



**Assessment of the occupational risks in the
workplace (multiplicative method):
Appendix 6 - Risks associated with
psychosocial factors**

	Group guide and manual		
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PSR/HSE Division	HSE		GM-GR-HSE-300 Rev. No.: 01 Date: 17/06/2020

Foreword	This English version is translated from the original French reference version.
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1 PSYCHOSOCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Psychosocial risk (PR) generally means the probability of difficulties or mental or psychosomatic pathologies caused by the work environment manifesting themselves.

The main factors of occupational PR are:


- The demands of the work (quantity, complexity, availability demanded);
- The emotional demands (relation with the customer, work relations, value conflicts, job insecurity);
- Autonomy, control and leeway (the amount of freedom to act, training level).

These only manifest themselves over time (stress, anxiety, burnout, depression, suicide).

1.1 Severity rating G

Rating G	Psychological stressors	Examples
15	Extremes that could result in the stoppage of all occupational activity	Situations of violence (burglary, hold-up, aggression by third parties, insecurity, etc.) Work in a region where the safety of civilian populations cannot be guaranteed. Major accident or particularly high risk situation
7	Important not requiring a work stoppage	Tense relations with the general public: claims management, call center, rudeness, violence, etc. Major restructuring/job insecurity
3	Multiple and repeated	<u>Demands of the work:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High workload, time pressure, complexity of the work, difficulty balancing life and work, frequent interruptions and disruptions, prolonged sustained concentration, management of emergencies, routine work not conducive to the development of competencies; - Work rate and hours, work in a isolated or confined space, night work, shiftwork; - Technical or organizational changes (e.g. new IT tools); <u>Autonomy:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vague/variable/multiple/contradictory goals, multiple hierarchies, too many or too little or poorly defined responsibilities, non-negotiable deadlines; - Under- or overqualification, procedural constraints, etc. <u>Emotional stress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constant pressure or stressor, not enough recognition, relationship with the general public, rudeness, lack of response/engagement, conflict of values, ethical conflict, difficulty balancing life and work; - Fear of accidents, experience of the suffering of others, necessity of not showing emotions, etc.

The following questionnaire on the seven psychosocial risk factors can facilitate the rating. A batch of questions can help determine a position.

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The psychosocial risk factors related to the HEG, not to individuals. The assessment group fills out the table below for each HEG (check where applicable with a remark as required). The rating for each psychosocial risk factor is determined by the number of checks.

The severity to be taken into account is the highest severity level.


However, the assessment group may move the severity level up or down \pm a level based on an expert opinion.

For example, if the severity G for three factors in seven is 7, the assessment group may decide to set the severity G of the situation at 15. The more stressors there are, the more they are repeated and the more the population is exposed, the higher the risk that PR will emerge, especially if there were events in the recent past.


	Severity →		1	3	7	15
7 psychosocial risk factors ↓	nc	😊	😊	😐	😐	😞
1 - Intensity and complexity of the work						
1.1 – Is the <u>HEG</u> subjected to high work rate stressors? The work rate can be imposed by internal constraints (speed of a machine, production norms, dependence on the work of colleagues elsewhere in the process chain) or external constraints (customer requests requiring an immediate response). These high work rate stressors demand employees to be almost constantly responsive and available, which causes stress.						
1.2 – Are the <u>HEG</u> goals clearly defined? The work goals set by the company guide the employees in their work. They may be quantitative (such as the number of sales per month) or qualitative (such as responding to the satisfaction of customers). If these goals are vague or nonexistent, employees lack guidance on what is expected of them in their work. As a result, discrepancies can develop between the goals they set for themselves and the targets set by the company.						
1.3 – Are the goals that have been set compatible with the means and responsibilities allocated to the <u>HEG</u> to achieve them? Work goals can be clearly set that are simply not realistic given the demands of the work and the resources available to the employees (human resources, technical means, actual responsibilities). There is a higher risk that the employees will run into difficulties and be dissatisfied.						
1.4 – Is the <u>HEG</u> given instructions or orders or asked to do things they find contradictory? The contradictions can be caused by different instructions from different people (hierarchical/functional staff, customer/company management). They may also be due to conflicting instructions, orders or requests. E.g. do they work quickly, meet the customer's personalized expectations within the time set. The need to reconcile these contradictions adds complexity to the work and increases the mental load for the employees. For example: if the person falls under more than one hierarchy.						
1.5 – Does the <u>HEG</u> have to change tasks, workplaces or jobs unexpectedly in response to the situation at a given time? Flexibility is a form of work organization in which one employee has various unrelated activities. This can cause problems when it is imposed. That is, when replacements have to respond off the cuff without preparation in an urgent situation. It is even more problematical when employees have not been trained in all these activities. As well as generating a higher risk of mistakes or accidents, imposed flexibility can be experienced as a loss of prestige and a sense of specialism by employees.						

