



Valsts darba inspekcija

LATVIA ANNUAL REPORT 2021

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Introduction

The State Labour Inspectorate (hereinafter – Labour Inspectorate) is the direct management authority, which is subordinated to the Minister of Welfare. Employers, businessmen, their authorized persons and enterprises, construction objects, including the construction objects belonging to a private individual during the time of construction works, as well as working areas and work equipment – all this is a subject to the supervision and control of the Labour Inspectorate.

Law on the State Labour Inspection, which has been adopted on 19 June 2008 and came into force on 10 July 2008, defines the legal status, function and tasks of the Labour Inspectorate.

The function of the Labour Inspectorate is to maintain the effective implementation, supervision and control of the state policy in the area of labour relations and occupational safety and health (OSH).

The Labour Inspectorate has set up two main activities directions:

1. Effective inspection and supervision of the labour legal relations and OSH area;
2. Services providing to customers, including public information on the current labour legal relations and OSH issues.

The main objectives of the Labour Inspectorate in 2021 were:

1. An effective and preventive process of undertakings inspections and compliance ensuring;
2. Customer-oriented counselling, ensuring of accessible and convenient the Labour Inspectorate services;
3. Targeted public information;
4. Development of the Labor Inspectorate human resources and modernization and improvement of internal processes.

The planning of the Labour Inspectorate activities was based on the principle of priority. Priorities were set based on analysing the current situation in the area of labour law and OSH, as well as taking into consideration the European Union (EU) policy planning documents (EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2021–2027, the Senior Labour Inspectors' Committee (SLIC) operational program), national policy planning documents (National Development Plan 2021–2027, OSH Development Plan 2021–2023, Social Protection and Labour Market Policy Guidelines for 2021–2027, Shadow Economy Restriction Plan 2021/2022, the Ministry of Welfare Operational Strategy 2020–2023), Guidelines on application of the “Consult First” principle in the work of the state authorities and the resources available to the Labour Inspectorate.

The Labour Inspectorate's priorities in 2021 were identified as:

- √ Implementation of the unregistered employment reduction policy through inspections of companies whose economic activities showed an increased risk of unregistered employment;
- √ Reduction the number of fatal accidents at work and accidents at work that led to the injured person's serious health disorders;
- √ Ensuring continuity and quality of activities of the Labour Inspectorate, including ensuring continuity of services vital to society (investigation of accidents at work and reduction of unregistered employment), in circumstances of increased epidemiological risk (COVID-19 pandemic).

Implementation of the “Consult First” principle in practice in 2021, as in the past, was the horizontal priority of the Labour Inspectorate penetrating completely all activity areas of the Labour Inspectorate, both when carrying inspections of companies and when performing a broad public information and education work.

The following activities were implemented in the framework of the priorities:

1. Visits to the enterprises where high risk of unregistered employment existed;
2. Preventive inspections on OSH, including thematic inspections:
 - 2.1. of the construction companies;
 - 2.2. on the organisation of remote work in the State administration;
 - 2.3. of the security guard services companies;

2.4. of the companies of dangerous sectors.

3. European healthy workplaces campaign „Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load”.

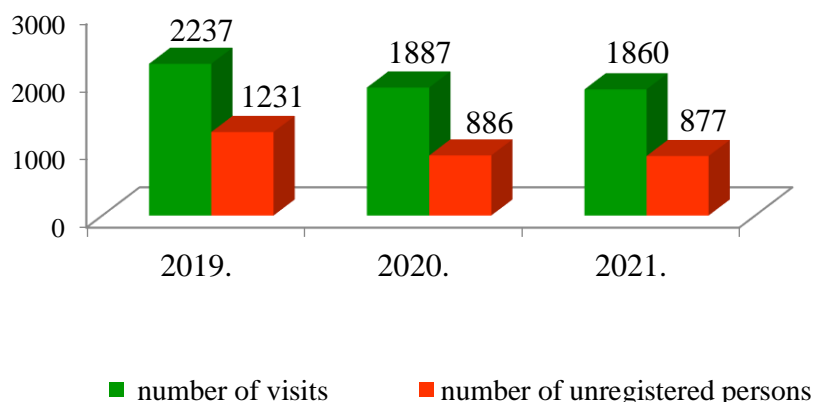
In 2021, in compliance with the containment measures of the Covid-19 pandemic, part of the company inspections was carried out remotely, communication with the companies being organized in an electronic and written process, which of course had a significant impact on both the duration of the inspection and the total number of visits carried out.

1. The implementation of priorities of the Labour Inspection in 2021

1.1. In 2021, as before, the implementation of measures to tackle undeclared work was the priority of the Labour Inspectorate in order to continue combating shadow economy and to ensure fair competition within the competence of the authority. The priority objective was to reduce the proportion of undeclared work in Latvia by making the control mechanism more efficient and, therefore, also reducing potential occurrence of unfair competition, as well as to inform the society about the negative consequences of undeclared work etc. In 2021, both the number of the Labour Inspectorate inspection visits carried out in the context of the reduction of undeclared work and their results were also significantly affected by measures to limit the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions imposed by the emergency.

The Labour Inspectorate carried out 1 860 inspections (planned – 2 000) aimed at the reduction of unregistered employment, of which 31.0 % inspections were successful. It means that the persons, who had not signed written employment contracts and/or whom the employer did not register in the State Revenue Service (SRS) as workers were detected in every third inspection.

The Labour Inspectorate officials shall re-examine the undertaking if, during the first survey, unregistered persons are not detected, but when assessing the situation in the company as a whole, there is reasonable suspicion that the employer could employ his or her workers unregistered. The companies with a high unregistered employment risk underwent 242 re-inspections, being 13.0 % of all unregistered employment inspection visits (see *Graph 1*).

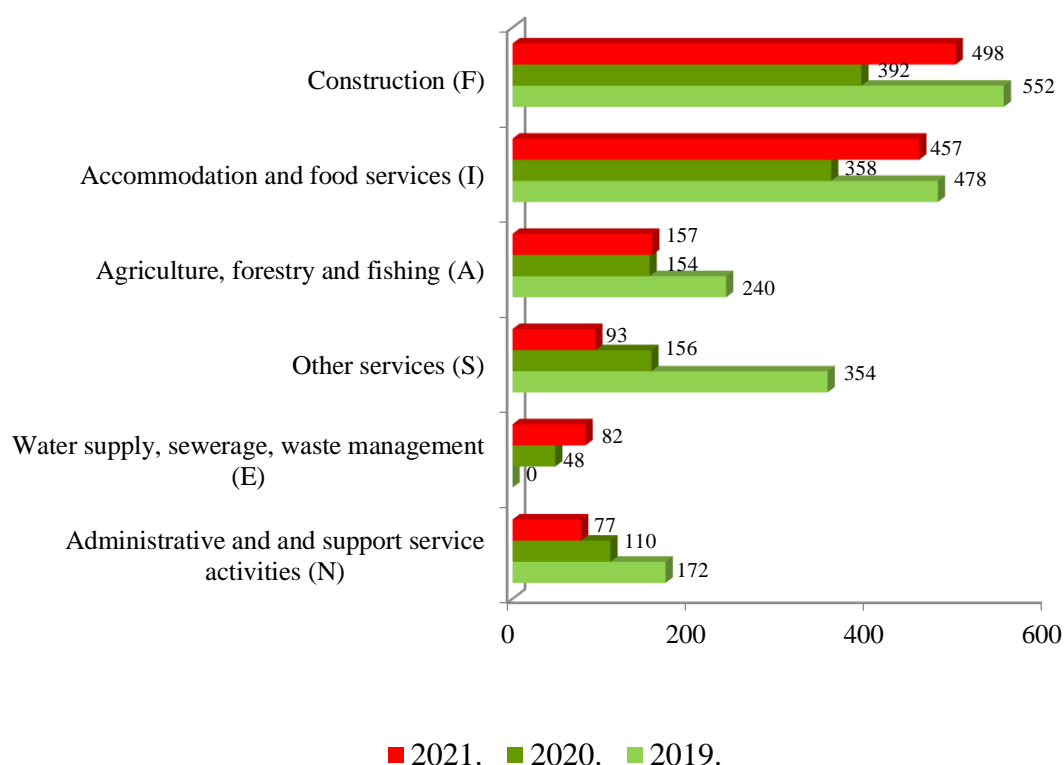


Graph 1: Dynamics of the number visited enterprises and unregistered persons (2019 – 2021)

