

# ORR/Rail Trade Unions Conference 2015

Gender sensitive health and safety in  
the Rail Industry



# Ten steps to equality

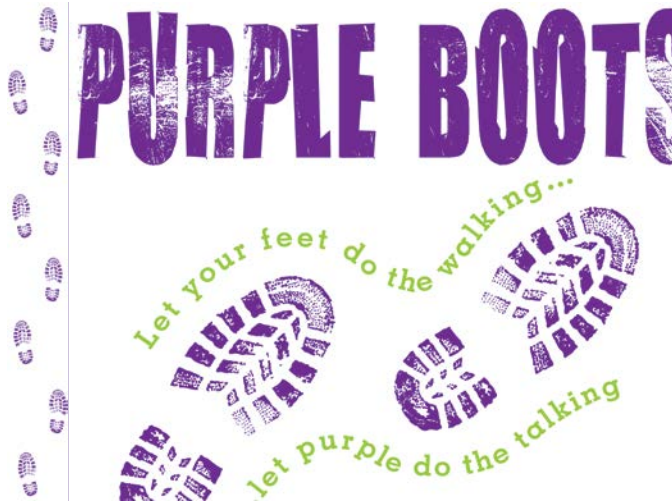
1. Spot the difference
2. Spot the stereotype
3. Involve women & men
4. Gender-sensitive risk assessment
5. Apply the general principles of prevention
6. Improve reporting
7. Improve research
8. Integrate gender & health
9. Take effective action
10. Ensure equal protection

# Step 1 Spot the difference

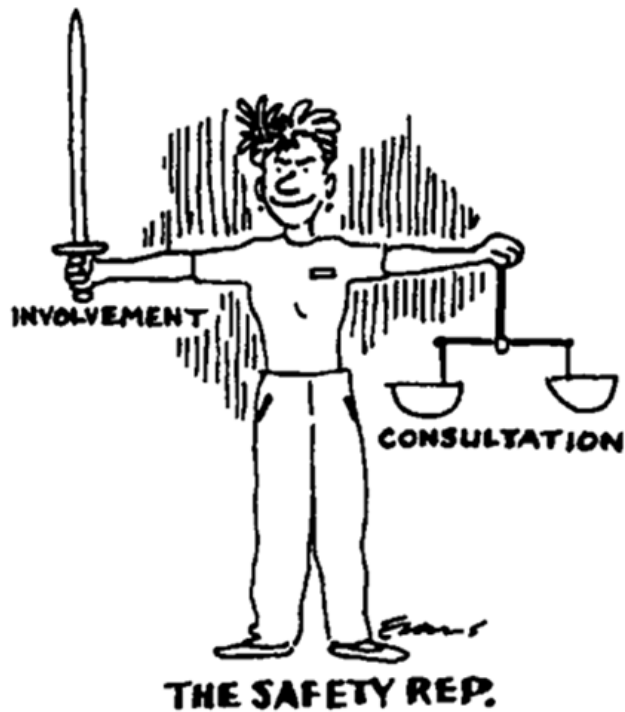
Men - Women

Different. Equal

# Step 2 Spot the stereotype



# Step 3 – Involve all



# Step 4 Gender sensitive risk assessment



## Including gender issues in risk assessment

Continuous efforts are needed to improve the working conditions of both women and men, however, taking a 'gender-neutral' approach to risk assessment and prevention can result in risks to both sexes being underestimated or even ignored altogether. When we think about hazards at work, we are more likely to think of men working in high accident risk areas such as a building site or a fishing vessel than of women working in health and social care or in home areas such as car centres. A careful examination of

real work circumstances shows that both women and men can face significant risks at work. In addition, making jobs easier for women will make them easier for men too. So it is important to include gender issues in workplace risk assessments, and 'restructuring' gender issues into risk prevention is now an objective of the European Community (1). Table shows some examples of hazards and risks found in female-dominated work areas.

