

TIC Council-DEKRA Occupational Health and Safety Webinar Series: “Tackling Ergonomic Challenges in the Manufacturing Industry”

On 8 June, TIC Council and DEKRA hosted a virtual panel on Tackling Ergonomic Challenges in the Manufacturing Industry as part of a joint Occupational Health and Safety Webinar Series.

As Official Partners of the **European Agency for Safety & Health at Work (EU-OSHA)**’s ‘Healthy Workplaces Lighten the Load 2020-2022’, TIC Council and DEKRA are committed to raising awareness of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) in the workplace and proactively seeking solutions to better prevent and manage MSDs. The updated European Industrial strategy sets out to drive the competitiveness of Europe’s industry and deliver the twin transitions towards climate neutrality and digital leadership. However, if industry is to achieve these ambitions it is imperative that employers properly address MSDs as an integral part of company policy to improve the health of their workforce and thereby bring mutual benefits to both businesses and individuals. As such, this webinar entitled “**Tackling Ergonomic Challenges in the Manufacturing Industry**” brought together high-level speakers from the TIC sector (**DEKRA**) and the manufacturing industry, specifically (**Pirelli**) and (**Toyota Material Handling Europe**) to share challenges faced and propose best practices.

Our virtual panel moderated by **Mr. Martin Michelot, TIC Council, Policy and International Affairs Manager** began with an introductory presentation from **Mr. Sebastian Bartels, Senior Vice President, Head of Global Business Line HSE & Sustainability at DEKRA** providing valuable context on the topic of MSDs. Mr. Bartels highlighted those ergonomic risks pose a major challenge for industry with two thirds of employees reporting one or more MSD-related health problem.

To mitigate these risks, our second speaker **Ms. Carina Strömberg, Sustainability Controller at Toyota Material Handling Europe**, advocated a forward-thinking approach whereby employees’ safety and wellbeing is the responsibility of the entire workforce. She highlighted that working with material handling equipment creates a high-risk environment, therefore it is important to stay in regular contact with staff and to offer proper training to both managers and operators to build an effective ‘culture of safety’. In addition to reducing the risk of accidents, this in turn increases productivity and reduces costs. Ms. Stromberg recommended extending training to customers and shared insights on managing an ageing workforce, stressing the need to keep abreast of new information and adapt equipment accordingly.

To further reduce ergonomic risks in the manufacturing industry, our second speaker, **Mr. Alberto Schiavon, Group Health and Safety Manager at Pirelli** advised moving ergonomics from an ‘End-of-Pipe’ approach to the process design stage by working closely with the engineering departments on the topic of ergonomics. For the tyre industry in particular, the high level of variability in the equipment required, as well as the characteristics of products manufactured, and the technical tasks performed can render the production process thereby causing the task of implementing MSD risk prevention to be complex. Moreover, the development of new technologies and green vehicles is significant for a sector that has seen little evolution in production techniques for approximately a century. Therefore, it is advisable to take a holistic approach, by proactively anticipating and preventing potential ergonomic risks at the start of the production process to better protect workers and drive competitive edge. Other considerations for a successful ergonomics strategy are benchmarking, both internally and against competitors and other markets, thus taking a standardised approach across

regions, specifically regarding the data sets behind risk assessment evaluation. Moreover, the process of sharing information and experiences between sites is also a means to facilitate further continuous improvements in the management of ergonomics, in addition to increasing automation wherever possible and developing new technologies such as simulation tools.

Mr. Bartels also acknowledged the wide-reaching benefits of embracing technological solutions. He went on to underline the importance of leadership by employers and within organisations, highlighting that MSDs urgently need to be moved up the priority list and integrated into company sustainability strategies. In summary, this webinar served as a valuable awareness building exercise to highlight how ergonomic risk in industry can be effectively mitigated through the application of tangible and practical solutions.

To gain further insights join us for our third webinar due to take place in September 2021.

Speakers

- **Alberto Schiavon**, Group Health and Safety Manager, **Pirelli**
- **Carina Strömberg**, Sustainability Controller, **Toyota Material Handling Europe**
- **Sebastian Bartels**, Senior Vice President, Head of Business Line HSE & Sustainability, **DEKRA**

To learn more, please click to access the webinar recording [here](#).

The presentation of the webinar can also be found [here](#).

As TIC Council continues to provide thought-provoking presentations on the current market trends and legislative developments around conformity assessment, check our [list of webinars](#) to learn more.

About TIC Council

TIC Council is a global association representing over 90 international independent third-party testing, inspection, certification, and verification organizations. The industry represents an estimated one million employees across the world with annual sales of approximately USD 200 billion.