

# Deliverers' Occupational Safety

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# 1 Occupational health and safety in the work of a deliverer

A deliverer's work is independent, responsible and requires speed, precision and a relatively good physical condition. In all activities when delivering newspapers, the primary areas of attention include safety aspects and delivery that is as free from errors as possible. You are alone in the performance of your job, and working conditions vary constantly according to the seasons and weather conditions. Different delivery areas impose their own requirements on safety at work.

The purpose of this guide is to improve the identification of hazards and risk factors included in your work, in order to avoid accidents and work-related illnesses.

You cannot always influence your working environment, but you can manage risks related to it

- with careful preparation
- by using correct working methods
- by concentrating on what you are doing
- by identifying hazards and anticipating the creation of hazardous incidents.

Remember also that you are not alone – your supervisor's duty is to support you at your work and to find solutions to any problems. Also, occu-

pational health care and the OHS representative are at the workplace for you. It is in everyone's best interest that you can do your work well and without any accidents.

This guide does not describe all potential hazardous incidents or duties. It serves as a general guideline, and more detailed information is available in the workplace-specific instructions in your organisation.

Accidents happen to deliverers. Most of these involve slipping, tripping, falling from heights and falling down, and the injuries are usually directed at the ankles, legs (including the knees), and back. People often break a fall with a hand, which causes injuries to the hand and wrist. Injuries can be mild, such as sprains, twists or bumps, or more serious, such as fractures. There are fewer fractures but they usually lead to absences lasting for weeks, even months. Also, sudden physical states of stress, such as incorrect handling of bundles of newspapers or roller cages, or gradual repetitive strain injuries as a consequence of monotonous burden on certain muscle groups, can lead to long periods of recovery.

**It is important for you to know how to avoid such risks by your own actions. Read this guide carefully.**



*Familiarisation into the work, risk factors during work, and methods for preventing accidents are part of the supervisor's statutory obligations. The supervisor must also make sure that people follow the instructions given. Upper management, for its part, is responsible for ensuring the sufficiency of resources and line management's competence for managing its duty of occupational safety and health.*

Unnecessary haste often leads to nothing more than accidents and errors in delivery. For example, if you risk missing a deadline in delivery, you should not rush at the expense of quality and occupational safety. It is better that customers receive their papers late than not at all – ensure your own safety and avoid accidents!

Every accident is one too many, and everyone at all levels of the organisation must pay more attention to improving safety. In order to avoid accidents caused by motion, it is crucial that you pay attention to walkways and concentrate on where and how you move around.

You are the best expert on your working environment, so you have the best chance to influence your own and other people’s health and safety. Report all hazardous or threatening incidents you face or other problems related to your work in accordance with the practices followed at your company. Do not wait for accidents to happen, but prevent them in time. An accident can happen to you or anyone else.

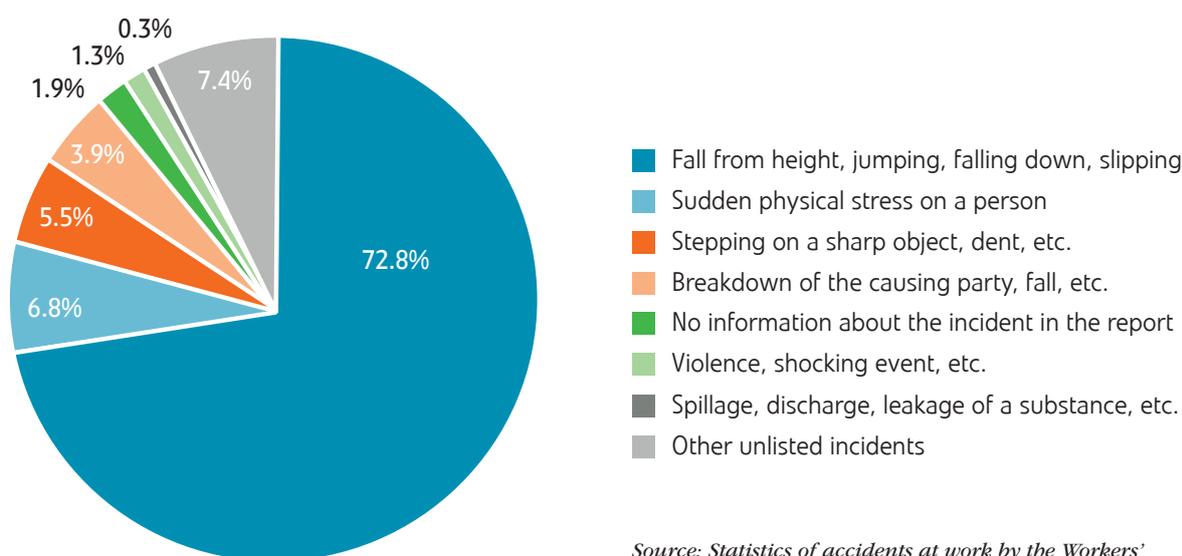
Employees shall follow the orders and instructions given by the employer within his or her competence. Employees shall also otherwise observe such order and cleanliness as well as care and caution that is necessary for maintaining safety and health necessitated by the work and working conditions.

Occupational Safety and Health Act, Section 18

Employees shall, without delay, report any faults and defects they have discovered related to the performance of the work. Even in the event that they can eliminate these by themselves.

Occupational Safety and Health Act, Section 19

## Newspaper deliverers’ occupational accidents, incident prior to an accident



Source: Statistics of accidents at work by the Workers’ Compensation Center in 2015.

*Most of these involve slipping, tripping, falling from heights and falling down, and the injuries are usually directed at the ankles, legs, and back.*

## 2 Preparing for work

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### **Prepare for your delivery tasks even before going to work**

- Go to work with an alert mind. You will learn the sleeping rhythm that is best for you through experience. You can sleep for a long time before heading to work or take a brief nap. Make sure you wake up for work by using several alarm clocks, if necessary. You should have a snack and something to drink before you go to work. Ensure a sufficient balance of liquids during the delivery process as well.
- Service your tools as necessary. During the day or before leaving for work, at the latest, make sure that your tools – the vehicle, driving lights, tyres, flashlight, head lamp, clothing, shoes, gloves, charging of devices etc. – are in good order.
- Follow the weather reports. Experience will teach you the most suitable clothes to wear in different weather. When it is cold, you should wear layers of clothing rather than wrap yourself in one thick item of clothing. Remember to wear shoes of a type that correctly suit the conditions.
- If you carry a new area, read potential area maps and delivery lists. It may be advisable to study the area beforehand, during the daytime. Take into account the vehicle specified for the delivery area. Delivery by bike or car can take place in a different order.