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1.6 – Does the HEG have to frequently interrupt the work to attend to unforeseen tasks? Unexpected interruptions require employees to put their main tasks on hold to take care of other tasks. They split the work into pieces, disrupt the work and are a source of mental stress. They can lead to mistakes or bad experiences that give people the impression they are performing poorly and never have the chance to finish what they start.					
1.7 – Is the HEG responsible for activities that require sustained concentration or constant alertness? It is particularly hard for a person to maintain a high level of concentration or remain alert for long periods. Depending on the task, surveillance or control, say, or the complexity, this can cause tiredness, a loss of concentration or even a fear of making mistakes.					
2 - Difficult working hours					
2.1 – Can the HEG work more than 45 hours per week on occasions? Beyond a certain limit, the weekly work duration can have harmful health effects, regardless of how satisfied the employee is. Based on current scientific knowledge, it would be reasonable for employees not to work more than 45 hours per week.					
2.2 – Does the HEG work nights, alternate or irregular hours? Some patterns of working hours have harmful effects on the physical and mental health of employees. These include night work or alternating hours (3x8, 2x12...), irregular hours (especially evenings and weekends), split hours (11-15 h, then 18-21 h), and being on call (no set worktimes).					
2.3 – Is the HEG contacted outside regular working hours about work-related matters? Employees may be required to be available outside their regular working hours (weekends, nights). This restricts their opportunities for physical and mental recuperation. It also encroaches on employees' personal lives.					
2.4 – Is the HEG notified of his or her work schedule and any changes sufficiently well in advance? Uncertainty about working hours and unexpected changes to schedules make it harder for employees to make plans in their personal life. They can also force employees to reschedule their private appointments, especially if they have young children.					
2.5 – Does the company give the HEG the chance to find a good work/life balance? This can be facilitated by negotiating agreements on flexible working hours or the possibility of informal arrangements based on the needs of employees. Such arrangements can help them fulfil their private obligations (family, medical matters, personal matters).					
3 - Autonomy at work					
3.1 – Does the HEG have leeway in how he or she does the work to achieve the goals set? Low autonomy: The leeway in the work is due to the different options the employees have to organize and do their work as well as the techniques employed (actions, techniques, tools...). The greater the leeway, the greater the autonomy employees have in their work. Employees with little or no autonomy have little leeway and no way to influence how their work is done or to show initiative. These employees can disengage from work in which they have no stake.					