In 2021, 877 unregistered persons were detected, of whom 480 persons had not signed written employment contracts and were not declared at the SRS; 288 had written employment contracts, but were not registered at the SRS, and 109 persons did not enter into written employment contracts, but were declared at the SRS.

In 2021, detecting the employment without a written employment contract and / or declaration at the SRS, the officials of the Labour Inspectorate imposed 704¹ fines in the amount of EUR 605 668.00.

Analysing unregistered employment detected in the course of inspections in specific sectors of the national economy, it should be concluded that, as in the previous years, the highest unregistered employment ratio was observed in the construction sector. The number of unregistered persons in construction in 2021 was 57.0 % of the total number of unregistered persons were detected by the Labour Inspectorate. The proportion of unregistered employed persons detected in construction, compared to 2020, has increased by 23.0 %. The construction had the largest number of unregistered persons per 100 000 workers of the industry in 2021 as well (see *Graph 2*).



Graph 2: Dynamics of defined unregistered persons by branches per 100 000 workers (2019 – 2021)

At the same time, it must be noted that there was also a positive trend - after inspections conducted by the Labour Inspectorate, a written employment contract was concluded with 623 or 71.0 % of persons detected by the Labour Inspectorate that were subject to undeclared work and/or such persons were registered with the SRS in the status of a worker. This means that the employer legalized employment legal relations in accordance with the requirements of laws and regulations.

Within the framework of the examination of the mentioned cases, the Labour Inspectorate effectively cooperated with the State Border Guard, the SRS and other authorities in Latvia, as well as with the competent authorities in other countries.

¹ The data on the violations identified for which an administrative penalty has been imposed after 1 July 2020 are entered and stored in the Administrative Offence Proceedings Support System (APAS) maintained by the Information Centre of the Ministry of the Interior.

The Labour Inspectorate was actively participating in activities organised at the European and national level in the field of tackling undeclared work, improving skills and knowledge, sharing experience and gaining international experience.

The Labour Inspectorate was actively involved in the experience exchanging trips, cross-border trainings and webinars (online and face-to-face). Training projects were organized by the European Labour Authority (ELA) - Platform Tackling Undeclared Work and the experts of the Working Group on Inspections.

From June to October, the ELA, together with the European Commission, the European Platform Tackling Undeclared Work, the EURES network, EU countries and social partners, organized an awareness-raising campaign "Rights for all seasons", drawing attention to necessity to promote fair and safe working conditions for seasonal workers, working across the EU. The campaign in Latvia was organized by the Labour Inspectorate. As part of the campaign, the Labour Inspectorate not only realized inspections (188) of workplaces working conditions, but also carried out information activities, as well as other compliance measures to promote fair and safe working conditions for seasonal workers in Latvia. The main attention during inspection visits was paid to control the seasonal work. The purpose was to reduce and prevent the possible violations of labour rights and OSH in the employment of seasonal workers, as well as to remind that the rights to fair and safe working conditions are not of a seasonal nature.

The Shadow Economy Restriction Plan for 2021-2022 was examined and action directions for reducing the shadow economy were approved at the meeting of the Latvian Council for Combating the Shadow Economy in September 2021. The plan envisages continuing the cooperation of the public administration authorities, taking targeted measures to reduce the specific problem of the shadow economy and limiting the shadow economy in general. The plan also defined tasks for the Labour Inspectorate:

- ✓ to control labour relations at purchasing points of berries and mushrooms;
- ✓ to improve cooperation between the authorities to regulate the operation of the security guard service sector and to reduce the shadow economy;
- ✓ to limit undeclared employment in the fruit and vegetable sector by carrying out control measures;
- ✓ to improve cooperation between authorities and control measures aimed at attracting foreigners in the field of employment in Latvia.

The Labour Inspectorate continued to play an active role in two international projects - "Boosting Transnational Cooperation on Posting of Workers" and "Tackling Undeclared Work in the Nordic Countries". The main objective of the projects was to improve cross-border cooperation and exchange of information between participating countries.

1.2. The other priority of the Labour Inspectorate was reducing the number of fatal accidents at work and those accidents at work due to which the injured person had serious health disorders. Four thematic inspection campaigns in OSH were organised with this aim, 3 639 preventive visits carried out, other public awareness and educational measures took place. In addition, four new modules for online interactive risk assessment (*OiRA* – Online interactive Risk Assessment tool) of the working environment were worked out.

In 2021, 718 thematic inspection visits of companies on OSH were conducted with the aim:

- ✓ to evaluate the compliance of working conditions at a company with the requirements in the OSH field;
- ✓ to evaluate the actual performance of employers in terms of creating a safe working environment, particularly focusing attention on the companies with a previous record of accidents at work;
- ✓ to draw the attention of employers towards matters related to OSH;
- ✓ to reduce the risks of occupational diseases and accidents at work.

Simultaneously with the survey of companies, various information events were organized during the thematic inspections. The form and content of which was specially adapted to each thematic inspection and sector, so that cooperation with entrepreneurs putting in order the working environment would be constructive and purposeful.

1.3. The European information campaign “Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load” in Europe was launched in autumn 2020, but it will be ended in the autumn 2022.

Similar to previous years, the central campaign activities were the "Golden Helmet" good practice award competition and the annual conference. In the "Golden Helmet" competition, examples of good practice of the Latvian companies, state and local government institutions were sought - various solutions implemented to improve the ergonomics of the working environment. The "Golden Helmet" good practice award competition was held in Latvia for the 17th time, and a record number of participants took part in it. 22 companies shared their examples of good practices. The competition ended on 29 October 2021 with the "Work Smart" conference organized by the Labour Inspectorate.

As part of the “Work Smart” conference, the winners of the “Golden Helmet” award were honored and rewarded. SIA “Silkeborg Spaantagning Baltic” was recognized as the best example in the category of small enterprises, while SIA “Severstal distribution” was the best company in the group with more than 100 workers.

SIA "Silkeborg Spaantagning Baltic" received an award for an example that can be described with the words "small steps towards a big goal - an ergonomically and safely arranged workplace". The mentioned example was also submitted to the European level Good Practice Award competition. It was recognized as one of the eight best examples and will be awarded in autumn 2022 at the closing event of the European campaign "Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load".

SIA "Severstal Distribution" received the award for a comprehensive approach to creating an ergonomic working environment with the aim of reducing the impact of physical factors on the health of workers.

