliminate hazards to the greatest extent possible. Since this is not always achievable, it is necessary to have comprehensive safety concepts which guarantee protection by means of technical, organisational or personal protective measures.



## FCOS as a hub

**FCOS plays a control and coordination role in the area of occupational health and safety. It can be considered the nerve centre of the efforts undertaken in this regard. In view of the great many people and tasks involved, FCOS ensures that the available resources and measures are used efficiently while minimising duplication of work.**

### Structure of FCOS

The Federal Council elects the chairperson and members of the coordination committee, which is structured as follows:

- Three representatives from insurance carriers, including one representative from Suva and two representatives from private insurance companies or health insurers
- Eight representatives from the implementation bodies, including three representatives from Suva, two from the federal and three from the cantonal bodies responsible for implementing the Employment Act
- Two employer representatives
- Two employee representatives

The Federal Council elects a representative of Suva to act as chairperson.

### Tasks of FCOS

The main task of FCOS is to ensure that employees are protected as far as possible against occupational accidents and diseases. The duties and powers of FCOS are established in the Federal Act on Accident Insurance (AIA) and in the Ordinance on the Prevention of Accidents and Occupational Diseases (APO).

- It coordinates the areas governed by the various implementation bodies.

- It ensures the uniform application of regulations on the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases in companies.
- It may submit suggestions on the enactment of such regulations to the Federal Council.
- It may authorise Suva to enter into contracts with suitable organisations regarding the completion of specific implementation tasks.
- Its decisions are binding for insurance carriers and bodies responsible for implementing the Employment Act.

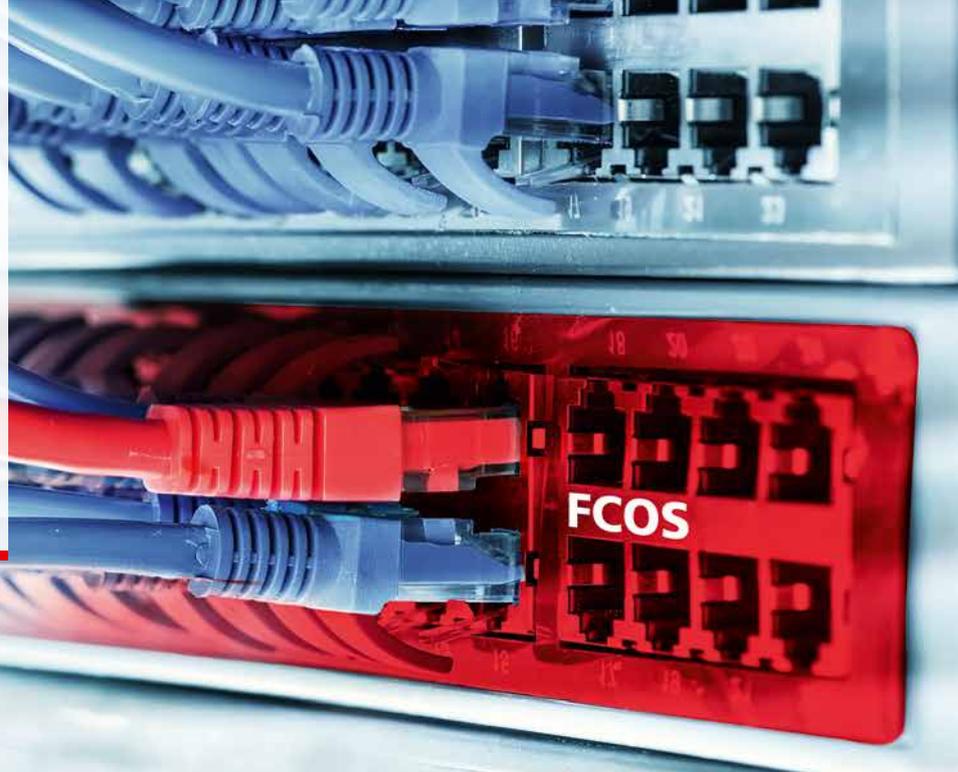
FCOS has been granted the authority necessary to carry out these tasks. Its activities are supervised by the Federal Council.

### Rights and obligations of FCOS

- FCOS is authorised to issue instructions to insurance carriers and implementation bodies.
- FCOS may determine the procedures that must be observed by the implementation bodies in carrying out controls, issuing instructions and enforcing regulations.
- FCOS may issue guidelines on the prevention of occupational accidents and diseases to ensure that the regulations on occupational safety are applied uniformly and correctly. In doing so it takes the corresponding international laws into account.
- FCOS may implement nationwide or regional

## Control

Pooling all of the available resources and applying the relevant specialist knowledge to corresponding responsibilities makes it possible to avoid duplication and manage preventive activities in an efficient, uniform way.



