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## Personal Safety in the Management of Contemporary Organisations

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Submitted 22/12/24, 1st revision 13/01/25, 2nd revision 24/01/25, accepted 15/02/25

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### **Abstract:**

**Purpose:** The aim of this article is to show the impact of personal safety on the management of contemporary organisations. It is essential to understand what modern strategies and good practice could help to improve staff safety in organisations, and how to cope with new threats connected with work in a changing working environment.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** The personal safety of employees is a key element in managing organisations, and managing it effectively requires the use of innovative technologies, psychological support and the promotion of a positive organisational culture. The research problem was formulated as follows: Which innovative strategies and practices in the field of protecting personal safety are effective in the management of organisations, particularly in the face of the new threats such as cyberthreats, professional stress, professional burnout and changes in forms of employment? A research hypothesis was formulated in relation to the research problem, which assumes that modern technologies, psychological support programmes and an organisational culture based on inclusivity and trust significantly improve the personal safety of employees in organisations, particularly in the face of new challenges connected with remote working and changing forms of employment. The article applies theoretical methods such as an analysis of the literature on the topic, and a review of reports and research concerning personal safety. It also focuses on areas such as management, workplace psychology and modern technologies which support safety.

**Findings:** The studies involved the authors defining the main problems connected with demonstrating the impact of personal safety on the management of a contemporary organisation. Firstly, the integration of technology as an element ensuring personal safety in organisations is of vital importance. This enables monitoring, the detection of threats and immediate steps aimed at protecting the health and lives of employees. Next, the increasing

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relevance of mental health is important, particularly countering professional burnout and alleviating stress. It is also important to promote an organisational culture based on inclusivity, trust and open dialogue. Employees who feel respected and supported are more engaged with and loyal to the organisation. The final factor is adaptation to remote working, since changes connected with the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the necessity for organisations to adapt to new forms of work, such as WFH and flexible forms of employment. Organisations must provide the appropriate tools and support to meet these challenges.

**Practical Implications:** The aspects of personal safety mentioned in the article and their impact on the management of a contemporary organisation may be useful in identifying threats, creating innovative strategies and indicating good practices in the field of employee protection. The first part shows the importance of personal safety in an organisational context, indicating that it is vital not only for employees' health, but also for the efficiency and success of the organisation. The second part concentrates on contemporary threats such as cyberthreats, professional stress and burnout, as well as challenges involved in remote working and the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the perception of personal safety. The final part of the article presents innovative safety protection strategies, such as implementing modern technologies, psychological support programmes and the development of an organisational culture based on trust and inclusivity.

**Originality/Value:** The authors present questions connected with the personal safety of employees in the management of organisations. This safety covers physical and mental as well as social protection, forming a basis to build stable and effective teams. The complexity of problems such as cyberthreats, professional stress, remote work and diversity of teams requires management strategies to be adapted to dynamic changes. Studies on these aspects may provide crucial information for creating more complex and effective strategies for personal safety management in organisations in future.

**Keywords:** Safety, cyberthreats, employee, management, organisation, remote work.

**JEL codes:** L2, M1, M12, M54, J5, I1.

**Paper type:** Research article.

## 1. Introduction

Contemporary organisations operate in a dynamically changing environment which requires flexibility and the ability to react quickly to a variety of threats. In this context, the personal safety of employees is becoming a vital aspect of effective management. This safety covers physical and mental as well as social protection, forming a basis to build stable and effective teams.

Today, personal safety management extends beyond traditional means such as workplace H&S regulations and insurance. Technological development, globalisation and employees' changing expectations require a new approach (Wyrzykowska, Kacprzak, Król, Wielewska, and Tul-Krzyszczuk, 2024).

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Employers must face up to such challenges as cyberthreats, professional stress and ensuring inclusivity in the workplace.

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need to adapt safety strategies to new realities such as remote and hybrid work (Penc-Pietrzak, 2023). The purpose of this article is to indicate the role of personal safety in managing an organisation, with particular consideration given to contemporary challenges and innovative solutions.

Theoretical aspects of safety management will also be presented, as well as practical examples of actions taken by organisations in order to protect employees and support their wellbeing. Emphasis will also be placed on the need for a balanced approach combining concern for safety with business efficiency and creating an organisational culture based on trust.

## **2. The Importance of Personal Safety in Managing an Organisation**

The personal safety of employees is one of the key pillars of effective organisational management. It forms the basis for building stable and productive teams, while at the same time affecting the organisational cultural and sustainable development of a business (Nermend *et al.*, 2021).

