

Press Release of 22 April 2020

IG Metall Sets Standards for Health and Safety in the Companies

The danger is evident: The risk of being infected with the coronavirus is present all across Germany. "Regardless of whether on the shop floor or in the office, it must be ensured that workers and employees in the factories are adequately protected against the risk of infection. For IG Metall, health protection in the workplace is the top priority. Adherence to health protection standards is also a precondition for reopening closed plants", said Jörg Hofmann, First Chairman of IG Metall, on Wednesday in Frankfurt.

IG Metall has now compiled the measures necessary for infection protection in the company in a key points paper that helps works councils to implement them. These include - in this order of priority - technical measures, social distancing, break times and personal protective equipment.

The combination of different measures is particularly effective because of the greater protective effect. "But the best measures do not have the desired effect if workers are not sufficiently involved," warned Hans-Jürgen Urban, Managing Member of the Executive Board of IG Metall and responsible for work design and health protection. "Systematic and adequate instruction is the key to successful prevention. This should also include travel to and from work".

The employers are first and foremost responsible in the field of occupational health and safety. They must, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Act, provide the necessary resources and instruments for prevention. "Employers have the responsibility to organise work and use technical means in such a way that the distance and hygiene requirements are observed. The works council has a decisive role to play in this. It has a right of initiative and can demand protective measures and develop solutions with the employees," said Urban.

The IG Metall pressed for uniform nationwide standards for health protection very early on. Hofmann: "Last week, the Federal Ministry of Labour presented binding occupational safety standards, which also included recommendations by IG Metall. With its key points on corona prevention in the workplace, IG Metall concretises the government paper for the sectors in its organisational area. "