- programmes in Switzerland to promote occupational safety among specific groups of companies or occupations.
- FCOS promotes the provision of information and instructions to employers and employees within companies, as well as the provision of information, education and training to the implementation bodies.
- FCOS instructs the bodies responsible for implementing the Employment Act to report certain operations, facilities, work equipment and construction works (as well as certain hazardous work activities) which fall within Suva's area of responsibility.
- FCOS encourages the coordinated application of the Ordinance on the Prevention of Accidents and Occupational Diseases and other regulations.
- FCOS organises and coordinates the ongoing training of specialists in occupational safety with other institutions within the context of the Federal Council's regulations.
- In taking decisions on the use of the premium surcharge, FCOS controls the financing of the enforcement and prevention activities undertaken by the implementation bodies.

### FCOS partners

In order to fulfil its coordination role to the letter, over the years FCOS has built up a close network of various private and government agencies, institutions and organisations.

- Implementation bodies: Suva, cantons, SECO, specialist organisations
- Insurance carriers: Suva, Swiss Insurance Association (SIA), santésuisse, the individual private insurance companies

- Employers' social partners: Swiss Employers Confederation, Swiss Chamber of Commerce
- Employees' social partners: Swiss Federation of Trade Unions (SGB), Travail.Suisse
- Federal departments: Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), Federal Office of Justice (FOJ), SECO – Labour Directorate, Federal Chancellery
- Sponsors of industry and corporate group solutions, providers of model solutions
- Industry associations and companies
- Expert societies for specialists in occupational safety:
  - Swiss umbrella association for health and safety (suissepro)
  - Swiss Society for Occupational Safety (SGAS)
  - Swiss Society for Occupational Hygiene (SGAH)
  - Swiss Society for Occupational Medicine (SGAS)
  - Swiss Ergonomics Association (SwissErgo)
  - Study Group for Health Protection in Industry, Services and Trades (SGIG)
  - French-speaking Switzerland's Organisation for Occupational Medicine, Hygiene and Safety (GRMHST)
  - Threshold Value Commission (GWK)
- Freelance occupational safety experts: occupational physicians, occupational hygienists, safety engineers, safety specialists
- International organisations/institutions: International Social Security Association (ISSA); European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA, Bilbao).

# Professionalism and efficiency

**The aim is clear: safe and healthy workplaces. What is the best way to achieve this? It makes sense, depending on the task and industry at hand, to appoint special committees for this purpose. This is entirely in keeping with the principle of efficiency: everyone does what he or she does best.**

## How FCOS operates

FCOS works according to its rules of procedure, which are approved by the Federal Council. It usually meets four times a year. Its operations are prepared by the agency and carried out according to the decisions of the committee. FCOS and its **agency** are supported in their work by various agencies of Suva, SECO and IVA; by specialist organisations; and by special bodies (expert committees, expert groups, working groups).

The agency also works closely with Suva, which makes premises available to it, handles logistics (post, translation services, storage and dispatch of print, audio and video media, etc) and provides valuable support in managing and staffing expert committees.

## Expert committees

Expert committees are appointed for the preparation of particular operations, especially guidelines. They include representatives from the affected industry groups and experts in the field. Expert committees primarily draw up guidelines and take care of the material preparation of regulations. On each expert committee, qualified specialists from the fields in question work with at least one employer and one employee representative from the industries concerned. Some expert committees also include repre-

sentatives from the Federal Office of Public Health and the Federal Office of Justice. The following expert committees are currently in place:

- Expert Committee No. 12, "Construction"
- Expert Committee No. 13, "Chemicals"
- Expert Committee No. 14, "Work Equipment"
- Expert Committee No. 15, "Gases and Welding"
- Expert Committee No. 17, "Forests and Timber"
- Expert Committee No. 18, "Agriculture"
- Expert Committee No. 19, "Guidelines"
- Expert Committee No. 21, "Training Drivers of Industrial Trucks"
- Expert Committee No. 22, "ASA" (occupational physicians and other occupational safety specialists)
- Expert Committee No. 23, "Educational Matters"

## Expert groups

Expert groups comprise members and/or substitute members of FCOS. They prepare operations which, because of their significance, need to be handled by FCOS itself, but which cannot be dealt with in detail at the regular FCOS meetings due to a lack of time. The following expert groups are currently in place:

- The **finance committee** is responsible for supervising the medium-term development of finances, the level of the equalisation reserve and that of the premium surcharge.