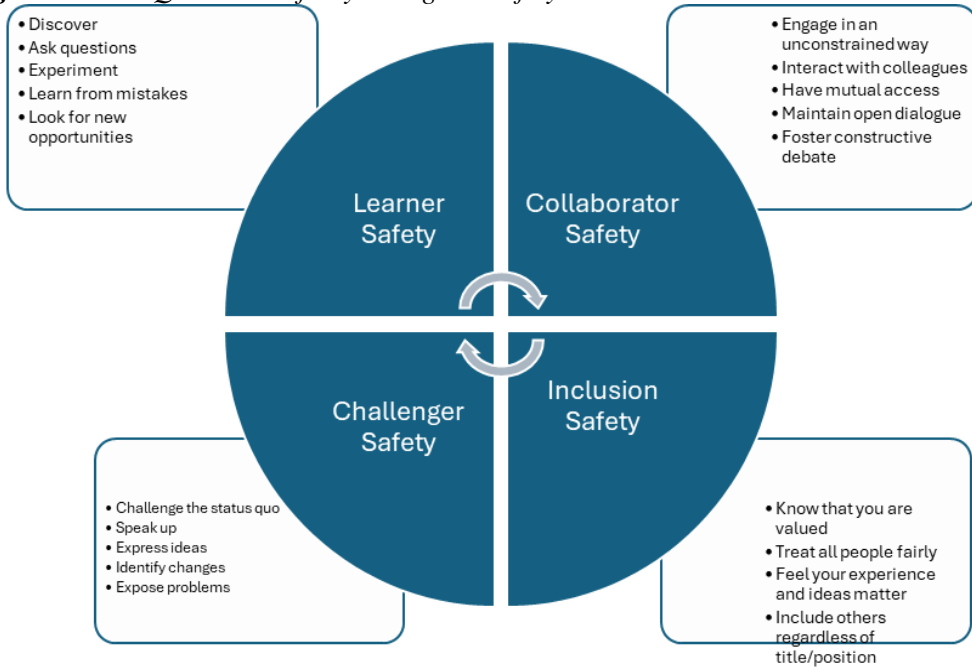
Personal safety covers a wide spectrum of actions and strategies intended to protect employees physically, mentally and socially. A key aspect of workplace safety is to ensure so-called psychological safety, which enables employees to express their opinions freely and take a professional risk without fear of negative consequences (Edmondson and Lei, 2014, p. 24; Tyagi *et al.*, 2023).

From the point of view of organisational management, personal safety is an integral part of ensuring working conditions which comply with the applicable legislation and standards, such as ISO Standard 45001, concerning quality and environmental management, and work on the first international ISO standard concerning workplace safety and hygiene (Chomałowska, Molek-Winiarska, 2017, p. 181).

A lack of appropriate protective measures may lead to falling morale, a higher staff turnover and numerous legal and financial problems. Figure 1 below shows the four levels of psychological safety in an organisation.

Studies indicate that organisations which treat personal safety as a priority achieve better business results. According to Brown and Leigh (1996), employees' sense of safety correlates positively with their engagement and productivity. Meanwhile Dijk and Vashdi (2018) emphasise that introducing strategies based on personal safety leads to greater cohesion in teams and innovation.

**Figure 1. Four Quadrants of Psychological Safety**



**Source:** <https://www.wwt.com/article/how-and-why-to-create-safety-within-your-teams>

Personal safety also plays a key role in creating an organisational culture. Organisations which form working environments supportive of employee wellbeing attract more dedicated talent and are more immune to crises (Dollard, Bakker, 2010). In spite of the benefits resulting from investing in personal safety, organisations encounter various challenges, such as:

- ensuring compliance with international safety standards;
- employee data protection in the context of increasing cyberthreats;
- coping with pressure connected with remote work and its effects on mental and social health.

The personal safety of employees is an intrinsic part of managing an organisation. It forms bases for building teams capable of realising ambitious goals, while at the same time providing space for developing creativity and innovation. Organisations which prioritise the safety of their employees are better prepared to react to the challenges posed by the modern world.

### **3. Challenges and Threats to Personal Safety in Contemporary Organisations**

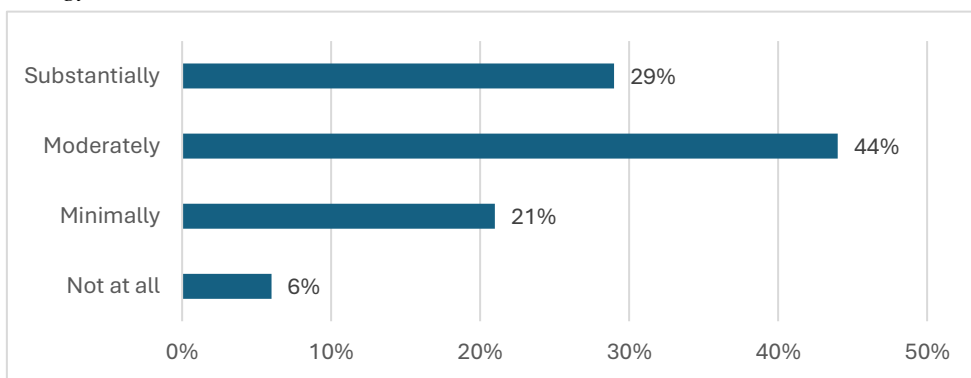
The contemporary working environment presents numerous challenges for organisations with regard to protection of employees' personal safety. The

complexity of problems such as cyberthreats, professional stress, remote work and diversity of teams requires management strategies to be adapted to dynamic changes. The COVID-19 pandemic additionally highlighted the importance of this area, while also revealing new risks connected with the wellbeing of employees.