Most of the time, your delivery will proceed without any incident. Being prepared in case of problems helps you avoid panic and poor decisions. Papers that are late, haste and bad weather can make you face surprising situations.

It is your supervisor's duty to familiarise you to the hazards of the working environment and provide guidance on how to act in any exceptional circumstances. Due to the independent nature of the work and sometimes rapidly changing external factors, you will, in practice, have to solve exceptional situations alone. For the sake of your own safety and efficiency of work, be active and do not hesitate to discuss any exceptional conditions and how to act in them with your supervisor and more experienced delivery employees. Ignorance easily leads to errors, haste and accidents through wrong decisions. Keep the phone number of the night desk with you, including somewhere other than in your mobile phone. Do not hesitate to ask for advice whenever necessary.

## 3 Circumstances



*Use planned routes – do not take shortcuts in unfamiliar places.*

The circumstances largely determine how quickly you work. In good conditions, you can proceed through your area at a regular pace. If the conditions are poor, you may have to slow down your pace considerably. Running or speeding are unacceptable in any circumstances. Different types of areas impose their own challenges to the delivery task. If you feel that you cannot deliver the material safely in the estimated time, discuss this with your supervisor.

### 3.1 Night work

Deliverers spend most of their working hours in the darkness of night. They can confront darkness in other situations as well. Renovations of facades, roadwork and other repairs can cause lighting to be out of service in the street, in staircases at apartment buildings, or in yards.

The risk of an accident increases in dark locations. Anticipate dangerous places along your route, and make sure you see where you step. Also, more

animals move around at night than usual. Make sure you bring a head lamp or flashlight ready for use with you.

Since your work is constant night work, you have to adapt to a sleep rhythm that differs from other people. The key is to find a rhythm that suits you and that you get enough sleep in sufficiently long, uninterrupted periods. Long-lasting fatigue impairs safe performance of work. It also has negative effects on health. Sleep as much as necessary, especially in the early stages. Agree with other family members on how to balance work, leisure time and rest.

Getting enough sleep helps maintain alertness during work. Cool outdoor air makes it easier to stay alert. If you get tired in the vehicle, turn the heater down and go outside for a while to breathe some fresh air. The nature of the delivery task means that your state of alertness cannot fall very easily, but you must be attentive, especially when driving a vehicle.

// During work, a delivery person fell asleep at the wheel and the car veered into the woods, rolling over”.

// A deliverer slipped on a tree root on a path in the dark”.

### Tips for a good night's sleep

- Keep the bedroom cool and as dark as possible.
- Use clean and comfortable bedding and a good mattress.
- Use earplugs or eyeshades if necessary.
- Adopt a ritual when you go to bed.
- Go to bed without worries; resolve any issues before going to bed.
- Turn off all sources of blue light (mobile devices, TV's stand-by light, etc.) well before going to bed. They disrupt sleep and falling asleep.
- Set aside a regular and sufficiently long period for sleeping.
- Make sure that the surroundings are as peaceful as possible.
- Switch your phone to mute or route calls to voicemail.
- Tell your family members, friends and neighbours when you have to be allowed to sleep in peace.
- If you have trouble falling asleep, relax by reading or listening to music, for example.
- A light snack can help you get sleep.

## 3.2 Seasons

The seasons in Finland create specific challenges for the work of a deliverer. Follow the weather reports, and take special note of sudden changes in the weather and how they affect your work. You can also keep a log of weather conditions. This will teach you quickly what kinds of clothes suit which temperatures and weather conditions, and you can prepare for work accordingly.

Breathable and flexible materials are the best. Natural materials breathe and wool, for example, feels warm even when wet.

By wearing layers of clothing, you can adjust your attire according to the weather. Against the skin you should wear material that transfers moisture from the skin ('technical underwear').

You should choose your footwear according to the season. A thick sole, a proper tread pattern and a sturdy last are good. You should also ensure that your shoes do not become slippery in wet or freezing weather conditions. A rule of thumb is that the more flexible the sole material (more rubber), the better the grip during any weather. A slippery shoe can also slip from the pedal of a bicycle and thus create a serious risk of accident.



*Good shoes with a gripping sole material and tread reduce the risk of slipping. In addition to shoes, pay attention to how slippery various surfaces are in different conditions. Remove any snow that has become stuck to your soles and remember that mere moisture makes certain surfaces extremely slippery!*



*When the dark autumn approaches, remember to ensure that you are visible to others on the road and that you see them too! Give yourself and others time to react – use reflectors and a lamp. Make sure that your own vehicle's driving lights are in order well before leaving for work.*

### **3.2.1 Spring**

The problems in early spring include slippery streets, melting snow and ice, and walkways and roads battered by frost. Beware of treacherous sides of roads and unexpected holes. Night frost can freeze roads during your working hours. You should use winter tyres in your vehicle and bike until there is no more frost at night. Slow down your pace of work to suit the road conditions and slipperiness. Rain and slush can cause extreme chills, so wear clothes that protect you and keep you warm. Watch out for snow and icicles falling from rooftops. If the situation seems dangerous, avoid the area and leave the newspapers in a safe place. Report the matter to the night desk.

### **3.2.2 Summer**

The conditions are reasonably good in the summertime. Loose gravel and slipperiness caused by rain can come as a surprise even in summer. You should also prepare for different insects. Remember to take care of your fluid balance during warm summer nights.

### **3.2.3 Autumn**

Dark and wet nights in the autumn can be truly murky. Remember to wear reflectors and a flashlight or head lamp. Other people can find it difficult to spot you in the dark night, against black asphalt. Freezing roads and black ice on frosty nights in autumn are dangerous. Wet leaves falling on yards and wet lawns can be slippery.