## Networking

Occupational health and safety is a joint effort. Working together and integrating all the participants and activities at hand is the only way to handle the tasks and overcome the challenges involved in employee protection.



- The **budget committee** is tasked with collating the expected income and the permissible maximum expenditure for each financial year and presenting a draft budget to FCOS. It is also involved in basic issues relating to the short and medium-term allocation of resources and in the service contracts of the implementation bodies.
- The cantonal/SECO **remuneration committee** deals with checking the accounts of the bodies responsible for implementing the Employment Act, the list of activities eligible for compensation and the service contracts of FCOS with the cantons. It submits requests to FCOS for any necessary amendments or revisions to the regulation governing the remuneration payable to these implementation bodies.

## Working groups

The main task of the working groups is to prepare safety campaigns at the canton level. Such campaigns are supported by the publication of communication media (brochures, online information media, learning modules, etc). For example, campaigns have been carried out in the following industries/companies under the theme "Don't Leave Accidents to Chance!":

- Hospitality and hotels
- Car and bike trade
- Bakeries
- Offices (banks, insurance companies, the service sector in general)
- Dry cleaning
- Retail industry (specialist shops, supermarkets and department stores)
- Healthcare
- Out-of-hospital care (Spitex)
- Meat industry (in preparation)

## ASA specialist department

FCOS maintains an ASA specialist department that provides administrative and specialist support for the 100 or so industry solutions, corporate group solutions and model solutions that are currently available. It works in close collaboration with the relevant sector specialists from Suva, SECO and the cantons. The department also accompanies the approval and recertification procedures and provides specialist and organisational support to sponsors.

## Responsibilities of implementation bodies

Swiss legislators have determined that the Federal Council is to define the implementation bodies' areas of supervision. The corresponding details and ways in which these areas interact in practice are to be governed by FCOS. The responsibilities are divided up as follows:

- **Suva:** Suva is entrusted with a supervisory and consulting role in preventing occupational accidents in companies that deal with special operational hazards (which account for around 1.4 million employees) and a range of complex technical equipment and devices. Suva is also responsible for occupational health screening and the prevention of occupational diseases.
- **SECO:** The Working Conditions Division within the Labour Directorate at SECO is responsible in particular for supervisory and enforcement tasks in the area of workplace health and safety pursuant to the Employment Act (EmpA), and for occupational safety pursuant to the Federal Act on Accident Insurance (AIA). It supervises the application of regulations on the prevention of occupational accidents in federal enterprises in cases that do not fall under Suva's purview.
- **Cantons:** The cantonal labour inspectorates are responsible for advising and supervising the remaining companies (around 2.6 million employees).
- **Specialist organisations:** Specialist organisations monitor compliance with the accident prevention regulations in their specialist departments in accordance with special contracts they have concluded with Suva (with authorisation from FCOS).

### Cantons

26 cantonal labour inspectorates

#### Prevention of occupational accidents

General occupational accident prevention (no highly hazardous equipment) in companies that are not assigned to Suva:  
2.6 million full-time employees

(General clause, Art. 47 APO)

### State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

Labour Directorate Working Conditions Division:

- Federal Labour Inspectorate
- Labour and Health
- Employee protection
- Cross-sectional tasks and projects
- Chemicals and Occupational Health
- Product safety

#### Prevention of occupational accidents

- Involvement in companies within the purview of Suva
- Federal enterprises
- Uniform enforcement in the cantons

(General clause, Art. 48 APO)

### Suva

Health Protection Department with five divisions:

- Occupational Safety Lucerne
- Occupational Safety Lausanne
- Occupational Medicine
- Occupational Health Protection
- Prevention Methods

#### Prevention of occupational accidents and diseases

- General occupational accident prevention:  
1.4 million full-time employees
- For all employees:
- Company types, plants and equipment with high hazard potential that require particular specialist knowledge
  - Prevention of occupational diseases
  - Preliminary work
  - Publications
  - Information and training
  - Occupational preventive health screening
  - Threshold values in the workplace

(Art. 49 and 50 APO)

### Specialist organisations

electrosuisse  


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 SVGW  


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 SVS  


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 SVTI  


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 agriss  


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 BfA  


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#### Prevention of occupational accidents in special areas

- Special inspectorates: Electricity (electrosuisse)  
Mains-connected gases and liquefied gases (SVGW)  
Industrial, medical and liquefied gases; welding technology (SVS)  
Pressurised containers (SVTI)
  - Consulting:  
In agriculture (agriss)  
  
In the construction industry (BfA)
- (General clause, Art. 51 APO)

# Financial resources and appropriation

At first glance, occupational health and safety measures are expensive. Over the long term, however, these measures pay for themselves many times over. The corresponding expenditures therefore represent a real potential for profit.