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High autonomy: Too much autonomy for low-skilled employees who are not very independent can also be a source of stress (work in an isolated environment). Employees who only do routine work cannot develop their competencies. If they always have to follow set procedures they could become less independent.					
3.2 – Can the HEG take a break from the work if deemed necessary? The possibility of deciding when to take a break is also an indicator of the level of autonomy employees have in their work. Short breaks give them a chance to rest or have a chat, which recharges their batteries and improves social relations in the company. Breaks also favour informal discussions about the work.					
3.3 – Can the HEG use his or her competencies and develop new ones? It is important here to determine whether the tasks and assignments designated to employees enable them to make full use of their competencies and develop new ones. Employees who are not able to make full use of their competencies or do not have opportunities for growth (through training, for example) will increasingly see their skills degraded. This can affect the employees' confidence and their abilities, and cause them to disengage from their work.					
4 - Emotional demands					
4.1 – Does the HEG have to deal with tense situations (with customers, users...) and complain about this? Poor service quality and long waiting times can generate discontent among the general public and create tensions with employees (verbal and/or physical altercations). This can affect the work of employees (interruption of the activity, more mistakes, demotivation, deterioration of the work climate, work relations...). There can be tense relations with the general public (rudeness) at the call centers, when managing complaints and mediating in conflict situations.					
4.2 – Must the HEG make a good impression at all times when working? The duty to be obliging and accessible to others is a demand that can be placed on some employees, in certain jobs that entail contacts with customers, for example. Generally, they can also be required to be enthusiast and passionate about their work around colleagues. This can affect their mental health when they are not able to express their true emotions or feelings.					
5 - Deterioration of social relations at work					
5.1 – Are relations between colleagues good (trust, assistance, friendliness in teams)? Does the quality of relations and the integration in the work collective affect health and wellbeing at work? When people are willing to assist others and work together tasks get done more easily. These are especially resources for employees who face unexpected, complex or difficult to manage situations. Depending on the context, the work collective can play a role of social integrator by promoting mutual support and friendly relations. On the other hand, this can lead to tension, rivalry or competition, which can be a risk factor for the mental health of employees. Working alone can also cause stress, because there's no one the employee can turn to.					
5.2 – Does the HEG get support from superiors? In addition to the quality of relations with the hierarchy, this is also about superiors being accessible, listening and taking action when employees need them (for example, to discuss a technical problem, sort out unexpected difficulties, arbitrate disparate interests and moderating conflicts). The absence of support from a superior can create a sense of isolation, frustration, weariness or injustice in employees.					
5.3 – Are company employees courteous and respectful of each other (no hurtful or discriminatory words or attitudes)? Violence in the workplace relates to all the attitudes, behaviours and hostile acts between company employees in the workplace, regardless of where they are located in the hierarchy. These can include degrading attacks, scornful behaviour, discrimination and even psychological abuse or sexual					

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harassment. Regardless of the form it takes (verbal, physical, psychological...) this violence is symptomatic of the deterioration of social relations in the company. It can have harmful effects on the physical and mental health of employees.					
5.4 – Is the work of the HEG recognized by the company? Recognition of the value of the work done, competencies or performance is key to building a positive work-related identity. Recognition can be shown by a pay rise, greater status or the offer of promotion. It can be practical (allocation of resources to get the work done in the right conditions) or symbolic (praise, award). The lack of recognition of work by the company can lead to a loss of self-esteem and the disengagement of the employee. It also has effects on mental and physical health.					
6 - Conflicts of values					
6.1 – Does the HEG feel that he or she delivers work of high quality? Being able to have pride in your work and achievements, the time and effort you put into it, helps make your work more fulfilling and highlights your personal contribution. On the other hand, having to rush your work or accept mediocre quality due to a lack of time or resources impact employees' mental health and work climate. The same is true when you have to do something that clashes with your work values (ethical conflict).					
6.2 – Does the HEG generally feel that his or her work is considered useful? The usefulness of work refers to the employee's significant contribution to the assignment designated by the company. Generally, employees feel their work is useful when it contributes in concrete terms to the results of the company or benefits other parties (customers, users, patients). Recognition of this contribution is an important factor in how useful employees feel their work is.					
7 - Job insecurity					
7.1 – Is the HEG faced with uncertainty about whether they will still be in a job in a few months' time? This uncertainty can lead to people worried about whether they will lose their job, see their income reduced or have their career stall (no promotion, forced to work part time).					
7.2 – Are changes adequately prepared and supported and clearly explained to employees? Generally speaking, (strategic, organizational, technological) change creates risks that overburden employees (the time needed for training and assimilating), call their competencies into question and make them lose the meaning they find in their work.					
7.3 – Situations of violence or extreme psychological stress that can lead to the cessation of all professional activity or repatriation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Situations of violence, aggression by third parties (hold-up, etc.) - Intervention in a major accident or risk situation - Fear of an accident occurring - Work in a region where the safety of civilian populations cannot be guaranteed (terrorism, conflict...). 					