### **3.2.4 Winter**

In delivery work, the conditions are often the most difficult in winter. The cold weather causes challenges for clothing and delivery equipment. Protect yourself well by wearing layers of clothing and by protecting your feet, fingers and face against the cold and the wind. If the weather is extremely bad, slow down to a safer pace of delivery. It is better to deliver the papers slightly later rather than take unnecessary risks.

Recent snow often covers up an icy ground. Step with caution and use anti-slip studs in your shoes after the first snow has fallen. Note that indoors such studs in the soles cause a risk of accident and

can also damage the floor material. In late winter and early spring, snow and ice falling from rooftops can cause dangerous situations. If there is an area cordoned off with bars or sealing-off lines, you must not go inside it under any circumstances.

// While delivering newspapers, the deliverer stepped on a block of ice by the staircase, slipped and pulled a calf muscle in the left leg".

// Snow fell from the roof on the head and neck of a deliverer who was delivering papers".

You wear a lot of clothes and do physical work, so heat can surprise you even in wintertime. Prepare for this by bringing something to drink with you. If necessary, keep an extra jacket or shirt with you that you can wear if you have to slow down your pace and you begin to feel the cold. You can anticipate this the same way by removing your overcoat when you deliver in apartment buildings.



*Pay attention to changes caused by the different seasons in your delivery area. If you come across any problems, notify your supervisor.*

### 3.3 Working alone

As a deliverer, you do your work alone. Because you work alone, the chance of getting help can be limited in exceptional situations. You can increase the feeling of control by planning ahead how to act during stressful situations.

Plan in advance how to avoid or react to the following situations:

- You have a flat tyre in your bike or vehicle.
- The battery in your flashlight runs out.
- The battery of your mobile phone goes dead in the cold.
- You hear suspicious noise nearby.
- You confront a threatening person or situation.
- You have an accident, crash your vehicle or sustain an injury.
- You see a fire, an accident or a crime in your area.

Save the phone numbers of your supervisor and the night desk in your mobile phone. Report any exceptional situations to the night desk immediately. Call the night desk also if you have to leave the papers in a different place than you usually do. Notify the supervisor the next business day, so any corrective action can be taken swiftly.

**Never take any unnecessary risks!** Do not place yourself at risk – you have the right to refuse work that causes a serious danger to your own or to other people's life or health.

### 3.4 Delivery area and delivery method

The delivery method for your delivery area is determined by whether your area has been specified as a vehicle or bike area. Avoid loads that are too big. When loading the vehicle, pay attention to visibility.

The Road Traffic Act prohibits the use of mobile devices during driving. The risk of having an accident multiplies if your attention is drawn to something other than driving. **When you concentrate on what you are doing, you ensure both your own safety and the safety of other people.** Look up the next location, products and driving instructions when you have stopped moving. Wear the device in a case you can wear around your neck or arm, so you can keep your hands free. Ensure a proper location for the device inside the vehicle as well.

Wearing earphones while delivering papers is prohibited. This way you can pay better attention to your surroundings.

// During a commute, the deliverer looked for the mobile phone on the adjacent seat. The tyre on the passenger's side slipped from asphalt to sand, so the deliverer turned the steering wheel abruptly, causing the vehicle to swerve and end up in a ditch, rolling over".



*Information fresh from the press, ready to head out.*

### **3.4.1 Drop-off place and delivery room**

When you enter the drop-off place or delivery room, pay attention to other people and park your vehicle or bicycle such that it does not obstruct or prevent other traffic and cause hazardous situations.

Make sure that the paper vehicle's movement is unobstructed. Let the driver unload the papers in peace. Do not climb into the vehicle to pick up your own papers; wait until the driver has done his job and the vehicle has left the scene. After this, the deliverers can take their papers.

**//** A deliverer slipped while taking papers from a drop-off box and hurt his left hip".

**//** A deliverer was lifting two bundles of papers from the box simultaneously when she staggered and sprained her back".

The delivery room is busy with action when papers are being picked up. Pay attention to the surroundings and other traffic in the area. Wear a reflective vest, work clothes with reflectors or other reflectors to ensure that other people can see you. Do not go to the vehicle loading area unnecessarily. Use the designated driving routes, and obey the traffic rules even in the vicinity of the delivery room.

In the delivery room, take a moment to become familiar with the first aid stations, fire alarm buttons, fire extinguishing equipment, emergency stop switches of the various devices, and instructions on how to act in the event of an emergency.

Move the newspaper bundles to your vehicle or bike by using the agreed tools and methods. Accidents have happened when bundles of paper were moved around, during the handling of roller cages, for instance. In case of an accident, a roller cage can fall on you or get away and bump into someone else if it is handled incorrectly.



*Some workplaces can have different transport equipment that is easier to handle than roller cages. Transport only so many bundles of papers as you can handle safely. Do not take loads that are too big.*

### **Loading the vehicle**

When you load the vehicle, remember that the load must not obstruct or block the driver's line of sight and the products must not be allowed to move. Do not pile up papers on the window of the vehicle, because this impairs unobstructed visibility outward and prevents the fan from working. Windows can easily fog up during moist or freezing weather. This is a safety risk.

Paper bundles should primarily be loaded in the rear compartment of the vehicle. If placed inside, they should be positioned as low as possible or fastened with a seat belt to prevent them from hurtling at the driver in the event of a collision.

Note that if a vehicle travelling at 50 km/h has a head-on collision, loose objects inside fly forward at 40 times their own mass. For example, a newspaper bundle that weighs 10 kg goes flying forward at a force of 400 kg!



*Load bundles of newspapers preferably in the rear compartment of the vehicle. It is an easier place for loading them, and the bundles cannot move around and cause danger during abrupt braking, for instance.*

Pay attention to correct ergonomics when handling bundles of newspapers. Keep bundles as close to your body as possible, use your legs, avoid rotational motions and reaching. Do not yank but lift them deliberately.

### **Loading a bicycle**

Before you load a bicycle, make sure that it is standing firmly in place. Load the bicycle evenly by using delivery bags.