Within the framework of the "Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load" campaign, several seminars were also organized, in which, mainly, employers were encouraged to improve the working environment.

In 2021, the Labour Inspectorate continued implementation of the project of the European Social Fund entitled “Practical Application of Regulatory Enactments Regarding Employment Relationship and Occupational Safety”. The aim of the project is to improve occupational health and safety at enterprises, in particular at enterprises operating in a high risky industry.

2. Laws and decisions, which relate to the activities of the Labour Inspection

2.1. Laws regulating the Labour Inspection’s activity that has become effective in 2021:

No amendments.

2.2. The laws, rules, regulations, which have come into force in 2021, and the implementation of which is supervised by the Labour Inspectorate:

√ Amendments to the Labour Law:

- conditions relating to the employee with a disability were specified – dismissal procedure, time period for a notice of termination of an employment contract, part-time work;

- additional rights were set up to the worker who is a parent caring for an adult with a disability from childhood requiring special care;

- expenses for workers who worked remotely should be covered by the employer if it was agreed by the employment contract or the collective agreement.

√ Amendments have been made to the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 372 "Labour Protection Requirements when Using Personal Protective Equipment" (adopted on 20 August 2002) in the annexes due to the implementation of European Commission Directive 2019/1832. The annexes were supplemented with new risk factors (mechanical, thermal, chemical risks, radiation, etc.), jobs

(drowning, lack of oxygen, insufficient visibility) and types of personal protective equipment, taking into account the development of technology and changes in the working environment in recent years;

√ Amendments to the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 92 "Labour Protection Requirements in Performing of Construction Works" (adopted on 25 February 2003) set up that project execution co-ordinator may be a person who has obtained a construction practice certificate in the field of construction work management or construction supervision in accordance with the procedures laid down in the regulatory enactments;

√ Amendments have been made to the Cabinet Regulation No. 310 "Regulations regarding Latvian Construction Standard LBN 231-15 "Heating and Ventilation of Residential and Public Buildings" (adopted on 16 June 2015) in order to ensure quality air exchange in the interior of public buildings and to limit the spread of the virus COVID-19 by determining the maximum permissible level of concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) up to 1000 ppm;

√ The regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 803 "Labour Protection Requirements when Coming in Contact with Carcinogenic Substances at Workplaces" (adopted on 29 September 2008) have been supplemented with seven new carcinogenic substances (beryllium and inorganic beryllium compounds, 4,4'-methylenebis (2-chloraniline), diesel engine exhaust gas emissions, formaldehyde, cadmium and its inorganic compounds, mineral oils previously used for the lubrication and cooling of moving parts of an internal combustion engine, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon mixtures containing benzo(a)pyrene) and two new processes with possible exposure to carcinogenic substances, six new occupational exposure limit values for carcinogenic substances (arsenic acid and its salts, as well as inorganic arsenic compounds, 4,4'-methylenedianiline, epichlorohydrin, ethylene dibromide and ethylene dichloride, trichlorethylene).

√ The regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 325 "Labour Protection Requirements when Coming in Contact with Chemical Substances at Workplaces" (adopted on 15 May 2007) have been supplemented with seven new chemical substances (beryllium and its inorganic compounds, exhaust emissions from diesel engines, ethylene dibromide, 4,4'-methylenedianiline and 4,4'-methylenebis (2-chloraniline), trimethylamine), changed occupational exposure limit values for 12 chemical substances (aniline, 1,2-Dichloroethane, epichlorohydrin, acetic acid butyl ester, formaldehyde, phosphorus oxychloride, isoamyl alcohol, cadmium and its inorganic compounds, cumene, methyl chloride, p-toluidine, trichloroethylene), as well as updated biological exposure limit values for lead, mercury, chromium, cadmium, benzene, and supplemented the list with limit values for aniline, cumene and nickel and its inorganic compounds.

3. The personnel of the Labour Inspection

3.1. In 2021, there were 187,8 job loads in the Labour Inspectorate.

3.2. Total number of inspectors in 2021 – 129, including:

√ chief inspectors – 17, including 5 heads of the Regional SLIs and 4 heads of Sectors whose do not carry out inspections of the companies;

√ senior inspectors – 55;

√ inspectors – 57.

3.3. Number of women inspectors in 2021 – 86 (66.7 % of total number of inspectors), of whom:

√ chief inspectors – 12 (70.6 % of total number of chief inspectors);

√ senior inspectors – 36 (65.5 % of total number of senior inspectors);

√ inspectors – 38 (66.7 % of total number inspectors).

3.4. The data on the geographical location of the structural subdivisions of the Labour Inspectorate (see *Figure 1*).

The Labour Inspectorate structure comprised of the Labour Inspectorate Headquarters and five Regional State Labour Inspectorates (RSLIs). In 2021, changes were made to the structure of the Labour Inspectorate in order to make optimal and targeted use financial and personnel resources,

ensure effective and provision of operational advice in accordance with the request and promote the implementation of the objectives of the Labour Inspectorate:

- ✓ the Sigulda office of the Vidzeme RSLI was closed because officials working there terminated the civil service relationship or went on a long-term justified absence;
- ✓ the Customers Support Unit has been set up.

RSLI which operated within the country:

- **Kurzeme RSLI** – the centre – in Liepāja, a sector – in Ventspils, office – in Saldus;
- **Latgale RSLI** – the centre – in Daugavpils, a sector – in Rezekne, office – in Jekabpils;
- **Rīga RSLI** – the centre – in Rīga, 4 sectors – Labour Protection Supervision Sector, Mediation and Compliance Sector, Labour Rights Supervision Sector and Prevention and Operational Activities Sector;
- **Vidzeme RSLI** – the centre – in Valmiera, a sector – in Gulbene;
- **Zemgale RSLI** – the centre – in Jelgava, a sector in Ogre, office – in Tukums, Consultation Centre in Bauska.