Table 2: Matrix - Psychosocial risk factor (source INRS ED 6140).

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1.2 Rating of the duration of the task/situation entailing potential exposure F

Generally, the strain on the HEG is constant, F is rated as **10**.

If work situations can be clearly differentiated, the following scale is used:

Rating F	Exposure duration
6	Stressor present for 75% of the working time
3	Stressor present for 50% of the working time
2	Stressor present for 20% of the working time

Table 1: Matrix - Exposure duration F.


1.3 Potential exposure probability rating P

The potential exposure probability P of exposure to psychosocial risk factors when performing a task related to an organization and/or work conditions are highlighted, is **10**. It can be reduced to **6** if the activity is seasonal.

1.4 Residual exposure probability rating P'

Reduction of P	Means/measures of prevention/protection
-1	<u>Individual-based actions:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specific training depending on the stressor (change to the workplace/tools, management of difficult customers or contacts, teamwork, management of aggression, supervision to prevent psychosocial risks, etc.), - Implementation of a stress observatory, - Possible availability of a consultant psychologist, toll-free number, treatment of posttraumatic stress syndrome, social and psychological support in the event of major restructuring situations...
-2	<u>HEG-based actions:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction of technical resources to limit service station hold-ups: security hatches, automatic pump, electric strike, marker spraying, CCTV, police alert button... - Introduction of measures to change the organization that generates the PR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Presence of trained counsellors or trusted confidants AND specific procedures depending on the stressor: internal mediation (hierarchical or HR referrer, medical-social services, employee representative, designated trusted confidant) for interpersonal conflict situations. o AND processing of information on these structures and the medical stress observatory. - Psychosocial treatment of the HEG after a serious event, GM-GR-RH-005.
-3	<u>Long-term general actions:</u> <p>Existence of an up-to-date policy and program on preventing psychosocial risk factors, with a multidisciplinary task force, a clear definition of prevention objectives, and monitoring indicators.</p>

Table 3: Matrix - Reduction in potential exposure probability P.

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2 TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

ADA

Approach to alcohol, drugs and addiction

HOF

Human or organization factor.

Homogeneous Exposure Group (HEG)

Group of people with a similar exposure level based on the tasks they perform, the frequency of these tasks and the conditions in which these tasks are performed.

Posttraumatic stress

Posttraumatic stress syndrome can follow a direct and dramatic confrontation with a violent event putting life in danger (death or physical injury) leading to a long-term change

to the psychological balance and the quality of life of victims (intense fear, sense of powerlessness or horror).

Substances that can cause an accident

Substances that by their very nature alter behaviour or attention and so create or increase a risk of accident: alcoholic drinks, drugs, some medication, etc. This property of medication is assessed with regard to the workplace risks.

Isolated worker

Person who performs work out of sight or out of voice range who cannot be rescued quickly if there is an accident. The isolation can be physical or psychological.

3 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Reference	Title - Group documents
CR-GR-HSE-405	Industrial hygiene
GM-GR-RH-005	Preventing and treating post-traumatic stress

4 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Group kit on the RPS, available under WAT : <http://wat.corp.local/sites/s215/fr-FR/Pages/hygiene-sante/sante-poste-travail/kit-rps.aspx>

Guide INRS ED 6140 - Evaluer les facteurs de risques psychosociaux : l'outil RPS-DU.
<http://www.inrs.fr/media.html?refINRS=ED%206140>