*In terms of the progress of your work, it is important that you prepare for it carefully. When the bike is loaded correctly, with the right balance, the work goes more smoothly.*

### 3.4.2 Vehicle delivery area

When you drive a vehicle, you must obey the traffic rules and pay attention to other traffic. You may still be delivering papers in the morning when the first residents in the area leave for work and there is momentary increase in traffic. This is why you should pay close attention to your surroundings. Smooth driving brings the fastest results, not unnecessary acceleration or abrupt braking. Try to avoid excessive reaching and intense rotational motions – the position of the vehicle is of great relevance to your ergonomics and smooth delivery work. Delivering from a vehicle is only permissible from the company's own vehicles designed for this purpose (steering on the right side). Always wear the seat belt when driving the vehicle, even during short distances.

**//** A deliverer was placing a paper in the box when the vehicle started moving and his glove got caught in the mailbox, and his arm was ruptured".

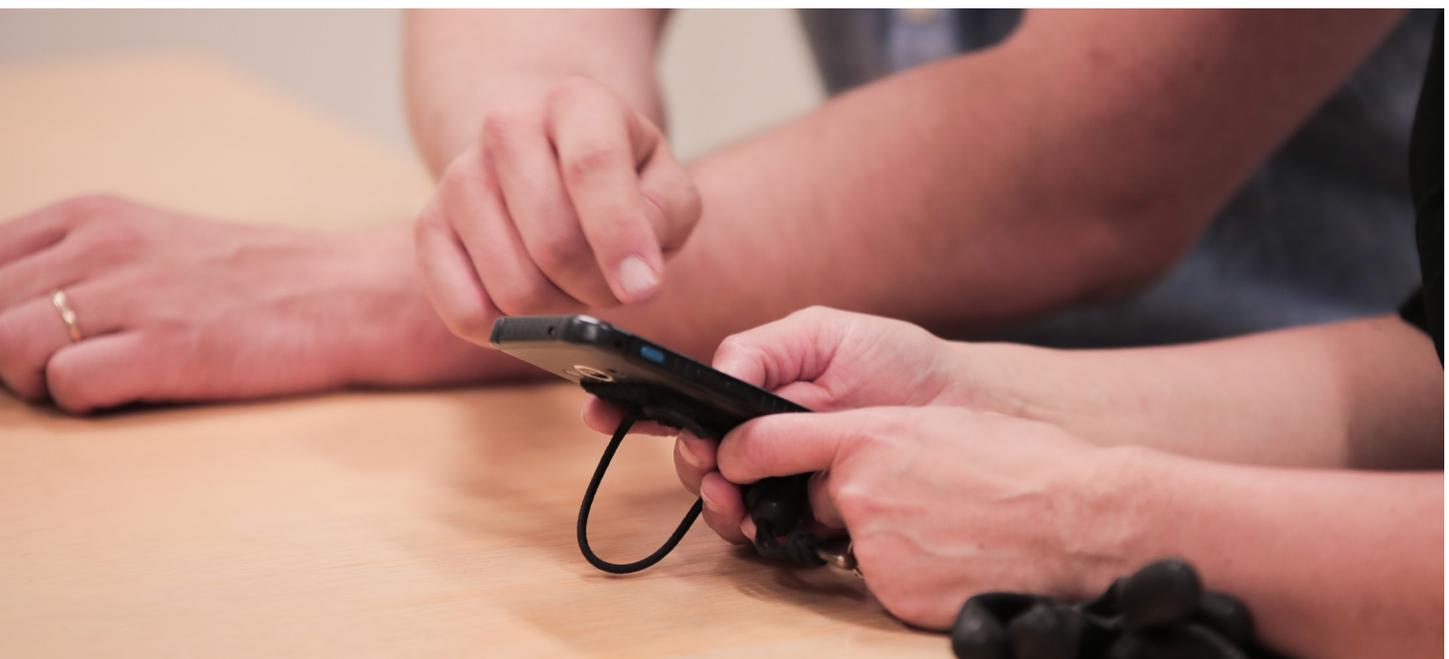
If you are a new deliverer, it can be a good idea to drive the route during the day and observe post-boxes, crossings and dangerous places that are difficult to discern. Take note of problematic places and report them to your supervisor. Your supervisor records the observations in a delivery list, so they can be taken into account when planning for delivery areas and during familiarisation into the work, for instance. In the daytime, you can see your surroundings better and learn your route more easily.

Take note of pits, curbs, deep ditches, bad stretches of road, and animals running into the road. Note that some yards can have a dog loose even during the night. There can also be fallen trees or large branches on roads.

If you deliver in rural areas where the delivery route is long, make sure you have enough fuel when you leave for work. Keep a spare canister with you if necessary. It may come in handy during surprising situations. Always keep some cash with you, so you do not have to rely on just a card if you have to buy fuel. Keep the vehicle otherwise in good condition, with a full reservoir of windscreen washer fluid, and with tyres and lights that are in good condition. Always keep a bulb of the headlamps in the vehicle, to ensure you have at least one working light. The employer's vehicle is your responsibility.

You can come across many kinds of animals when driving in the countryside. Concentrate on driving, observe the surroundings and keep your speed sufficiently low to avoid any accidents. Getting help in a remote area can take a long time.

**//** A deliverer was driving a passenger car to the drop-off place, swerved to avoid a rabbit, lost control of the car and drove into a ditch".



*Problematic places in a delivery area must be recorded in the delivery list, so they remain in memory and even substitutes are aware of them.*



*Fatigue, haste, an unlit area and uneven ground increase the risk of an accident, whereby a place that seems harmless in daytime can become dangerous at night. Remember to concentrate on safe motion.*

In wintertime, make sure the windows open without obstruction before you leave. Also make sure that the doors are not frozen shut and that the hatch/cap of the fuel tank opens without obstruction.

Never handle papers when you drive a vehicle. Do not move or open bundles, reach to the back-seat for papers or advertisements, or do anything else which would jeopardise safe driving.

**//** A deliverer was delivering mail with a vehicle when a bundle of papers started to slide from the seat onto the floor. The deliverer tried to stop this when the car skidded and collided with a tree".

When you get out of the vehicle or sit down, you can easily slip or sprain your ankle if the ground is uneven or slippery. Please note the following. The likelihood of an accident increases if you are in a rush or in a careless position.