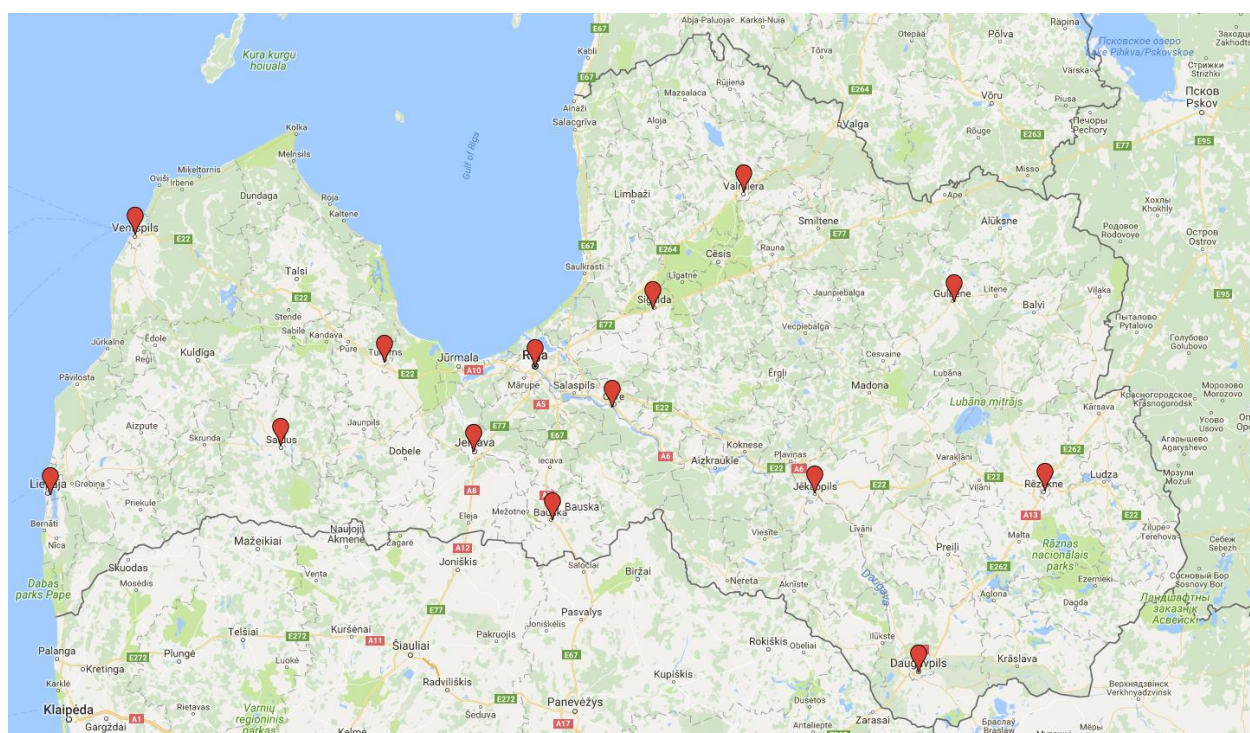


Figure 1: Geographical location of the structural divisions of the Labour Inspection

4. Data on companies under the control of the Labour Inspection and number of employees working in these companies

Number of companies under the control of the Labour Inspectorate – **122 385**, including in agriculture – 6 512 (5.3 % of the total number of the companies under the control of the Labour Inspectorate, data of the Central Statistical Bureau for the 2021).

Number of workers in the companies under the Labour Inspectorate's supervision – **752 400**, including in agriculture – 29 544 (3.9 % of the total number of workers), of whom women – 387 300, including in agriculture – 9 093 (2.4 % of the total number of women, data of the Central Statistical Bureau for the 2021).

5. Statistics of inspection visits

Number of companies inspected by the Labour Inspectorate in 2021 – **6 702**, including in agriculture – 590 (8.8 %) out of which: more than once a year – **1 447**, including in agriculture – 47 (3.3 %).

The Labour Inspectorate carried out **10 026** visits to companies, including in agriculture – 675 (6.7 %) in 2021.

6. The statistical data on the established violations and imposed sanctions

6.1. In 2021, inspectors of the Labour Inspectorate issued to employers **1 141 orders** (in 2020 – 1 402), including in agriculture – 130 (11.4 %, in 2020 – 137) due to violations of labour legal relations and OSH legislative enactments. In these orders in total **3 336² violations** (in 2020 – 6 252) were detected, including in agriculture – 433 (13.0 %, in 2020 – 624) of which:

- 2 941 (in 2020 – 4 493), including in agriculture – 390 (13.3 %, in 2020 – 511), on OSH;
- 395³ (in 2020 – 1 467), including in agriculture – 43 (10.9 %, in 2020 109), on labour legal relations;

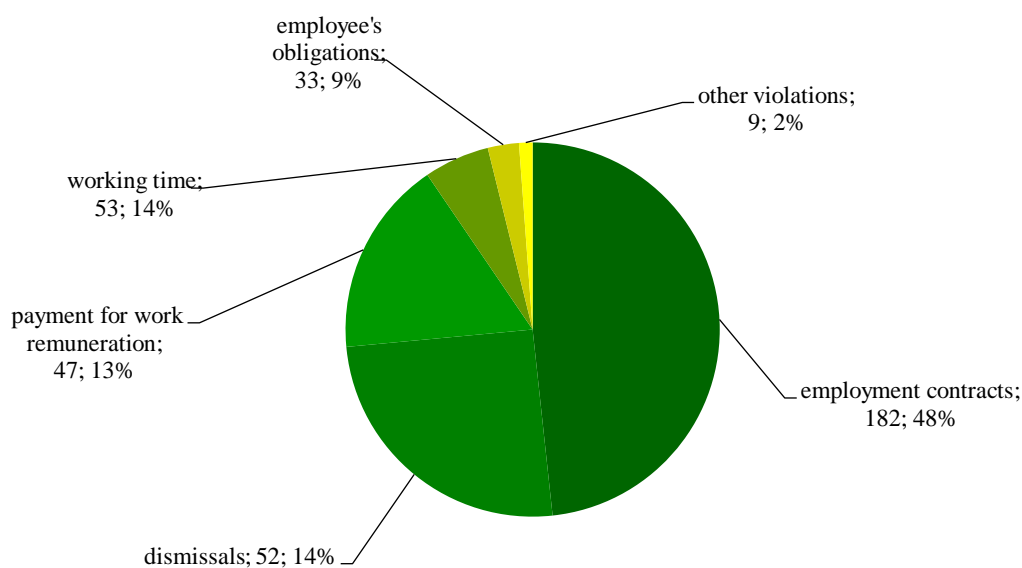
The reduction in the number of irregularities identified in 2021 compared to previous years was significantly affected by epidemiological safety measures to limit the Covid-19 pandemic. Companies had reoriented themselves to work remotely, those specific nature of work allowed it, but some ones closed their operations completely or partially, sending workers to idle, as well as the Labour Inspectorate implemented more and more effectively the principle of the "Consult First" in the control and supervision of companies. As part of the implementation of the "Consult First" principle, the employers were given the opportunity to receive consultations within the framework of commenced administrative offence proceedings and eliminate violations until the case was examined. If the employer did so, then there was no longer any need to issue an administrative act with the imposition of compulsory duties. The application of the "Consult First" principle also contributed to the development of more successful cooperation with the employer.

6.2. Violations of regulatory enactments on the **labour legal relations** made up 12.0 % of all violations detected by the officials of the Labour Inspectorate in 2021. 95.0 % of violations of the labour legal relations were violations of the Labour Law.

In 2021, as in previous years, most employers did not comply with requirements of the Labour Law regarding employment contract, which were 46.0 % of all labour relations violations. The violations found were related to having a written employment contract and the content of the contract - the contract was not signed at all or it did not contain all the information specified in the Labour Law, for example, did not specify the agreed daily or weekly working hours, the amount of remuneration and time of payment, the duration of the annual paid leave, profession etc. Employers committed such labour violations both due to ignorance or a desire to manipulate employees' working hours and its record-keeping. A significant part of the Labour Law violations was related to work remuneration (24.0 %), including all amount of money was not paid to the worker on the day of dismissal (see *Graph 3*).