In the digital age, personal data protection has become one of the major challenges for organisations. Employees who use digital tools are exposed to various types of cyberthreats, such as phishing, ransomware and unauthorised data access. Effective protection of information requires not only advanced technologies, but also an increase in employee awareness of cybersecurity (Bada, Sasse and Nurse, 2019, p. 127-128). Improper management of personal data may lead to serious consequences, including a loss of employee trust and potential fines resulting from failure to comply with regulations such as GDPR. Organisations must invest in data protection systems and training in threat identification (Velinov *et al.*, 2023).

The World Economic Forum Global Cybersecurity Outlook report 2023 stressed the increasing risk of systemic cybernetic attacks, particularly in the context of global geopolitical instability. The result of the research is shown in the graph below. As many as 93% of cybersecurity leaders and 86% of business leaders consider that global geopolitical tensions may lead to a catastrophic cyberattack within the next two years (World Economic Forum Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2023, p. 5). The graph below shows respondents' answers to the question: Do organisations expect geopolitical threats, and can these impact their cybersecurity strategy?

**Figure 2.** Do organisations expect geopolitical risks to affect their cybersecurity strategy?



**Source:** World Economic Forum Global Cybersecurity, Outlook 2023, p. 5.

Increasing pressure connected with results, a fast pace of work and lack of work/life balance are the main factors contributing to professional stress (Pfejfer-Buczek, Nowicka, Ciekankowski, and Marciniak, 2023, p. 149). Professional burnout, recognised by the WHO as a phenomenon linked to the workplace, is increasingly being reported by employees all over the world (Maslach and Leiter, 2016).

Organisations must pay particular attention to the mental health of their employees, by introducing psychological support programmes and anti-burnout strategies. Studies have shown that investing in mental wellbeing increases productivity and reduces staff turnover in teams (Knight, Patterson, and Dawson, 2017).

The COVID-19 pandemic forced organisations to move quickly to a remote working model which on the one hand has enabled greater flexibility, but on the other results in new threats (Chrząszcz, Ciekanowski, Żurawski, Załoga, and Pietrzyk, 2024, p. 768). Problems such as anxiety and depression have become common, costing companies billions of dollars in lost working days and falling employee engagement.

One new challenge is the need to adapt mental health programmes to diverse populations of employees to take cultural and demographic differences into account (Spring Health: The 2023 State of Workplace Mental Health).

The COVID-19 pandemic changed how people think about personal safety, forcing organisations to consider new aspects such as workplace hygiene, health care access and organising working time. The pandemic highlighted the importance of crisis management and the need to build up employees' mental resilience (Kniffin *et al.*, 2021, p. 76). One of the key conclusions drawn from the pandemic is that it is necessary for organisations to adapt to changing conditions, and this includes investing in tools to support remote work and schemes to bolster mental and physical health.

Employees often experience isolation, difficulties in separating professional from private life, and technical problems, which impact their efficiency (Bailey and Kurland, 2002, p. 384).

Flexible forms of employment, such as temporary work and freelancing, can additionally hinder organisations in providing a cohesive protection system for all employees. Unavailability of the appropriate tools or a lack of support may lead to marginalisation of employees on non-standard contracts.

Diversity in the workplace, which includes cultural, linguistic and demographic differences, brings both benefits and challenges. As noted by Hofhuis, Van der Zee and Otten (2012), diversity management requires the creation of an inclusive organisational culture in which every employee feels safe and accepted. The lack of such a culture may result in conflict, harassment or discrimination, significantly reducing the feeling of safety within a team.

Identifying contemporary challenges and threats to personal security constitutes a significant step in the creation of more resilient and aware organisations. Faced with such challenges as cyberthreats, professional stress and new models of work, it is of vital importance to implement innovative protection strategies and adapt safety policies to the needs of today's employee.

#### **4. Innovative Strategies and Good Practice in the Field of Personal Safety Protection**

Innovative strategies and good practice in the field of personal safety protection in organisations have become crucial, particularly in the context of increasing challenges such as remote work, changing technologies and the health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Ciekanski, Nowicka, Żurawski, and Mikosik, 2023, p. 803). This part of the article will cover the latest solutions which support the personal safety of employees, including technologies, psychological support programmes, and actions to promote an appropriate organisational culture.