Table 1. Examples of hazards and risks found in female-dominated work

Work area	Key factors and health problems include:	Physical	Chemical	Psychosocial
Healthcare	Infectious diseases, e.g. bloodborne, respiratory, etc.	Manual handling and strenuous postures, lifting, suction	Cleaning, disinfecting and disinfecting agents, drugs, anaesthetic gases	Emotionally demanding work, shift and night work, violence from clients and the public
Beauty salons	Infectious diseases, e.g. particularly respiratory	Manual handling, strenuous postures		Emotional work
Cleaning	Infectious diseases, dermatitis	Manual handling, strenuous postures, slips and falls, wet floors	Cleaning agents	Unsocial hours, violence, e.g. if working in isolation or late
Food production	Infectious diseases, e.g. animal/borne and from mould, spores, organic dusts	Repetitive movements, e.g. packing jobs or dough kneading, knife wounds, cold temperatures, noise	Pesticide residues, disinfecting agents, ammonia, grease and additives	Stress associated with repetitive assembly line work
Catering and restaurant work	Dermatitis	Manual handling, repetitive chopping, cuts from knives and burners, slips and falls, heat, cleaning agents	Passive smoking, cleaning agents	Stress from hectic work, dealing with the public, violence and harassment
Textiles and clothing	Organic dusts	Repetitive movements, e.g. sewing, repetitive work, awkward postures, needle injuries	Open and other chemicals, including formaldehyde in permanent press and stain removal solvents, dust	Stress associated with repetitive assembly line work
Laundries	Infectious diseases, e.g. in hospitals	Manual handling and strenuous postures, heat	Dry cleaning solvents	Stress associated with repetitive and fast pace work
Carpeting sector		Repetitive movements, manual handling	Glass, lead, silica dust	Stress associated with repetitive assembly line work
Light manufacturing		Repetitive movements, e.g. in assembly work, awkward postures, manual handling	Chemicals in microelectronics	Stress associated with repetitive assembly line work
Call centres		Voice problems associated with talking, awkward postures, excessive sitting	Poor indoor air quality	Stress associated with dealing with clients, pace of work and repetitive work
Education	Infectious diseases, e.g. respiratory, measles	Prolonged standing, voice problems	Poor indoor air quality	Emotionally demanding work, violence
Handwashing		Strenuous postures, repetitive movements, prolonged standing, wet hands, cuts	Chemical soaps, dyes, etc.	Stress associated with dealing with clients, fast paced work
Clerical work		Repetitive movements, awkward postures, back pain from sitting	Poor indoor air quality, photocopier fumes	Stress, e.g. associated with lack of control over work, frequent interruptions, monotonous work
Agriculture	Infectious diseases, e.g. animal/borne and from mould, spores, organic dusts	Manual handling, strenuous postures, unsuitable work equipment and protective clothing, heat, cold, wet conditions	Pesticides	

(1) Adapting to change in work and society. A new Community Strategy on health and safety at work, 2002-2006. Communication from the European Commission, COM(2002) 112 final.

# Gender sensitive risk assessment



## Gender sensitivity checklist

# Step 5 Apply the general principles of prevention

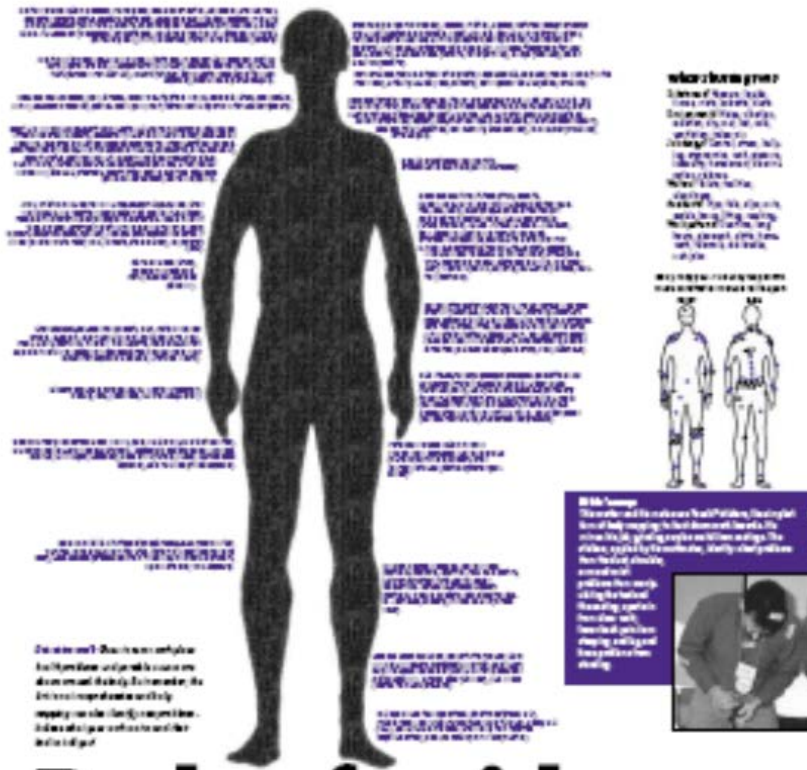
- Avoiding risks
- Evaluating the risks which cannot be avoided
- Combating the risks at source
- Adapting the work to the individual, especially as regards the design of the workplaces, the choice of work equipment and the choice of working and production methods, with a view, in particular, to alleviating monotonous work and work at a pre-determined work-rate and to reducing their effect on health ...
- Adapting to technical progress
- Developing a coherent overall prevention policy..
- ...
- Giving collective protective measures priority over individual protective measures
- Giving appropriate instructions to employees