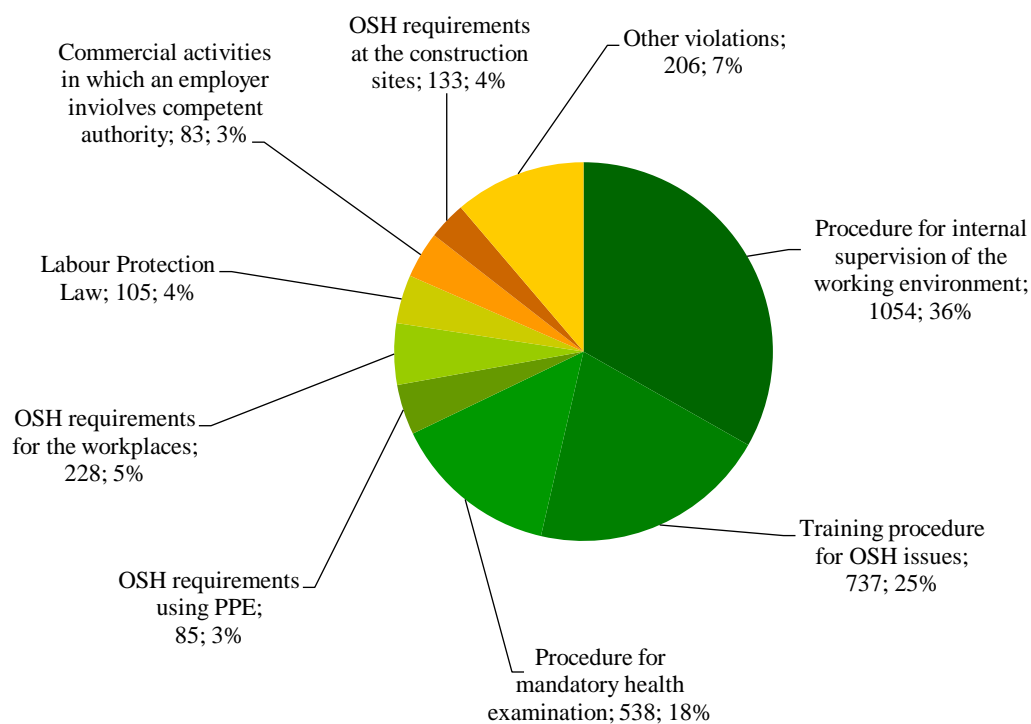
² Statistical information on detected violations does not include violations for which an administrative penalty has been imposed in 2021, as from 1 July 2020 all information regarding violations detected by the Labour Inspectorate for which an administrative penalty has been imposed is entered into the APAS. Therefore, it is not possible to collect and rank data regarding detected violations for which an administrative penalty has been imposed in 2021 in the databases of the Labour Inspectorate Information System.

³ The significant reduction in the number of violations of the requirements of labour law regulatory enactments determined in 2021 can be explained by the fact that administrative penalty is mainly applied for the mentioned violations, but all data about them are entered into APAS and the Labour Inspectorate cannot currently collect and rank them according to own criteria.



Graph 3: Distribution of violations on labour legal relations in 2021

Violations of regulatory enactments on **OSH** made up 88.0 % of all violations detected by officials of the Labour Inspectorate in 2021 (see on *Graph 4*).

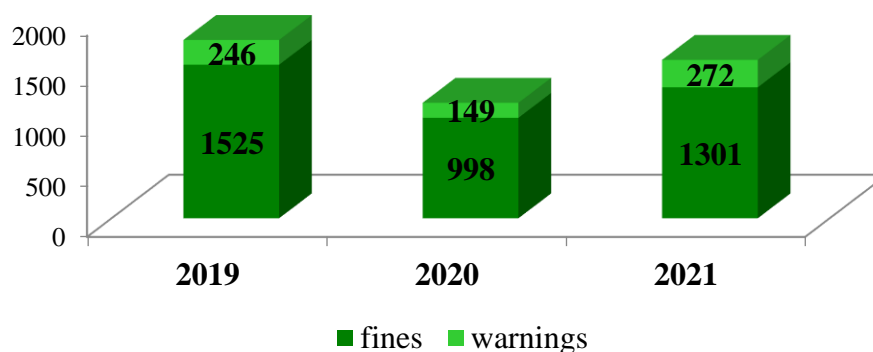


Graph 4: Distribution of violations on OSH in 2021

6.3. The applied penalties and their type

The officials of the Labour Inspectorate imposed on the employers **1 573⁴ administrative penalties** for violations of labour legal relations, OSH regulatory enactments and the State Labour Inspectorate Law in 2021 (see *Graph 5*), including:

- **272 - warnings** (2020 – 149);
- **1 301 - fines** (2020 – 998), in total for **EUR 488 120.50⁴**.



Graph 5: Structure and number of the imposed administrative penalties (2019 – 2021)

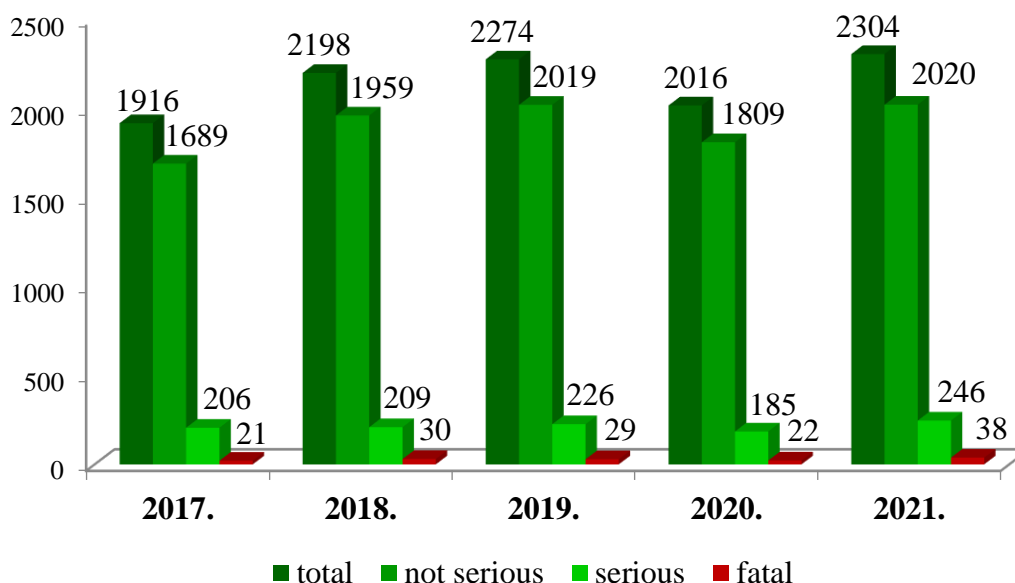
Upon discovering violations, which pose a direct threat to the life and health of workers, the Labour Inspectorate officials in year 2021 have issued six orders and one decision on the person's / object's suspension and eight warnings on a person's / object's suspension.

Out of 15 orders / decisions / warnings on suspension of the activity of a person / object ten (67.0 %) were issued at the construction sites. Most frequently, activities were suspended or a warning on suspension was issued due to unsafe work at a height, *inter alia* on unsafe or incompletely erected scaffoldings, during performance of work on the roof, unbounded openings in the floor, without anti-fall systems etc., one - for work in the trenches without fixed side edges, one – for unsafe working environment in a construction site that threatened the health and life of workers, one – for using of the unsafe lift and two – for using of the saws without adequate guards.

7. The statistical data on accidents at work

According to the information available within the Labour Inspectorate, 2 304 workers suffered in accidents at work in Latvia in 2021. 38 of the workplace accidents were fatal and 246 with seriously injured workers. In comparison with 2020, the total number of victims of accidents at work increased significantly - by 14.0 %, the number of serious victims - by 33.0 %, but the number of fatalities - by 73.0 % (see *Graph 6*).

