

PARTICIPATIVE RISK SCREENING IN A SITUATION OF WORK: THE DÉPARIS METHOD

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1. Introduction

Many techniques were proposed for a "comprehensive analysis of a working station". Their fundamental interest was to systematize a primary diagnosis of the working conditions by analysing systematically the most significant risk factors.

Their limitations were mainly:

- To be poorly participative, since usually an "ergonomist" conducted the study without referring directly to the employees
- To use rigid scales difficult to adjust to a given industrial sector
- To assess the risks without looking directly for solutions

2. Criteria for a screening tool

On the basis of experience gained through these methods, criteria can be defined:

- To be simple, easy to understand and to use, user friendly and cost effective
- To be based solely on the intimate knowledge of the work situation by the employees
- To be usable by the employees and their staff, with, when available, the assistance of an occupational health and safety (OSH) professional.
- Not to require measurements but be oriented directed towards the search for solutions

3. Déparis

The **Déparis** screening method follows strictly these criteria. It includes 18 tables covering 18 aspects of the work situation: Operating areas; Technical organization between stations; Worksites, Accidents, Orders and signals; Tools and work materials; Repetitive work; Handling operations; Mental load; Lighting; Noise; Thermal environment; Chemical and biological risks; Vibrations; Working relations; Social environment; Work content; Psychosocial environment. It is available at <http://www.md.ucl.ac.be/hytr/new/en/index.html>.

4. Procedure

1. Information on the aims and commitment of the employer to take account of the results
2. Definition of a group of workers forming a work system
3. Designation, by the direction and the employees of a coordinator and 4 to 6 key-representatives
4. Brainstorming in a quiet room close to the workplaces, on
 - ◇ what can be made to improve the situation
 - ◇ what needs the assistance of a specialist
5. Synthesis by the coordinator with
 - the list of solutions with indication of **who** does **what** and **when**
 - the list of the aspects to be studied more in details
6. Presentation of the results to the workers and the management
7. Development of short, medium and long term action programmes

5. Validity

In about 100 work situations, Déparis proved to meet the criteria and be helpful in coordinating the interventions from the OHS professionals and in initiating a continuous process of management of the OHs problems in large as well as in small enterprises.