

BGZ Wegvervoer (Road transport) is an intermediary organisation dedicated to improving working conditions and creating better health policies in road transport companies in The Netherlands.

Nearly 5000 companies (85 % of transport companies) with approximately 100.000 employees buy their occupational health care via a collective contract with BGZ Wegvervoer's occupational health services. The majority of these companies are SMEs.

Introducing better services

Besides co-ordinating occupational health and workplace health promotion, BGZ Wegvervoer recognises the importance of assessing the success of implemented measures. As these measures need to have a practical application in the real world, resources have been allocated for monitoring and evaluation.

Building better relationships

BGZ Wegvervoer is determined to encourage better co-operation between the parties involved in occupational health and workplace health promotion. Relevant parties include transport companies (both employers and employees) and the regional occupational health services.

Launch of the "complete package"

A new and unique package for improving working conditions was introduced in January 2000. It adopts a more proactive approach to reducing (long-term) absen-

teeism and improving workplace health promotion. It includes identification of factors that might contribute to long-term ill-health, organising counselling and rehabilitation for sick employees and, if rehabilitation isn't possible, finding another suitable job for that person.

Companies are also offered an "on demand" package where each activity is paid for separately – this option tends to be favoured by larger companies. However, nearly 85 % opt for the complete package.

Provision of additional services

BGZ Wegvervoer provides a special service desk to answer queries from companies, employees and occupational health services. There is also a website providing information on a variety of topics including service packages and special courses for companies and their employees. BGZ Wegvervoer also develops specific material such as occupational health policies and absenteeism management plans. An occupational health & safety checklist for road transport companies has also been developed for businesses with fewer than 15 employees.



Occupational health awards

From time to time BGZ Wegvervoer presents awards to companies with good occupational health and health promotion policies.

The "Healthier on the go" newsletter

BGZ Wegvervoer produces a bi-monthly newsletter called "Healthier on the go". This magazine is distributed to all road transport companies, occupational health services, roadside cafes used by drivers, associated organisations and to the home addresses of all member organisation employees (100.000). The newsletter covers developments in health and safety and workplace health promotion as well as issues such as ergonomic tests on truck cabs.

Other valuable services

n Road Transport information system

Data relating to occupational health and workplace health promotion (for example reporting rates of sickness and return to work) are fed into the computer information system (WIS). The data are statistically analysed by BGZ Wegvervoer and made available to members under the conditions imposed by privacy regulations.

n Training courses

A number of management training courses are organised on a broad spectrum of topics. Preventive health issues are covered extensively.

n Company research

Research has been carried out on stress in road transport and problems related to working with containers, pallet trucks and transport of livestock. Pilot projects are running in a number of companies.

WHP under the spotlight

BGZ Wegvervoer is placing increasing emphasis on workplace health promotion in addition to its existing work in occupational health. Regional managers are responsible for building up relationships with transport companies and occupational health services. These regional managers encourage companies to discuss their needs and to introduce improvements to the working environment. Demand for workplace health promotion is growing as businesses become increasingly aware of the costs of ill-health.

Education and training

BGZ Wegvervoer recognises that good communication with employees is essential. A number of presentations is organised throughout the country and efforts are made to ensure that meetings are easily accessible. Reduced rates are offered to members for all training activities.

Training of experts

Thanks to the special course for occupational health workers organised by the Netherlands School of Occupational Health in association

with BGZ Wegvervoer, the focus on workplace health promotion in road transport has increased.

Extensive research

Several methods are used to assess the success of BGZ Wegvervoer's approach. Every two years employers and employees are asked to fill in a questionnaire about the activities and services provided by the organisation. In-depth research is carried out to assess the success of BGZ's programmes.

The approach developed by BGZ Wegvervoer has attracted interest from organisations outside the transport sector. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment has commissioned a study to find out if this approach is transferable to other sectors.

During 2001 methods of tackling stress will be looked at. These will be tailored to suit the specific needs of individual companies. Large-scale research has been carried out in various transport companies and BGZ Wegvervoer has developed a number of training programmes as a result.

Adopting a practical approach to occupational health and workplace health promotion along with implementing a structured policy for rehabilitation and prevention of absenteeism has produced positive results. Health awareness in the transport and road transport industry is increasing and with it a demand for workplace health promotion.