**//** A deliverer was delivering papers and stepped inside the vehicle with her right foot first. Her left leg was twisted at the knee and she heard a cracking sound".

**//** A deliverer was retrieving delivery lists from a list box, got out of the car and hit her head on the running board".

**//** A deliverer was delivering papers in the dark. He fell on a bicycle stand".

Do not park on rescue routes, and do not block accessways with your vehicle. Only use permissible parking spaces when you leave the vehicle. Lock the doors when you leave the vehicle.

**//** During a paper delivery, a deliverer did a poor job parking the vehicle and it started moving. The deliverer tried to get inside the vehicle but fell to the ground and injured her hip".

If you have a problem with the vehicle, contact the night desk for instructions. If possible, first try to resolve the problem by yourself. This can be a faster way to get help than contacting the night desk.



*The right attitude toward safety begins with the preparation for work. A helmet can save your life.*

### 3.4.3 Bike delivery area

Bike delivery areas are usually situated in urban areas. Other traffic must be taken into account, just as when driving a vehicle.

**//** A deliverer was riding along a bicycle lane when a car came from the left and ran him over. The deliverer was hurtled over the car onto the lawn, and stayed there laying on his back. He broke the shin of his right leg”.

Paying attention to other things than riding can cause a fall or a collision with a car parked on the side of the road, for example. Always wear a helmet when you ride your bicycle!

**//** A deliverer was riding the bike home from work, collided with the side of a car and was thrown onto the asphalt head first”.

Pay attention to weather conditions when riding your bike. Dress according to the weather. You may be outdoors the whole time you work and unable to go inside a vehicle to warm up, if necessary. Winter tyres must absolutely be used during winter-time. The safest way to go up and down steep hills is to walk the bike, especially in winter conditions.

Take note of pits, deep ditches, fragments of glass, curbs and the like on your route. Use bike bags to facilitate the delivery and to balance the bicycle (they keep the centre of gravity low and reduce the risk of a fall).

**//** A deliverer was riding a bicycle, and there were stones and loose gravel on the asphalt. The bike slipped out from under the deliverer, who fell down and hit the right shoulder against the ground”.

The best bicycle for a deliverer is a woman's bike that has a sturdy frame and a foot brake, with a solid stand, wide tyres and a rear carrier for deliverer's bags. The bike should have a bell and reflectors and lamps as required by the law.

If your bike breaks down during work, contact the night desk.

// A deliverer came out of a building and started riding his bike downhill. The tyre had become flat, a group of youths in the area had probably squeezed all the air out of the tyre. He fell to the ground due to the flat tyre".

### 3.4.4 Apartment buildings

Deliverers slip and trip in staircases at apartment buildings. Your shoes may be slippery when you enter a staircase, especially in winter and rainy weather. Fatigue and haste increase the chance of tripping or slipping. Take note of carpets on the pathway (may slide from under you), raised edges

of rugs, wet or recently waxed surfaces, loose tiles and rocks, and sand on the steps. Boot scrapers are often slippery or can slide out from under you. Door stoppers can go unnoticed if you do not pay attention to obstacles in your path.

// A deliverer was delivering newspapers and slipped and fell on his face when coming out of the staircase. He hit his teeth hard, and a few of them were chipped".

When you go up or down a flight of stairs, do not take long strides but tread steadily on every step.

// A deliverer was running down the stairs, tripped and fell to the landing between the floors. She hit the ground with her right hand and broke her wrist".

// A deliverer was coming down the stairs inside a building, leapt over one step and landed on the outside edge of the next step; he fell onto his side first and then to his back, injuring his back and both hands".



*When you move, pay attention to different uneven surfaces, places where you may trip, and slippery surfaces. If you are in a rush, the risk of an accident increases.*



*Walk up and down stairs without any rush, and focus on the correct way of walking: one step at a time, holding on to the handrail.*

Lights in staircases at apartment buildings are usually turned off with a timer. Take note of this when you walk in a staircase. Walk with a firm stride and always hold on to the handrail in stairwells – this helps you avoid an accident even if the lights go out. When the lights go out, you must be able to slow your pace quickly and safely. Memorise the locations of light switches, so you can turn the lights on without effort. A head lamp or flashlight is a good tool to use in staircases where the lights go out automatically.

// An employee was delivering newspapers when the lights went out in the stairwell and she missed a step, injuring both her toes and back”.

If the lights are on too briefly or not at all, report this to your supervisor or the night desk. If this does not remedy the matter, you can contact the OHS representative.

In winter, snow may accumulate on your soles and cause risk of slipping when you step indoors. Try to clear your soles from snow before you enter the stairwell to deliver papers.

// Her shoes had caught snow, so she slipped in the spiral staircase”.

You may have to bring a heavy bundle of newspapers with you into an apartment building. Use a deliverer’s bag, strap or apron where you can neatly place the papers: your hands are free and the weight of the papers does not burden your arms or shoulders.

### 3.4.5 Areas with detached houses

Yards in areas with detached houses can be dark, slippery and snowy, especially in the winter. The edge of the driveway can have a stone with a sharp edge or a short pole that can puncture a tyre if you accidentally bump into it. Areas with detached houses can also have animals, such as dogs, running around without a leash. Take note of signs warning of dogs. Do not go into a yard that has a dog loose. Where newspapers are delivered into boxes mounted on a door, the customer is responsible for lighting, cleaning, sanding and maintaining the yard so it is safe and for keeping an open path to the door. If this has not been done, report the matter to the night desk.

// A deliverer fell down on a yard while delivering newspapers. The yard was tiled, icy and uneven, extremely slippery”.

// She stepped on a concrete tile that was tilted, and twisted her ankle”.

### 3.4.6 Location of a mailbox

Keep an eye on how the customer maintains the area around the mailbox. In wintertime, snow and ice may accumulate around the box, making it difficult to approach it. A box can also be placed in a spot that is difficult to reach. Sometimes roadwork or yard work can cause dangerous pits close to a box. If you think walking to a mailbox is dangerous or causes a hazardous situation, report this to the night desk or to your supervisor in the daytime. You can also leave the customer a card, asking them to remedy the matter as quickly as possible.

// A deliverer was walking to another address and had to jump over a bank, at which time her knee was overextended and became painful”.

