

## FACTSHEET

## Employees with an increased risk of illness

Dealing with at-risk groups for severe or fatal disease courses in workplaces or occupations with an increased risk of a COVID-19 infection.

### Key Messages

- It is the responsibility of employers to protect employees from an infection with COVID-19 at the workplace or at least to minimize the risk. Whether there is an increased occupational risk of infection - above and beyond the risk in the general population - is determined by the legally required hazard assessment. Countermeasures follow the so-called STOP principle by substitution of hazardous activities by less hazardous ones and by technical, organizational or personal protective measures.
- Only when these measures fail to reduce the risk of infection to a level similar to that of the nonoccupational population, an individual hazard assessment for a severe or fatal course of COVID-19 disease comes into consideration.
- The assessment of the individually increased risk for a severe or fatal outcome should be carried out by a physician together with the person concerned. Where company medical care is provided, a risk of infection screening should be offered in accordance with the ArbMedVV (Part 2). Otherwise, the individual risk assessment would be up to the physicians in charge of treatment.
- This article examines on the basis of the international literature, which factors increase the risk of a severe or fatal outcome. In addition, the perspectives of the medical professional societies and the Swiss and Austrian health authorities are presented.
- If both, an increased occupational risk of infection and an individually increased risk for a serious or fatal outcome exists, we recommend paid leave if the person concerned wishes. The leave of absence could be financed by health insurance funds, pension funds and accident insurance funds, similar to the continued payment of wages during pregnancy-related employment ban (U2).

This paper is addressed primarily to politicians and experts in the field of occupational safety and health in companies.

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