

Focus on IFA's work

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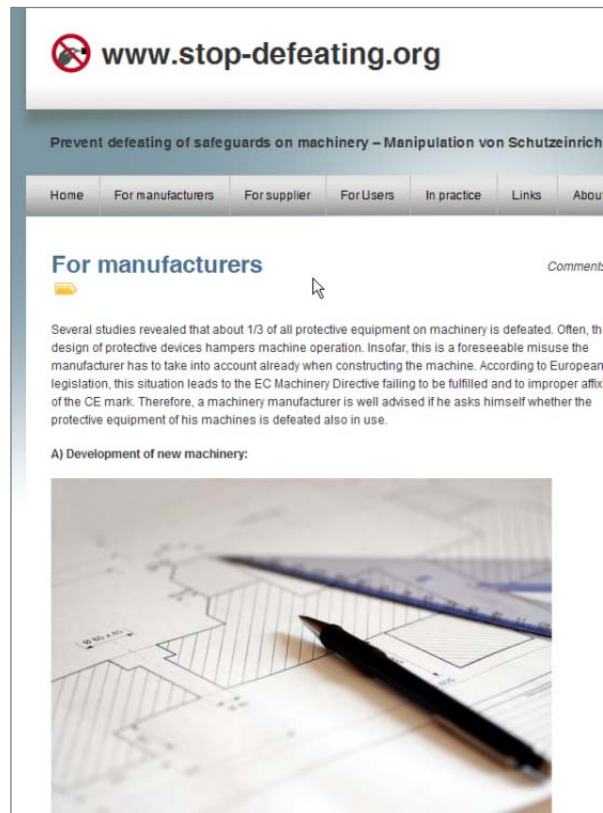
New web portal: defeating of protective equipment on machinery

Problem

Thousands of severe and fatal accidents are caused every year owing to the defeating of protective equipment on machinery. Time pressure is frequently the motivation for workers to disable such safety systems. A study conducted in 2005 by the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV; at that time the HVBG) revealed that approximately one-third of all protective equipment on machinery was defeated, and also how and why.

Some progress has been made since then and the defeating of safeguards is now discussed openly: in the literature, in companies, in standardization. The problem is still a long way from being solved however, since a sea-change in attitudes is first required among those involved in the design and operation of machinery. The urgent need for action is still not universally recognized, despite defeated protective equipment resulting in injuries and fatalities, many machines bearing the CE mark without justification, and no small number of machinery operators in Germany disregarding the Ordinance on industrial safety and health.

A need therefore exists for information to be provided for designers and operators of machinery. At the same time, guidance is lacking on what can be done to prevent the defeating of protective equipment.



Web portal www.stop-defeating.org

Activities

The study into defeating analyzed the current situation in German companies in the metalworking sector, and revealed areas in which measures are necessary to prevent the protective equipment on machinery from being defeated.

The German Social Accident Insurance Institutions then set up a working group headed by the IFA and tasked with addressing these areas. The first step involved the creation of guides for the design of machinery. Examples of good design in which protective equipment does not obstruct machine operators during their work are intended to provide incentives for machinery to be manufactured which presents no motivation for defeating. The examples are taken from a number of sectors, but are generic in their scope. The next step involves the creation of tuition modules for use in seminars etc., in the first instance for the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions.

The defeating of protective equipment is not an exclusively German problem. The International Social Security Organization (ISSA, www.issa.int/prevention-machines) has therefore taken up the issue with good reason. With the support of the IFA, a working group produced information material and guides on the subject. These are aimed at manufacturers, dealers and operators of machinery.

Results and Application

The results produced by the two working groups are available at www.stop-defeating.org (see figure). This website is maintained by the ISSA, with the support of the IFA and the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions. This is the only website worldwide dealing exclusively with the defeating of protective equipment on machinery. At present, all articles are available in English and German. Further language versions are to follow, subject to support from other countries.

Area of Application

Manufacturers, dealers and operators of machinery and protective equipment; OSH professionals; labour inspectors; developers of machinery standards.

Additional Information

- www.stop-defeating.org
- Manipulation von Schutzeinrichtungen an Maschinen. Report. Published by: Hauptverband der gewerblichen Berufsgenossenschaften (HVBG), Sankt Augustin 2006
www.dguv.de/ifa, Webcode d6303

Expert Assistance

IFA, Division 5: Accident prevention – Product safety

Literature Requests

IFA, Central Division