

## Models of Good Practice

Volkswagen AG



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| <b>Branch:</b>            | <b>Automobile industry</b>                           |
| <b>No. of employees:</b>  | <b>104,000</b>                                       |
| <b>Products/services:</b> | <b>Automobiles</b>                                   |
| <b>Locations:</b>         | <b>Six works in Germany, main works in Wolfsburg</b> |

At Volkswagen AG, the group management board and joint works council have passed guidelines on health protection and health promotion which lay down minimum standards world-wide. Additional guidelines on health management apply in the domestic works. Roughly €130 are invested per employee every year in health protection and health promotion.

The health management system at VW is controlled and co-ordinated by the health department, the occupational safety and health committees of the individual works and the "health circles" where they exist. The health circles consist of representatives from the health department, occupational safety, the works council and the company health insurance fund (BKK). Annual meetings are held additionally on occupational safety and health.

The planning is based on the comprehensive workplace health reporting system. The results of the risk analyses, the occupational medical check-ups, the staff surveys and the analyses of absenteeism and employees' incapacity to work are taken into account.

In matters concerning their health, the employees at VW are involved in many ways: by participating in health circles, ideas management, special workshops and surveys as well as in a "try-out".

The company has created a variety of programmes to promote healthy behaviour among the workforce, such as back and posture classes, training courses on lifting and carrying and relaxation



courses. A company agreement on "co-operative behaviour at the workplace" clearly shows that the company is actively combating mobbing, sexual harassment and acts of racism.

The extensive measures have had an effect and have been worthwhile: Physical stress factors at the workplaces have decreased considerably, e.g. due to the elimination of overhead working. Between 1991 and 1998, the health rate rose from 91.6% to 96 %, and for every 1 million hours worked, the number of work accidents among the wage earners fell from 13.7 % to 10.7 %. Specific occupational safety and health measures made some occupational medical check-ups unnecessary and the financial benefits were calculable: At the Wolfsburg works for example, costs of over € 120,000 were saved every year.

At another works the number of days lost due to contact eczema was reduced by about 1,000 days with a prevention programme called "Skin". After the introduction of therapeutic measures for 25 alcoholic employees, the number of sick days in this group fell from a previous 1,420 to merely 351 per year.