# Step 6 Improve reporting

- ✓ Report work-related ill health in addition to accidents and near misses
- ✓ Are workers aware of the importance of reporting?
- ✓ Collect sex-disaggregated data – men and women
- ✓ Analyse ill-health statistics

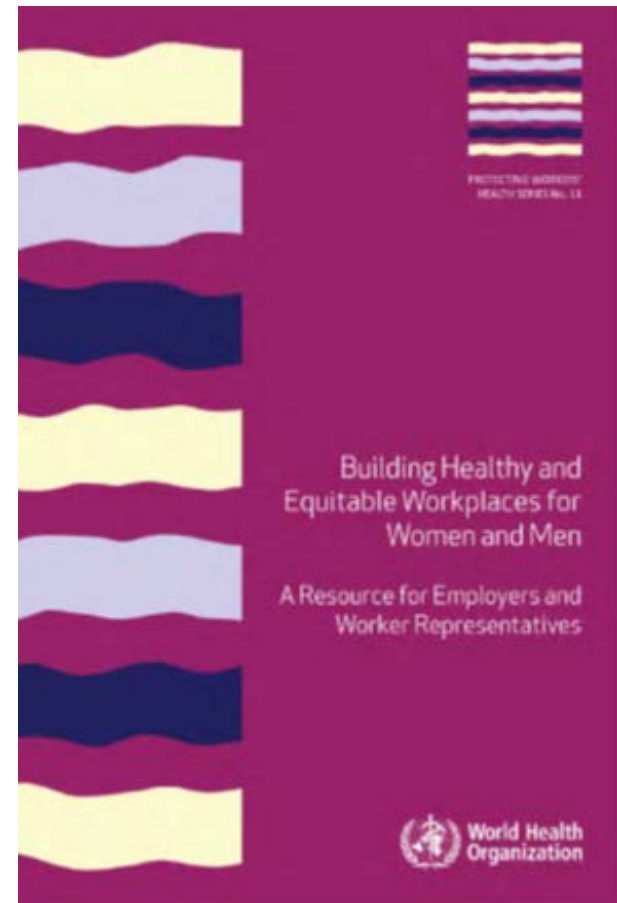
# Step 7 Improve research



## Mapping out work hazards



# Step 8 Integrate (or mainstream) gender & occupational health



# Step 9 Take effective action



Looking for Trouble  
on Health & Safety

Look for it  
Find it  
Fix it

[www.unitetheunion.org](http://www.unitetheunion.org)



# Step 10 Ensure Equal Protection: how gender-sensitive is your workplace?

- H&S management
- Agreements and policies
- Working with safety reps, equality reps, learning reps
- Risk assessment and prevention
- Sickness absence management
- Reporting and monitoring
- Rail specific HS issues

...gender sensitivity is more than comparing men's and women's disease and injury rates. It is a re-examination of workplace reality..."

Messing et al  
(2003)