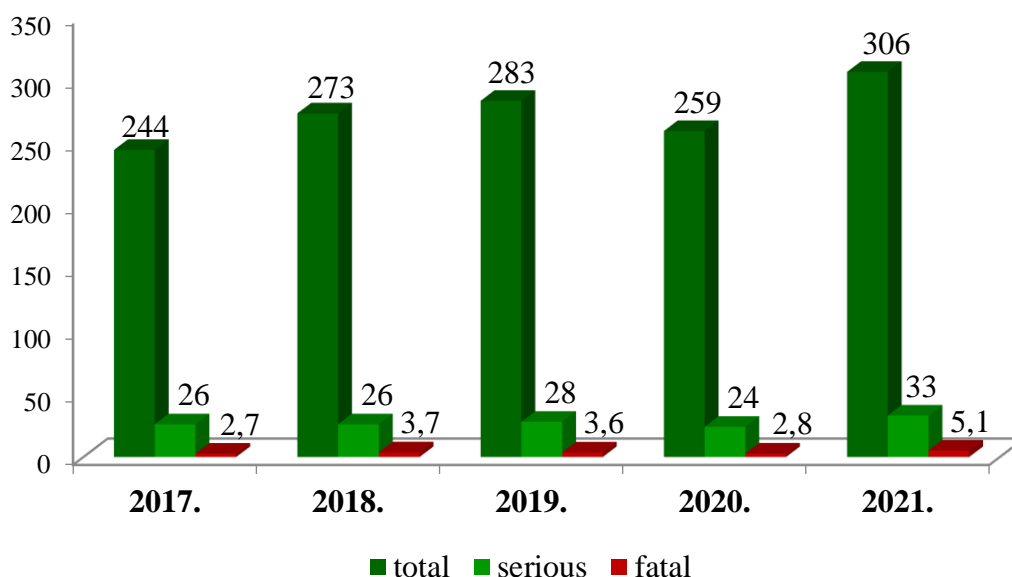
⁴ Data on the number and amount of administrative sanctions imposed by the Labour Inspectorate from APAS



Graph 6: The dynamics of the accidents at work (2017 – 2021)

In the opinion of the Labour Inspectorate, the increase in the number of accidents at work in general was significantly influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic. 2021 was already the second year in a row when Latvia and the world had to live with and learn to adapt to the challenges caused by the Covid-19 virus. During the Covid-19 pandemic, both companies and state and local government institutions continued their activities as far as possible, using remote work options. Thus, the set of measures introduced to limit the Covid-19 pandemic could be considered one of the most important reasons for the reduction of accidents at work in 2020. In 2021, despite the fact that the implementation of the mentioned measures continued, the number of accidents at work has increased significantly. The statistics of accidents at work showed that the highest number of accidents in both 2020 and 2021 occurred in the same sectors - manufacturing, trade, as well as transport and storage. Companies in these sectors did not suspend their activities as far as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic and continued their work in person. In view of the high morbidity rates in Latvia, employers in all sectors were significantly affected by the absence of workers due to incapacity for work and or quarantine, creating additional physical and psychological pressures for both parties, which could have contributed to the creation of a set of conditions in the workplace and or process for the occurrence of an accident at work. Taking into account the above, it can be concluded that the conditions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic were a clear confirmation that long-term exposure of workers to extreme working conditions contributed to a significant increase in the number of accidents.

When analysing data on persons injured in accidents at work per 100 000 workers, it may be concluded that compared to 2020, there has been a substantial increase in the total number of accidents - by 18.0 %, seriously injured - by 38.0 %, and the fatal - by 82.0 % (see *Graph 7*).



Graph 7. The accidents rates per 100 000 workers (2017 – 2021)

Analysis of the number of persons injured in accidents at work by industries (see *Table 1*) showed that the industries with the largest number of injured persons has not changed. In 2021, as well in previous year, it was manufacturing industry, wholesale and retail trade, transport and storage industry.

Manufacturing industry had the most persons (753) injured in accidents at work (33.0 %) in 2021.

The second highest number of accidents at work in 2021 was in wholesale and retail trade (340 - 15.0 %).

Transport and storage industry had the third highest number of accidents at work (290 - 13.0 %).

The most fatalities due to accidents at work in 2021 were in transport and storage industry (15 – 40.0 %), construction (7 – 18.0 %) and wholesale and retail trade (6 – 16 %). The total of 74.0 % of all fatal accidents (28) at work have occurred in these industries.

11 workers died in the road traffic accidents or due to deterioration of their health in the transport and storage sector.

Seven fatal accidents occurred in the construction sector (2020 – 3), including four fatal cases were related to fall from a height. The main causes that caused the death of construction workers were related to the unsafe or reckless action of the victims themselves: non-compliance with work safety rules or instructions, non-use of safety equipment or personal protective equipment, as well as an inappropriate the use of work methods.

There were 6 fatal accidents at work in trade sector (2020 – 2), of which 3 were road traffic accidents.

In 2021, the most common in accidents at work:

- ✓ injured men (1 569 cases or 68.0 %);
- ✓ injured workers in the age group 45 – 54 (485 cases or 21.0 %), including in fatal accidents at work (14 cases);
- ✓ injured workers with up to 3 years of service (in 1 558 cases or 68.0 %).

Persons who had suffered in accidents at work most of all had injured hands, head and legs.

Breakdown of accidents at work by sectors
(NACE Rev. 2 classification)

	Sectors	Total		Including			
				Serious		Fatal	
		2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
A	AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING	97	88	13	15	2	1
01	CROP AND ANIMAL PRODUCTION, HUNTING AND RELATED SERVICE ACTIVITIES	59	55	7	10	0	0
02	FORESTRY AND LOGGING	37	32	6	5	2	1
03	FISHING AND AQUACULTURE	1	1	0	0	0	0
B	MINING AND QUARRYING	11	10	2	2	0	1
C	MANUFACTURING	689	753	47	54	4	4
D	ELECTRICITY, GAS, STEAM AND AIR CONDITIONING SUPPLY	18	12	2	4	0	0
E	WATER SUPPLY; SEWERAGE, WASTE MANAGEMENT AND REMEDIATION ACTIVITIES	32	35	1	4	0	0
F	CONSTRUCTION	198	225	38	45	3	7
G	WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE; REPAIR OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOTORCYCLES	254	340	15	26	2	6
H	TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	220	290	22	44	11	15
I	ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICE ACTIVITIES	37	45	1	0	0	1
J	INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	15	17	0	1	0	0
K	FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE ACTIVITIES	6	4	1	0	0	0
L	REAL ESTATE ACTIVITIES	27	26	2	7	0	1
M	PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES	16	21	0	1	0	0
N	ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICE ACTIVITIES	62	84	5	9	0	0
O	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEFENCE; COMPULSORY SOCIAL INSURANCE	91	103	7	10	0	0
P	EDUCATION	56	44	7	7	0	0
Q	HUMAN HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK ACTIVITIES	162	181	17	14	0	0
R	ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION	12	20	3	3	0	0
S	OTHER SERVICES	13	6	2	0	0	2
	Total	2016	2304	185	246	22	38

In 2021, the most of accidents at work resulted from unsafe human actions (72.0 %), which led to fatal outcome in 33.0 % and serious injuries in 59.0 % cases. Work organization and related shortcomings resulted in 11.0 % of accidents at work, 16.0 % of fatal accidents and 20.0 % of serious injuries. Unsatisfactory working conditions (lack of safety equipment, use of damaged equipment and tools, insufficient order at workplaces etc.) as a cause for accidents was identified in 5.0 % cases, 8.0 % - fatal accidents and 9.0 % - serious injuries (see Table 2).

