

# Efficient management of psychosocial risks in a petrochemical company

COMMENDED

Slovnaft, a.s., Slovakia

[slovnaft.sk/sk](http://slovnaft.sk/sk)

## The issue

Work in Slovnaft, part of the petrochemical industry, largely involves the operation of control systems and machinery. The company aimed to identify the jobs and activities that were most hazardous not only to employees' health, but also to the company's overall performance. Human error is the source of many major industrial accidents; by systematically assessing psychosocial risks, Slovnaft aimed to reduce human error and prevent accidents and stress-related health problems.

## Action taken

Slovnaft launched its COHESIO (Compliance with Occupational Health of Ergonomics and Stress Identification Optimum) project in 2012, focusing on three areas: stress management, shift work and ergonomics. In the first area, the objectives were to eliminate or minimise psychosocial risks, improve productivity and reduce sickness absence due to the negative impact of psychosocial risks.

In cooperation with the occupational health service provider, psychosocial risk assessments have been carried out in eight production units among a total of 800 employees.

The preventive approach has been implemented with full support from management and staff engagement — workers are taking part in activities dedicated to health

protection, and are aware of the importance of this in relation to their work.

One of the main goals of the project was the identification of job positions and activities which are hazardous and where the 'human factor' plays an important role. When badly managed, they can have consequences for the employee's life and health, the neighbouring population, the environment and the company itself. Practical emergency simulation training has been implemented to reduce the probability of stress appearing in a variety of situations and to improve workers' skills to deal with them. The comfort of personal protective equipment was also examined.

In addition, a stress management seminar was organised to increase employees' understanding of this issue. A one-day training session covered, among other topics, basic knowledge of the topic, communication skills and tackling stress strategies.

Other activities included establishing preventive examinations — comprehensive, targeted medical examinations and psychological checks.

Further, activities dedicated to health promotion, such as pilates, were organised and sports clubs were set up to encourage regular exercise among employees. In the 'Healthy Food' programme, a dietary specialist assessed the foods available to staff in the canteen and suggested healthy alternatives to add to the menu.





## Results achieved

The practical emergency simulation training was considered by employees to be the most valuable training session. In the four years since the emergency simulation testing device was introduced, there have been two genuine emergencies; operators confirmed that they better handled each of these situations. In a safety-at-work survey, three-quarters of employees expressed their satisfaction with the activities that have been carried out.

The company has seen reductions in both injury rate and sickness absence.

Employees feel more content as a result of improvements in comfort when using personal protective equipment.

*Practical emergency simulation training has reduced the probability of a stressful situation emerging for workers and has also improved their skills.*