## Prevention in the first place

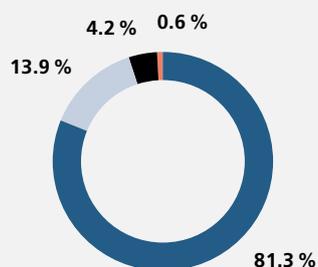
Workplace accidents not only cause a great deal of human suffering; they also involve significant costs. Both can be significantly reduced using targeted measures that benefit employers and employees alike.

## Financing

Employers bear the main responsibility for ensuring safety in the workplace. They must organise working processes

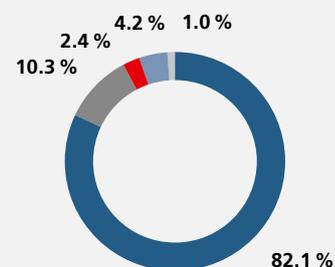
safely and allocate funds for safety equipment and personal protective gear. Employers also bear the costs incurred by the implementation bodies in supervising enforcement. An employer obliged to pay a premium for compulsory accident insurance currently pays a surcharge of 6.5 % on the net premium for occupational accident insurance. The total financial revenues currently come to around 115 million Swiss francs each year.

### Earnings (based on 2016)



- Suva 81.3 %
- Private insurance companies 13.9 %
- Health insurers (including those for public-sector staff) 4.2 %
- Capital income and incidental revenues 0.6 %

### Appropriation (based on 2018)



- Suva 82.1 %
- Cantons 10.3 %
- Specialist organisations 2.4 %
- Main tasks of FCOS 4.2 %
- SECO 1.0 %

## Balance

Only balanced solutions are sustainable. The fair and solution-oriented use of resources ensures optimum effectiveness and benefits all those involved, from employers and employees to insurance carriers and implementation bodies.



# Openness and transparency

**FCOS's fundamental principles include transparency in enforcing occupational safety and providing open access to information. After all, everyone involved has a justifiable need for a positive atmosphere based on trust.**

## Working together towards a common goal

All those responsible for occupational safety are obliged to pursue an ambitious objective: that of ensuring the best possible protection for a person's most important asset – their health. This is a goal that we can only achieve by working together, with the cooperation of everyone involved. FCOS attaches the greatest importance to this, which is why it openly publicises its intentions, plans, decisions and priorities. As part of its information and prevention activities, FCOS has developed a range of offerings, including publications, conventions and information materials.

Overview of the main offerings and information material available from FCOS:

- Guidelines
- Guidelines on occupational safety ([www3.ekas.ch](http://www3.ekas.ch))
- Brochures (general or topic-specific, e.g. the series of brochures entitled "Don't Leave Accidents to Chance!")
- Bulletin (on current issues; appears twice a year)
- Annual report
- Newsletters (for internal information to be brought to the attention of the implementation bodies)
- Training programmes
- Website: [www.fcos.ch](http://www.fcos.ch)
- Online training modules
- Online prevention tools, e.g. [www.fcos-box.ch](http://www.fcos-box.ch)
- Annual sponsorship convention for sponsors of industry-wide ASA solutions
- Annual workshop for representatives from the implementation bodies
- Swiss Conference on Occupational Safety (STAS), for managers and specialists in occupational safety (every two years)
- FCOS enforcement database for the implementation bodies

Publications can be ordered free of charge from the FCOS agency (as long as supplies last). **Online orders (available in German, French and Italian): [www.ekas.ch](http://www.ekas.ch) > Dokumentation > Bestellservice.**

For information, please contact:

FCOS, agency, Fluhmattstrasse1, 6002 Lucerne, tel. 041 419 51 11, [ekas@ekas.ch](mailto:ekas@ekas.ch)

## Communication

More than ever before, open and transparent communication is a must in our modern information society. Exchanging knowledge, insights and experience increases the effectiveness of prevention measures.