Table 2

Breakdown of accidents by accident causes

	Causes of accidents at work	Total		Including			
				Serious		Fatal	
		2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
1	UNSATISFACTORY CONDITIONS AT WORKPLACE	125	144	17	29	4	4
2	UNSAFE HUMAN ACTION (ACTION/PERSON)	1873	1910	152	186	9	16
3	WORK ORGANIZATION AND RELATED SHORTCOMINGS	128	300	45	61	7	8
4	VIOLATION OF ROAD TRAFFIC RULES	63	95	11	16	1	13
5	VIOLENCE (ATTACKS)	72	83	1	4	0	1
6	OTHERS	123	121	17	17	9	7
	Total	2384	2653	243	313	30	49

Analyzing occupations of the injured persons, it may be concluded, that ordinary professions workers (24.0 % - construction, production and transport industries' workers), qualified workers and craftsmen (23.0 % - metalworking, mechanical engineering and builders etc.), and equipment and machine operators and article assemblers (20.0 % - self-propelled vehicle and equipment operators, lifting machine and equipment operators, industrial equipment operators) suffered primarily in accidents at work in 2021 (see Table 3).

Table 3

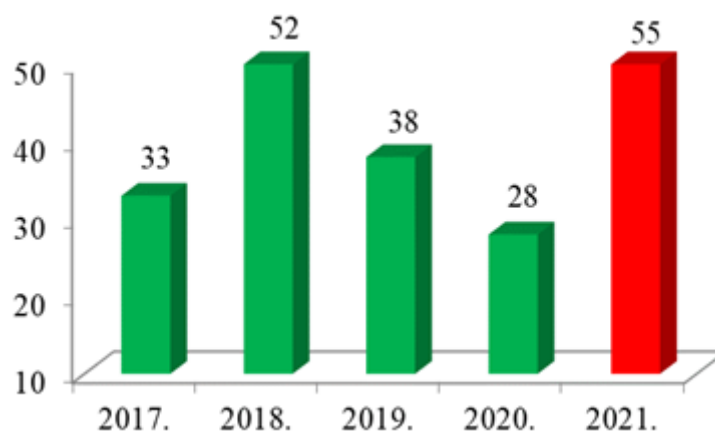
Breakdown of injured persons by occupations classification

	Occupations	Total		Including			
				Serious		Fatal	
		2020	2021	2020	2021	2020	2021
1	MANAGERS	40	31	7	9	1	1
2	SENIOR SPECIALISTS	106	102	14	11	0	1
3	SPECIALISTS	179	197	10	17	1	3
4	OFFICE WORKERS	81	126	7	11	1	0
5	SERVICE AND TRADE EMPLOYEES	231	279	19	10	1	0
6	QUALIFIED AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERY WORKERS	25	23	1	3	1	0
7	QUALIFIED WORKERS AND CRAFTSMEN	496	534	40	59	5	9
8	EQUIPMENT AND MACHINE OPERATORS AND ARTICLE ASSEMBLERS	396	449	44	66	10	17
9	ORDINARY PROFESSIONS	462	563	43	60	2	7
	Total	2016	2304	185	246	22	38

In 2021, the Labour Inspectorate investigated 57 fatal accidents at work that were not related to the working conditions and environmental factors, 55 (96.5 %) of which were so-called “natural deaths”⁵.

⁵ The Accident at Work Act was prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Cabinet Regulations “Procedures for the Investigation and Registration of Accidents at Work”, which stipulates that the Labour Inspectorate, taking into account the opinion provided by the

Meanwhile the remaining two fatal accidents at work, which after investigation were declared non-associated with the working conditions and the impact caused by the working environment factors, e.g. committed a suicide, as a result of a dispute between workers or accidents had occurred outside working hours, including rest period (see *Graph 8*).



Graph 8. Dynamics of “natural deaths” (2017 – 2021)

In the opinion of the Labor Inspectorate, the doubling of the number of “natural deaths” in 2021 compared to 2020 can also be explained by the restrictions imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which prevented workers from receiving medical services (medical rehabilitation, specialist consultations, etc.) in time. This, in turn, caused various chronic diseases, incl. cardiovascular diseases became acute, which could also lead to sudden death. An important factor affecting the increase in the number of “natural deaths” was the much more frequent incapacity for work and absences of workers in connection with Covid-19. It in turn affected the workload of other workers - it was necessary to work overtime, as a result, the rest time decreased, which often worsened the health of the employed.

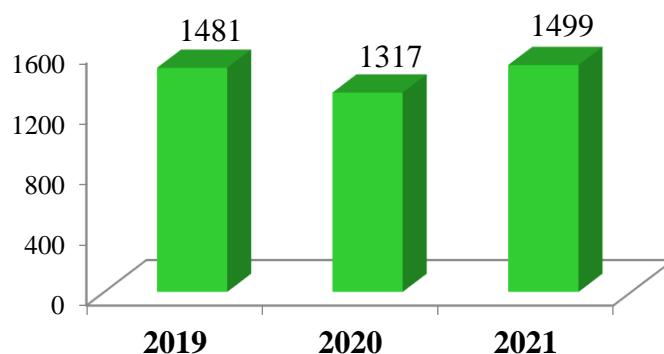
While analysing the data by sex and age of persons who had died “naturally” at their workplace, it can be concluded that more men (46 – 84.0 %), and workers of age group from 55 to 64 (29 - 53.0 %).

In 2021, 55.0 % of “natural death” cases at workplaces were registered in three industries: manufacturing industry (13), transport and storage (11) and human health and social work activities (6).

8. The statistical data on occupational diseases

The Labour Inspectorate participated in the investigation of cases of occupational diseases by preparing workplace hygienic descriptions (WHD) at the companies. In 2021, the Labour Inspectorate’s officials have prepared 1 499 WHD on the requests of the Occupational Disease Medical Commission of the Occupational and Radiological Medicine Centre of Pauls Stradins Clinical University Hospital (Occupational and Radiation Medicine Centre) and from occupational physicians. In 2021, in comparison with 2020, the number of requests for WHD has increased by 14.0 % (see *Graph 9*).

Medical Commission on Occupational Diseases of the Occupational and Radiation Medicine Centre, has evaluated that the cause of death of the injured person in the workplace is not the result of the exposure to the working environment factors.

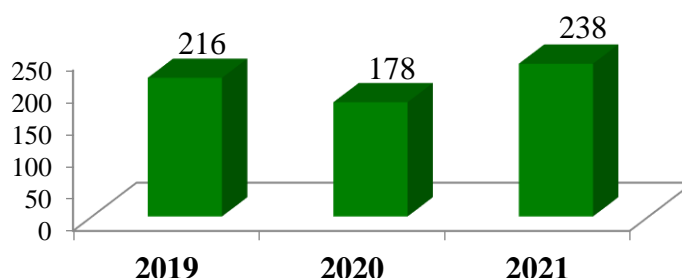


Graph 9: Prepared hygienic descriptions of workplaces (2019 – 2021)

According to the information provided by the Occupational and Radiation Medicine Centre, 1 788 of the first-time patients of an occupational disease were confirmed in 2021. It was more by 29.0 % than in 2020.