# 4 Dangerous situations

This chapter describes the most common dangerous situations deliverers may come across in their work. Report all dangerous situations you observe in accordance with the practices followed at your workplace. The best way to control hazards is to keep your thoughts on the delivery task. Report all dangerous places to your supervisor, who records them in the delivery list. This way even stand-by deliverers and substitutes can avoid them.

Employees have the right to refuse work that causes a serious danger to their own or to other people's life or health.

## 4.1 Tripping, falling down and slipping

// A deliverer was coming down a flight of stairs, stepped on a moulding at the end of the stairs and slipped. The deliverer went down the stairs at great speed and fell down at the bottom of the stairs, injuring the right side and back. The soles of the shoes were damp and it was wet outside".

Slippery conditions, haste and fatigue are often the cause of the most common accidents that deliverers have, slipping, falling down and tripping.

Remember that the edges of pavements are slippery; when you enter a yard of a house, take note

of any driveways that have not been maintained or sanded. If the yard of a detached house has not been maintained or is slippery, place a card in the customer's mailbox urging them to sand the yard so it is safer. If this does not rectify the situation, contact your supervisor.

// In a customer's yard, a deliverer tripped on an unidentified stone or metal object with a sharp edge, at knee height, and injured their left shin".

If you feel tired, slow down your pace of work slightly so you can focus on the work and take care of your area without an accident. Tripping in a staircase and falling down can cause long-term injuries.

// A deliverer was walking up a slope when her foot slipped and she fell flat on her tummy. Her hand got caught between her and the ground, and she hit her teeth on the ground. One tooth was broken."

If you ride a bicycle, always load the papers on top of the bike so they are in balance. Papers that are carelessly loaded in transport bags may cause loss of balance and a fall. In wintertime, use studded tyres in your bike, choose your line of riding carefully and avoid spots that have proven dangerous.



### Avoid slipping or tripping

- Walk calmly, and pay attention to the weather.
- Step calmly off your bike or out of the vehicle.
- Keep the load of newspapers on your bike in balance at all times.
- Watch your step!
- Only use actual routes of passage. Do not take shortcuts!
- Always hold on to the handrail in staircases!
- The brightness of a handheld computer or another device can be blinding. Note this when you move from a platform to stairs.
- Do not over-exert yourself physically.
- Clean snow from the soles of your shoes before you enter a staircase.
- Use anti-slip studs outdoors.
- Take the anti-slip studs off indoors.
- Use studded tyres on your bicycle in winter.
- When you walk on a slippery surface, take short steps, bend a little and step with even feet – a “penguin walk” helps keep the centre of gravity in front of your feet, helping you stay upright.

## 4.2 Traffic accidents

Whatever mode of transport you use in your area, always obey the traffic rules. Be very attentive in traffic. There can be less traffic at night, but speeds are often considerably higher. Even if you are careful and obey the traffic rules, other people on the road do not necessarily do so and may cause an accident. Many animals move at night and dusk, so remain vigilant. Beware of trains at unsupervised railway crossings. Your route should be planned such that you do not need to cross unsupervised railway crossings.

Keep the driving lights of your vehicle clean and in good order during the muddy season, so you see where you are going when you drive in reverse through yards, dark crossings, and box groups. When the lights work, you can see where you are moving in the dark and other people can see you. Always put your vehicle in reverse with care. Drive carefully when roads are slippery, and concentrate on your driving. Do not read the delivery list or use your mobile phone while driving. If you have to do either of these things, stop your vehicle. Remember to wear reflectors in your clothes if you have to get out of the vehicle. Always wear a seat belt in the vehicle.

A reflective vest also increases your safety in vehicle delivery areas. Keep the vest in your vehicle and put it on if you have to change a tyre during your route, for instance.

If you ride a bicycle, wear enough reflectors on both your clothes and your bike. Wearing a reflective vest ensures that other people see you. Remember that you are in trouble if a motorist collides with you with their car! Always remember to check whether there is other traffic nearby before you dart off from a mailbox.



*A head lamp is an important instrument in a newspaper deliverer's job. Remember to check the condition of the batteries/accumulator in good time before leaving for work, and take spare batteries with you if necessary.*

### Safely in traffic

- Remember reflectors and driving lights.
- Obey the traffic rules.
- Stay alert.
- When you move from one place to the next, focus on your motion, do not read the delivery list.
- Pay attention to the weather conditions and adjust your driving speed to them.
- Get enough sleep so you do not become tired at the wheel.
- When you have your vehicle in reverse, beware of mailboxes, curbs and other surprises.
- Keep the reservoir of windscreen washer fluid full.
- Use tyres that are in good condition.
- Keep your vehicle maintained and in good driving condition.
- Keep a snow shovel and some gravel in the vehicle.
- Beware of animals.
- Store the number of the 24h road service provided by the Automobile and Touring Club of Finland (ATCF) in your phone's memory.

### 4.3 Crime and threatening situations

When you move around at night, you may confront threatening situations caused by other people. If you see criminal activity, alert the police to the scene by calling the emergency response centre (112). Stay at a distance and watch the situation, and report the events to the emergency response centre. If you see that a person's life is threatened, try to help them if this is possible.

When you travel in your delivery area, pay attention to people around you and further away, and be prepared to face them. Primarily you should try to avoid confronting anyone. Do not get into an argument or a debate with anyone. Remember that reasoning with a drunken person does not always help. Be flexible and play along during a conversation as much as necessary, but do not become drawn into any unnecessary distractions. Act in a resolute, confident and calm manner, and try to leave the scene as quickly as possible.

People who are under the influence of drugs can be extremely unpredictable and violent. It can be difficult to distinguish them from drunken people at a distance or in the dark. People under the influence of drugs can have blood-shot whites of the eyes, very small or enormously dilated pupils, their gaze can be fixated, and their eyes may not react to changes in lighting, such as the light of a flashlight.



*You can come across threatening situations at night. Anticipate such situations by observing your surroundings. If you detect people who act in a threatening manner, avoid a confrontation. Leave the papers undelivered if you have to. Based on your own discretion and the night desk's instructions, you can return there later and see if it is safe to finish the job. Remember to submit a report.*

// A group of young people was standing in front of the vehicle, one male began to kick the vehicle, and tore the mirrors off. When the deliverer got out of the car, the person hit the deliverer in the forehead with a mirror".