Technologies play a key role in improving personal safety in the workplace. In 2023 the noticeable increase in the use of devices worn by employees, such as smart helmets and exoskeletons, contributed to a reduction in the risk of accidents and injuries, especially in sectors requiring physical effort (Safety Innovations and Highlights of 2023: Year in Review, 2024).

An example of this are smartwatches monitoring health parameters, such as hydration levels or changes in pulse, which detect irregularities and send warnings, enabling the user to avoid more serious health conditions (Top 5 EHS trends of 2023 and beyond, 2024). In addition, more and more organisations are implementing artificial intelligence systems to monitor working spaces. Real-time image analysis enables threats to be detected, such as an employee lacking proper protective equipment, or improper working conditions. These technologies enable immediate intervention, which significantly improves safety.

Another vital element of innovative personal safety protection strategies is psychological support programmes. As a result of the rising number of cases of professional burnout and stress connected with excessive workloads, organisations are starting to invest in programmes promoting the mental health of their employees. Mental wellness is one example of this, offering employees access to professional psychological advice or workshops to help cope with stress.

In addition, the introduction of trainings in the field of resistance to stress and countering burnout is now standard in many companies, particularly those operating in demanding sectors. Employees learn to recognise the first signs of burnout and to manage their mental health effectively, which contributes to a general improvement in the atmosphere within the organisation, and to greater efficiency.

A final, but equally important, strategy to help ensure personal safety is to create an organisational culture based on trust, inclusivity and open dialogue. Companies which actively support diversity and promote an inclusive management model create an environment conducive to both the physical and emotional safety of employees. Inclusivity in organisations involves the creation of a space where all employees feel respected and have access to equal development opportunities.

It is also worth noting that the COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on the perception of personal safety. Remote work and flexible forms of employment have become common, which required new approaches to the management of employees' health and safety. Organisations began to invest in tools supporting remote work, such as communication platforms and task management systems, which ensure safe and effective collaboration, even in a dispersed form (Król, Kacprzak, Mikosik, and Ciekanowski, 2023, p. 325).

To summarise, innovative strategies and good practice in the field of personal safety protection in organisations concentrate on integrating modern technologies, psychological support and the creation of an appropriate organisational culture. This type of approach not only reduces the risk of accidents, but also contributes to an improvement in the general wellbeing of employees, which is of vital importance for the long-term effectiveness of organisations.

## **5. Conclusion**

In the management of organisations, employees' personal safety has become a key area with significant impact on the efficiency and wellbeing of the organisations. Contemporary dangers such as cyberthreats, professional stress and burnout, as well as challenges connected with remote working, require innovative modern strategies which can counter risk effectively. Technologies such as video monitoring, AI systems and wearable devices help prevent both physical and mental threats. At the same time, psychological support programmes, such as therapies and training in resistance to stress, are a vital support in the struggle against negative effects of professional burnout.

Another major element in the effective management of personal safety is an organisational culture which promotes inclusivity, trust and open dialogue, thus contributing to better risk management and an improved workplace atmosphere. Companies which prioritise employees' mental health notice an improvement in their engagement and an increase in efficiency.

Personal safety management is a dynamic process which requires constant adaptation of strategies to changing conditions and challenges. Innovative technologies and modern approaches to psychological support and the creation of an organisational culture based on trust and openness are of vital importance to ensure the safety and wellbeing of employees. Companies which invest in these areas are better prepared for future challenges, in both operational and organisational terms.

The main conclusions of the analysis are presented below:

1. The importance of integrating technologies: Technologies including artificial intelligence and wearable devices are becoming a vital part of ensuring personal safety in organisations. This enables monitoring, the detection of



- threats and immediate steps aimed at protecting the health and lives of employees.
2. The increasing importance of mental health: The increase in professional stress and burnout requires comprehensive psychological support programmes to be introduced. Organisations must concentrate on the mental health of their employees by offering them access to therapy and trainings which improve their resistance to stress.
  3. Organisational culture: Promoting an organisational culture based on inclusivity, trust and open dialogue is becoming vital for maintaining a high level of personal safety. Employees who feel respected and supported are more engaged with and loyal to the organisation.
  4. Adapting to remote working: Changes connected with the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the necessity for organisations to adapt to new forms of work, such as WFH and flexible forms of employment. Organisations must provide the appropriate tools and support to meet these challenges.

Although many studies exist concerning personal safety, further analysis is still necessary with regard to the impact of new technologies on the health and wellbeing of employees. It is vital to understand how health-monitoring technologies affect the mental wellbeing of employees, and what role is played by AI.

There should also be studies into the long-term effects of remote work on the mental and physical health of employees, and into the effectiveness of psychological support programmes in various sectors. Studies on these aspects may provide crucial information for creating more complex and effective strategies for personal safety management in organisations in future.

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