



Country: **Switzerland**

1 Introduction

Switzerland is not part of the EU and therefore does not need to comply with European H&S Directives. In order to facilitate trade with the EU, some areas of H&S legislation have been harmonised, such as the transportation and use of dangerous goods and the provision and use of work equipment.

Politically, the state has a Federal Government and is divided into 26 Cantons, each of which has its own local government. Interpretation and implementation of federal law can vary between the Cantons. There is an organisation in place (EKAS), which represents the Federal H&S Authorities, Cantonal H&S Authorities and the State Insurer (SUVA) in order to provide a degree of consistency. This is done through the issue of EKAS guidelines.

There are three official languages in Switzerland: German, French and Italian. German is the most common language (65% of the population). French is spoken in the Cantons of Geneva, Jura, Neuchatel and Vaud. Italian is spoken in Ticino and parts of Grisons. Bern, Fribourg and Valais are both French and German speaking. Grisons is tri-lingual and in addition has a number of Romansch speakers, although this is not an official language.

1.1 Institutions and links

The Cantonal Inspectorates and the State Secretary for Economic Affairs (SECO) are the executive bodies for the Work Act (ArG). The Swiss National Accident Insurance (SUVA) is responsible for the enforcement of the Accident Insurance Act (UVG). The responsibility for enforcing the Accident Prevention Regulation (VUV) is shared by the Swiss National Accident Insurance SUVA, the State Secretary for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Cantonal Inspectorates. This is coordinated by the Federal Commission of Coordination for Work Safety (EKAS). (OSH (OHS EU), s.d.)

The most useful links for general topics are SUVA and EKAS

Institution	Link
Swiss Accident Insurance Institute (SUVA)	http://www.suva.ch
The Federal Coordination Commission for Occupational Safety (EKAS)	http://www.ekas.admin.ch
State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)	http://www.seco.admin.ch/
The Federal Office of Public Health (BAG)	http://www.bag.admin.ch
Swiss federation of trade unions SCB/USS	http://www.sgb.ch/
Travail Suisse (umbrella organisation representing employees)	http://www.travailsuisse.ch/
Inter-Cantonal-Association for the Protection of Employees IVA/AIPT/AIPL	http://www.iva-ch.ch/

1.2 Health & Safety Law references

The Swiss legislative framework for safety and health at work is not based on European Legislation. As Switzerland has not joined the European Economic Area (EEA), it is not obliged to adopt EU laws. Although Switzerland has set its own policies on occupational safety and health, these basically comply with the EU legislation. Differences do exist e.g. non-reporting of occupational accidents in Switzerland.

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Occupational health and safety in Switzerland is primarily based on two laws: the Work Act (Arbeitsgesetz ArG, 1964) and the Accident Insurance Act (Bundesgesetz über die Unfallversicherung UVG, 1981). Occupational diseases are covered by the Accident Insurance Act (see below), whilst the Work Act deals with general occupational health and hygiene. The Work Act consists of two main sections: firstly concerning work and rest periods, and secondly with occupational safety and health.

There are five accompanying sets of regulations concerning working time and OSH (VO1, VO2, VO3, VO4, VO5). In particular, VO3 deals with health promotion, and VO4 deals with approved plans for new industrial buildings and conversions.

EKAS provides Guidelines and local, Cantonal Authorities can pass local interpretive laws.

(OSH (OHS EU), s.d.)

The main pieces of Health & Safety Law:

Full name	Abbreviation	Content
Bundesgesetz vom 20. März 1981 über die Unfallversicherung	UVG	Act on Accident Insurance All workers are insured against the financial consequences of occupational accidents and diseases. The act regulates the prevention of accidents and diseases.
Verordnung vom 19. Dezember 1983 über die Verhütung von Unfällen und Berufskrankheiten	VUV	The Ordinance on the Prevention of Labour Accidents and Professional Disease This implements and details the requirements in the above act. Subjects covered include information and training of employees, work tools, passageways, personal protective equipment etc
Bundesgesetz vom 19. März 1976 über die Arbeit in Industrie, Gewerbe und Handel, Arbeitsgesetz	ArG	The Labour Act http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/sr/c822_11.html With its implementing Ordinances, this Act sets out the requirements for health in the workplace and regulates the approval and operating authorisation of industries. The Work Act consists of two main sections: firstly concerning work and rest periods, and secondly with occupational safety and health. There are five accompanying sets of regulations concerning working time and OSH (VO1, VO2, VO3, VO4, VO5). In particular, VO3 deals with health promotion, and VO4 deals with approved plans for new industrial buildings and conversions
Bundesgesetz vom 13. März 1964 über die Sicherheit von Technischen Einrichtungen und Geraten	STEG	Act governing the Safety of Technical Equipment and Devices This Act provides harmonisation with the EU Machinery Directive, the Gas Appliances Directive and the PPE Directive

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Full name	Abbreviation	Content
Verordnung vom 12.Juni 1995 über die Sicherheit von Technischen Einrichtungen und Geraten	STEV	The Ordinance on Safety of Technical Installations and Equipment This provides a harmonised standard with the EU for work equipment and a certification for non-EU equipment.
Verordnung vom 25.November 1996 über die Eignung der Spezialistinnen und Spezialisten der Arbeitssicherheit		The Ordinance on the Qualification of Safety Specialists. Details the education and qualifications of Safety Specialists.
Verordnung über elektrische Niederspannungsinstallationen	NIV	Ordinance on low voltage electrical installations
Bundesgesetz vom 17 Dezember über die Information und Mitsprache der Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer in den Betrieben – Mitwirkungsgesetz		Information and Consultation with Employees Act
Verordnung vom 25.August 1999 über den Schutz der Arbeitnehmerinnen und Arbeitnehmer vor Gefährdung durch Mikroorganismen	SAMV	The Ordinance on the Protection of Workers from Risks Related to Exposure to Biological Agents at Work
Verordnung des EVD vom 20 März 2011 über Gefährliche und Beschwerliche Arbeiten bei Schwangerschaft und Mutterschaft		Ordinance on Dangerous and Tiring Activities during Pregnancy and Motherhood