// When a deliverer was delivering newspapers, two men grabbed the delivery area delivery lists and keys from the deliverer's vehicle. When the deliverer demanded them back, a 'scuffle ensued".

#### Instructions for threatening situations

- Acutely dangerous situations: call 112! Know where you are! Install the 112 Suomi application in your phone beforehand, and use it.
- Report any threatening situations to the night desk immediately and to your supervisor the next business day.
- If you see or hear anything disturbing, change your delivery route.
- Avoid crowds of people and stairwells that have people in front of them. Return to the area later.
- If anyone tries to take a newspaper or another product you are delivering by force, give in and do not stay to fight back. The situation may become physical.
- Anticipate restless areas and dark corners.
- When you leave your vehicle or bicycle, lock it.
- Leave all unnecessary valuables at home or hide them inside a locked vehicle.
- Keep calm and maintain your functional capacity.
- Speak slowly, in a clear and low voice.
- Pay attention to a threatening person's gestures, expressions and hands (such as whether there is a gun in their hands or whether their hands are hidden).
- Call for help and attract the attention of other people nearby.
- Do not go in the same lift or staircase with a person who behaves in a deviating manner.
- Keep as much distance as possible from a threatening person, and make sure you have an escape route available. Make use of natural obstacles and hindrances, such as cars, rubbish containers, bicycles, etc.
- Write down a description of the threatening person as soon as possible.
- If your night desk has an emergency number, store it in your phone.

## 4.4 Injuries and strain injuries

Poor working positions and circumstances can cause injuries and strain injuries. When you are at a drop-off box or place, lift bundles of newspapers in the correct position, by using the strength of your legs. Avoid lifting too many paper bundles at one time.

### Plan all lifting in advance:

1. Start and end lifting at almost the same level – no large differences in height.
2. Keep the bundle of newspapers close to the body.
3. The legs flex and do the lifting – not the back.
4. The legs move – no reaching or turning with the back.



*Plan for lifting in advance: keep the distances indicated by the red arrows as short as possible!*



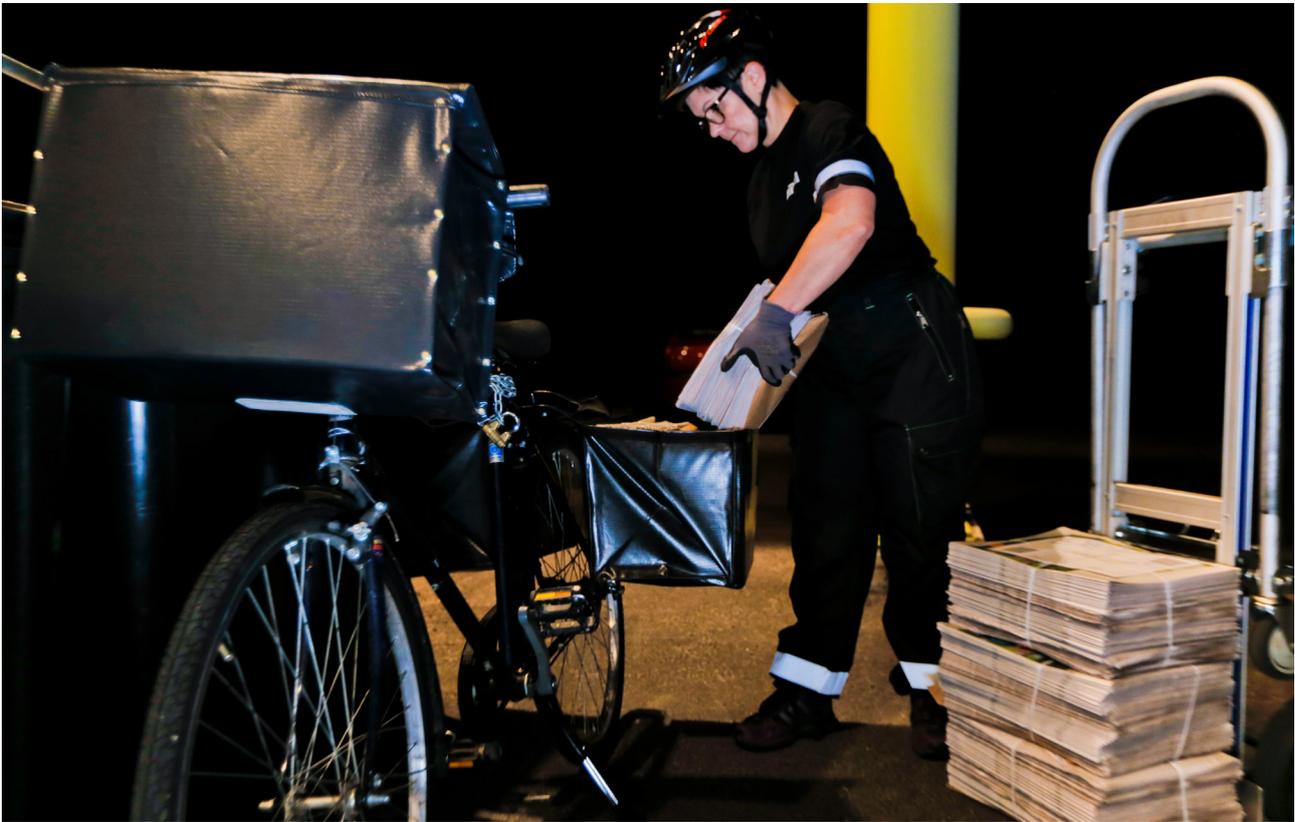
*When you handle a roller cage, keep your eyes in the direction of travel: you must see where you step. If you pull the roller cage toward you, it can fall on top of you. Make sure the bundles stay inside the cage (direction of travel, fastening).*

Your employer provides you guidance on how to correctly use your tools. Handling of roller cages, for example, involves numerous risks of accidents.

Your employer can have various solutions and tools for making it easier to do the work. If you are unsure about the correct practices, ask for instructions and follow them.



