



Occupational Diseases

Some illnesses can be work-related depending on the risk to which you are exposed. In these cases, the doctor who diagnoses the occupational illness will have to send a certificate to the National Institute for Insurance against Accidents at Work (INAIL) (patient's local branch) and a report (pursuant to Art. 365 Penal Code) to the judicial authority (PISLL usually the provincial headquarters of the company where the patient works). This initiates the procedure for recognising the illness as an occupational disease.

Health Surveillance

(Leg. Decree 81/2008, as amended – Min. Decree 27/03/2013 – Law 27/2020)

The medical examinations and any additional tests – for example: spirometry, audiometry, electrocardiogram and blood tests – are determined based on the risks to which the worker is exposed. These assessments, performed by the competent physician and paid for by the employer, play an important role in protecting workers' health.

They make it possible to assess the worker's state of health, identify conditions of greater vulnerability to specific risks – allowing the introduction of any limitations or recommendations to protect the worker – and detect, at an early stage, any work-related illnesses.

What the law says

The law states that:

- permanent, fixed-term and seasonal employees exposed to the risks identified in the company's Risk Assessment Document must be subject to health surveillance (Leg. Decree 81/2008 as amended),
- self-employed workers, Coltivatori Diretti (owner farmers) and family workers may undergo Health Surveillance to protect their health (Art. 21 of Leg. Decree 81/2008),
- seasonal agricultural workers engaged in generic and simple work, not requiring specific professional requirements, are entitled to simplified Health Surveillance pursuant to Interministerial Decree of 27/03/2013 and Law 27/2020.

Find your nearest occupational health clinic

or visit

regione.toscana.it/ambulatorimedicalavoro



Are you an agricultural worker? Think about your health!

Information Guide on Occupational Safety, Hygiene and Prevention (PISLL) services

Risks in agriculture - What to do

Solar radiation

Exposure to sunlight can cause skin lesions such as dermatitis, actinic keratoses, tumours (epitheliomas, basalomas, some types of melanoma).

Avoid exposure during the hottest hours of the day (12 noon to 4 pm), especially in summer, working preferably indoors or in shaded areas. Wear light-coloured, breathable clothing with long sleeves and trousers and a wide-brimmed hat.

Manual handling of loads

Many activities in agriculture involve transporting, lifting, pulling and pushing heavy loads which can cause back strain injuries and muscle/tendon injuries in the shoulders, elbows and wrists.

Check that the weight to be handled is within recommended limits; use tools and machinery to move loads and/or lift in pairs when possible; keep the load as close to the body as possible; bend the knees, keep the back straight and avoid twisting the torso during lifting; attend the medical examinations required by the company.

Repeated movements and awkward postures

Tasks such as pruning and harvesting fruit and vegetables may require repetitive movements that can cause injuries to the shoulders, elbows, and wrists.

Plan recovery breaks and limit, where possible, the use of force and high frequency of movements.

Noise

Machinery and tools used in agriculture are often noisy, and excessive noise can, over time, lead to hearing loss.

Move away from noise sources whenever possible, report noisy machinery and equipment to the employer, use protective equipment (ear muffs and earplugs), and undergo the medical examinations required by the company.

Vibrations

The vibrations produced by vehicles and equipment used in agriculture can cause issues to the back (e.g. when driving tractors), shoulders, elbows, wrists and hands (use of brushcutters, chainsaws, etc.)

Report machinery or equipment that vibrates excessively to the employer, take work breaks and use anti-vibration protective devices.

Chemical Risk

Workers who use plant protection products (PPPs) must be informed, trained and authorised, as they are at risk of acute intoxication, which can cause anything from mild discomfort to convulsions, breathing difficulties and even death. Over time, exposure can lead to chronic effects with progressive damage to the kidneys, liver, lungs and brain, depending on the substance used.

Use appropriate personal protective equipment during preparation, application and maintenance of the equipment used; observe the waiting period before returning to the field after treatment; store work clothes separately from clean clothes; do not smoke or eat near the treatment site; wash thoroughly in case of contact as absorption can also occur through the skin.

Biohazards

Even small wounds contaminated with soil can allow tetanus spores to enter the body.

Contact with animals – such as on livestock farms – can lead to the development of animal-borne infectious diseases (zoonoses).

Wear gloves and long-sleeved clothing to reduce the risk of mosquito, tick or flea bites; observe hygiene rules when handling animals. All agricultural workers are required to have tetanus vaccinations (Law No 292 of 5 March 1963, as amended).

Booster vaccinations must be administered every 10 years.