The increase in the number of prepared DVHR, as well as the number of occupational diseases approved for the first time, can also be explained by the consequences due to the measures the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. For some time, the opportunity to engage in physical activities was prohibited (for example, attend various sports activities), as well as receive outpatient rehabilitation. As a result, the health status of workers worsened and various chronic diseases became more acute. In addition, the workers, while being idle or observing the stay-at-home regime and other prescribed measures, increasingly evaluated their quality of life criteria, paying more attention to their health as well. One of the ways to take care of your health was to go to an occupational doctor and, if necessary, start the process of confirming an occupational disease.

In 2021, compared to the data of 2020, the number of the first-time patients of an occupational disease per 100 000 employed persons increased by 34.0 % (see *Graph 10*).



Graph 10: Dynamics of the first-time approved occupational disease patients per 100 000 workers (2019 - 2021)

In 2021 like in 2020, the first-time confirmed occupational disease patients most often suffered from diseases of nervous system – 67.0 %. The second most common occupational diseases were musculoskeletal system and connective tissue diseases – 32.0 %, the most common of which being spinal diseases – spondylosis, arthrosis etc. (see *Table 4*).

Table 4

Groups of occupational diseases according to the 10th International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10)

Code	Group of occupational diseases	2020	2021
C00-D48	NEOPLASMS (MALIGNANT AND PRE-CANCER DISEASES)	3	1
F00 - F99	MENTAL AND BEHAVIOURAL DISORDERS	48	6
G00 - G99	DISEASES OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM	771	1193
I00 - I99	DISEASES OF THE CIRCULATORY SYSTEM	29	3
J00 - J99	DISEASES OF THE RESPIRATORY SYSTEM	23	3
L00 - L99	DISEASES OF THE SKIN AND SUBCUTANEOUS TISSUE	1	1
M00 - M99	DISEASES OF THE MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM AND CONNECTIVE TISSUE	384	579
S00 - T98	INJURY, POISONING AND CERTAIN OTHER CONSEQUENCES OF EXTERNAL CAUSES	130	2
	Total	1389	1788

In 2021, like in 2020 most of the first-time patients of an occupational disease were confirmed in transport and storage (23.0 %), manufacturing industry (18.0 %) and wholesale and retail trade (13.0 %). More than half (53.0 %) of the total number of occupational patients confirmed for the first time was in the mentioned industries (see *Table 5*).

Occupational disease for the first-time was most often confirmed for men (69.0 %) in the transport and storage sector, and naturally for drivers of various vehicles (40.0 %) - bus, car or minibus drivers, lorry, towing vehicle or diesel locomotives, etc. In the transport and storage sector, the most frequently diagnosed carpal tunnel syndrome (nearly 60.0 %, a condition caused by nerve compression at the base of the hand), as well as spinal and hand diseases (37.0 %, spondylosis, arthrosis, etc.), resulting from long-term work under the influence of biomechanical factors (awkward postures, repetitive movement work, physical overload, etc.).

In the manufacturing industry, occupational disease was diagnosed most often for the first time for the qualified workers (tailor, confectioner, locksmith, operator of woodworking equipment, welder, carpenter, etc.), operators of various equipment and machines (driver of vehicles, operator of various machine tools - meat processing equipment, sewing equipment, etc. - operator, fitter, etc.), as well as for simple profession workers (cleaner, freight handler, workshop or warehouse worker, packer, sorter, dishwasher, etc.). Carpal tunnel syndrome was also the most frequently diagnosed as occupational disease in the manufacturing industry (70.0 %). On the other hand, in the manufacturing industry, occupational disease was most often confirmed for the first time for women (70.0 %).

Occupational disease for the first time most often was diagnosed for service and sales employees (salesperson, etc.) in trade (44.0 %). The most frequently diagnosed occupational disease was also carpal tunnel syndrome (63.0 %), as well as musculoskeletal and connective tissue diseases (various types of arthrosis, spondylosis, etc.) during long-term work under the influence of biomechanical factors (work in a forced posture, work with repetitive movements, heavy lifting, work with raised hands, etc.).

Table 5

**Breakdown of occupational disease patients by sectors
(NACE Rev. 2 classification)**

	Sectors	2020	2021
A	AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHING	53	68
01	CROP AND ANIMAL PRODUCTION, HUNTING AND RELATED SERVICE ACTIVITIES	33	44
02	FORESTRY AND LOGGING	19	22
03	FISHING AND AQUACULTURE	1	2
B	MINING AND QUARRYING	4	11
C	MANUFACTURING	274	315
D	ELECTRICITY, GAS, STEAM AND AIR CONDITIONING SUPPLY	12	20
E	WATER SUPPLY; SEWERAGE, WASTE MANAGEMENT AND REMEDIATION ACTIVITIES	17	16
F	CONSTRUCTION	57	98
G	WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TRADE; REPAIR OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOTORCYCLES	169	229
H	TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	332	404
I	ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICE ACTIVITIES	47	99
J	INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	8	6
K	FINANCIAL AND INSURANCE ACTIVITIES	14	7
L	REAL ESTATE ACTIVITIES	15	24
M	PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES	7	10
N	ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICE ACTIVITIES	21	40
O	PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND DEFENCE; COMPULSORY SOCIAL INSURANCE	91	113
P	EDUCATION	78	86
Q	HUMAN HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK ACTIVITIES	171	203
R	ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT AND RECREATION	10	16
S	OTHER SERVICES	9	23
	Total	1389	1788

Women comprised 63.0 % of the occupational patients confirmed for the first time in 2021. The largest number of cases of occupational disease confirmed for the first time remained in two age groups. Namely, 55.0 % (977) of new cases of occupational diseases were detected with workers in the age group of 55 - 64, as well as new cases of occupational diseases were confirmed for workers aged 45 – 54 - 33.0 % (597).

The occupational groups with approved occupational diseases most often were (*see Table 6*):

- ✓ equipment and machine operators – 23.0 %
- ✓ qualified workers and craftsmen – 16.0 %
- ✓ services and trade workers – 16.0 %
- ✓ workers of ordinary professions – 14.0 %
- ✓ specialists – 12.0 %.

*Table 6***Breakdown of occupational patients by occupations classification**

	Occupations	2020	2021
1	MANAGERS	43	45
2	SENIOR SPECIALISTS	140	161
3	SPECIALISTS	148	215
4	OFFICE WORKERS	72	98
5	SERVICE AND TRADE EMPLOYEES	216	282
6	QUALIFIED AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND FISHERY WORKERS	16	26
7	QUALIFIED WORKERS AND CRAFTSMEN	218	291
8	EQUIPMENT AND MACHINE OPERATORS AND ARTICLE ASSEMBLERS	376	419
9	ORDINARY PROFESSIONS	160	250
10	NATIONAL ARMED FORCES OCCUPATIONS	0	1
	Total	1389	1788

In 2021, as before, the Occupational Disease Medical Commission recognized that occupational diseases were most often with the employed during long-term work under the influence of biomechanical factors, which were in 98.0% of cases. It was the highest indicator ever among all occupational disease-causing factors. The main biomechanical factors were working in the forced posture; moving various weights; incorrect or uniform movements; physical overload, etc. The main and most frequent recommendations of occupational disease doctors to the employer for improving the working conditions of the employed or reducing the risk factors were to reduce the load in the static positions, reduce the load at work with frequent, repeated and uniform movements, as well as to ensure proper ergonomics of the workplace and equipment.