

The National Triad for Mandatory Supervision: Adapting to COVID-19

Sweden

	<p>Summary</p> <p>The Swedish Work Environment Authority (SWEA) set up a new temporary internal unit, The National Triad for Mandatory Supervision, to coordinate the national response to COVID-19, resulting in internal and external re-organisation and adaption measures (e.g., teleworking, remote inspections etc.). It provides guidance for labour inspectors to adapt their working methods in order to ensure all inspections are effective. Regarding undeclared work it is still considered essential to have on-site inspections.</p>
<p>Title of the practice in original language</p>	<p><i>Nationell Triad för Obligatorisk Tillsyn</i></p>
<p>Name(s) of authorities/bodies/organisations involved</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Swedish Work Environment Authority (SWEA)
<p>Sectors</p>	<p>All</p>
<p>Target groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Labour inspectors (directly targeted); ▶ Workers involved in undeclared work (indirectly targeted).
<p>Purpose of measure</p>	<p>Prevention</p>

	<p>Aims and objectives</p> <p>The aim of the unit was to coordinate the work of labour inspectors on a temporary basis in order to support the continuation of their work in a safe and efficient manner during the COVID_19 crisis, including on-site inspections.</p>
<p>Background context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ At the outbreak of the pandemic, most supervisory activities involving on-site inspections were cancelled. The National Triad for Mandatory Supervision was established to coordinate the SWEA's response in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It focuses on coordinating an efficient system with legally secured



	<p>decisions, introducing and managing new ways of working for the protection of labour inspectors e.g., remote controls, teleworking, while enabling their work to continue.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The type of work conducted included reports about serious incidents, safety representative work suspensionsⁱ, and safety representative demand measuresⁱⁱ. The unit also focuses on the work environment for bus drivers, taxi drivers, transportation services, and shop assistants.
<p>Key objectives of the measure</p>	<p>Please indicate in bullet points a list of specific objectives of the practice.</p> <p>General Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To coordinate an efficient system with legally secured decisions; ▶ To coordinate effectively all the incoming work related to COVID-19 from the whole country. <p>Specific Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To establish new and safe ways of working for labour inspectors to enable them to continue working and detecting undeclared work; ▶ To respond efficiently to workers' safety and work environment issues related to COVID-19.
<p>Main activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Where possible, inspections are carried out remotely. Desk-based, remote inspections via telephone and Skype calls were introduced during the pandemic; ▶ New methods were introduced to facilitate these new ways of working, for example, sending documents to employers in order to prepare for an inspection; ▶ On-site inspections continue to be performed where serious accidents occurred. A risk assessment was carried out before an inspection to evaluate the situation, checking the risks associated with the incident, along with the risk of the spread of the COVID-19 infection to labour inspection personnel; ▶ Joint authority controls for combatting undeclared work were not possible with remote inspections. Undeclared work inspections ceased during the Spring of 2020 but resumed again after the summer with joint on-site inspections continuing to combat fraud, violations of statutes, and crime in working life.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All on-site inspections were performed outside and at a distance while employers were notified to give them time to make the necessary arrangements; ▶ Personal protective equipment including face masks/shield were required. Respiratory protection was required in workplace inspections where COVID-19 was found. All inspectors were trained in how to use the equipment; ▶ Inspectors used cars provided by the SWEA to travel to sites. Where inspectors belong to a high-risk group, they do not carry out on-site inspections; ▶ Teleworking was also covered by the Work Environment Act. With teleworking the employer had the same responsibility of the work environment as before. However, it was not possible to perform controls to check that the law was being observed; ▶ Information campaigns aimed at companies and employers on how to handle risks related to the new work environment were introduced. e.g., psychosocial risks.
<p>Funding/organisational resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ No additional funding was required. Instead, new working procedures/a new working method were established within the existing frameworks.

	<p>Outcomes</p> <p>New methods and ways of working were introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in the reorganisation of the SWEA, reducing the risks to labour inspectors while allowing their work to continue as far as possible.</p>
<p>Achievement of objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ The National Triad for the Mandatory Supervision introduced a range of measures including, for example, teleworking, remote inspections and protection of inspectors if there was an on-site visit, which allowed inspections to continue to operate while taking account of the risks of COVID-19 to labour inspectors; ▶ It ensured that decisions made by the SWEA during the crisis were legally secure and allowed the SWEA to build capacity during the period too. ▶ Anecdotal evidence suggests that inspectors and managers agreed that the Unit worked well, even better than expected. With the establishment of the Unit, a uniformity and

	cohesiveness was achieved in the approach to work and also in the labour inspections.
Lessons learnt and success factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ There is more transparency and equal treatment when it comes to handling cases of undeclared work during the pandemic. ▶ It is important to ensure legally secured decisions for credibility and to build capacity of the relevant authority.
Transferability	The model is transferable to another country. There are several other countries that have worked in similar ways.

Further information	
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Useful sources and resources	<p>Acts and Regulations about Work Environment</p> <p>https://www.av.se/en/work-environment-work-and-inspections/acts-and-regulations-about-work-environment/</p> <p>Foreign Workers in Sweden</p> <p>https://www.av.se/en/work-environment-work-and-inspections/foreign-labour-in-sweden/</p> <p>Inspections, investigations and checks</p> <p>https://www.av.se/en/work-environment-work-and-inspections/foreign-labour-in-sweden/</p>

ⁱ The role of a safety representative is to monitor the management of the work environment. The Work Environment Act states that the employer and the employee (and their safety representative) should work together in the management of the work environment. However, the employer holds ultimate responsibility.

If the safety representative sees that there is immediate or serious danger for the lives of the employees he/she can decide to stop work (a so-called safety representative stop/work suspension) and wait for the SWEA to take a position on the matter.

ⁱⁱ An employee or the safety representative may discover that there are risks at the workplace or that the employer is not following the rules on working time. In that case, the person who is responsible for



working conditions is contacted and asked to rectify the risks. Most employers will then do what is necessary to ensure that working conditions are satisfactory. If not, the safety representative can *demand measures* (SWEA intervenes).