*Your organisation may use tools other than roller cages for transporting bundles of papers. Employees must be provided with guidance on use of all tools, so they adopt the correct working methods.*



*Make sure your bicycle is firmly in place before you load it. Plan the loading of the bike such that you can do it in an ergonomically safe manner, avoiding any rotational movements, reaching or bending. Remember calm movements, do not dash about.*

If you use a bicycle, loading it in a balanced manner makes it easier to control the bike during the actual delivery.

When you load bundles of newspapers inside a vehicle, it is almost impossible to avoid ergonomically poor positions; reaching and a rotational motion of the back. Calm and deliberate motions, focusing on the task and good muscle fitness help, but usually it is better to load the bundles in the rear compartment of the vehicle.

Read the workplace-specific instructions at your organisation. If you feel any symptoms caused by poor working positions, immediately contact your supervisor or occupational health care provider in order to obtain further instructions. The longer symptoms continue, the more difficult they become to treat.

**//** As a deliverer was loading bundles of newspapers in the backseat of the vehicle and putting them in order, there was an intense pain in their back that quickly became more severe. Finally the deliverer was no longer able to stand up. A sprain was diagnosed in the back".



*Loading bundles of newspapers inside a vehicle is ergonomically difficult, so it is advisable to always load them in the rear compartment. Sudden movements and/or poor working positions easily lead to accidents or, over a longer period of time, to a gradual repetitive strain injury.*

Plastic strips in paper bundles and bundle tags can make small cuts in your hands. Use gloves when you handle newspapers. You can cover any cuts with plaster.

Place the strings from paper bundles in the rubbish bin right away. Strings cause a risk of tripping, and hard tie-up strings with sharp edges can hit a person in the eye.

// A deliverer was opening a tie-up string of a bundle with a cutter when he cut off a piece of his middle finger”.

// A deliverer was removing a cable tie from a bundle when the end of the tie hit her in the left eye”.

// A deliverer was getting out of the vehicle and tripped on a piece of string covered by snow, one foot got caught inside the loop, the deliverer fell and hit his head against the wall of the building”.



*Handle bundle tie-up strings correctly and place them in the rubbish bin right away. Do not leave them lying around.*



*The edges of a mailbox can be very sharp and cause cuts. Snowy, damp lids freeze the fingers quickly, so you should have a spare pair of gloves with you in bad weather.*

When you place papers in a mailbox or slot, beware of sharp corners and edges. Bumping into mailboxes and slots can cause nasty cuts and bruises. Protect your hands with gloves. This helps you avoid cuts and staining your hands with printing ink. Avoid long-term contact with wet or snow boxes, because it quickly freezes your hands in cold weather.

// A deliverer was taking newspapers to a box and slipped on wet leaves".

// A deliverer froze both hands in the frost while delivering newspapers".

A disposable cold pack is good first aid for twists and sprains. In winter, you can use snow and ice as cold treatment.

Apt working positions are important for avoiding injuries and strain injuries caused by the work. Do a light stretching exercise before going to work. You should do physical exercise in your time off to increase muscle strength and to counterbalance work. The recommendation is to do aerobic exercise and also, at least twice a week, exercise that improves muscle fitness, mobility control and balance. Working out at a gym and circuit training are suitable for building muscle strength. Ball games, skating and dancing improve motion control and balance. Regular stretching maintains mobility.

#### **Prevent injuries and repetitive strain injuries**

- Avoid haste.
- Stretch before going to work.
- Keep a few plasters with you.
- Wear protective gloves.
- When you deliver papers in apartment buildings, use a delivery apron.
- Lift all loads correctly: your legs do the lifting, your back remains straight, and the load is held close to the body.
- Avoid twisting your back when you lift objects.
- Strengthen and maintain your muscle fitness by doing physical exercise.
- If necessary, contact an occupational physiotherapist who can provide assistance on ergonomics at work.

## **4.5 Haste and stress**

You may experience a feeling of haste due to the nature of the work. For instance, papers may be late and you want to deliver them before the deadline. However, you should calm down. If you are in a rush, you can hurt yourself. When you rush, you often spend more time on work than if you calm down for a moment and then deliver the papers at an efficient pace. Patience is a virtue!

When you deliver papers at night for the first time, you may feel that there is no way you can finish by the deadline. This is normal. Calm down. It is better to deliver the papers correctly than to rush and make mistakes. You will quickly learn your delivery area and the time you need for the delivery.

Contact your supervisor if you feel that your delivery time is significantly past the deadline. With your supervisor, you can consider different options to solve the problem.

Try to get your own affairs in order, so you do not have to think about any problems or stressful issues during work. When you deliver newspapers, you have to focus the whole time to do the work carefully.

Remember, if you feel an excessive physical or mental burden, you should discuss this with your supervisor in good time. You can also be stressed by matters outside of the working hours that the supervisor cannot directly intervene in but, if necessary, the supervisor can give you guidance and advise you to contact occupational health care, for example. You can also contact occupational health care yourself. In work-related matters, you can obtain help also from the OHS representative.

#### **Avoid stress and unnecessary haste**

- Do your work calmly but briskly.
- Sleep well and get enough sleep.
- Resolve any problems and put your affairs in order in good time.
- Have a positive attitude toward all things and enjoy your life.
- Remember that the supervisor supports your work.
- If your stress is severe or you feel it on a constant basis, contact the occupational health nurse.
- Plan ahead for how to deal with the delivery if the papers are late or the weather conditions are difficult.

# 5 Action in dangerous and risky situations

Occupational safety is a common interest for everyone at the workplace. Notify your supervisor of any situations that threaten your safety. This way the supervisor can influence your and other deliverers' working conditions.

## Notify your supervisor

- of any threatening and dangerous situations that impede your work, or your own or the company's property
- if you feel continuous, excessive mental or physical stress
- if work causes you pain or symptoms, because then your work ergonomics should be checked in good time – repetitive strain injuries cause long sick leaves if they are left untreated
- of any unanticipated incidents
- of any mental or physical violence you have experienced
- of any events at work that have shocked your peace of mind
- of any emergencies and situations where you have helped other people (car crashes, fires, calls for an ambulance, and other calls to the emergency response centre).

You can always ask for help and further information on occupational safety from your supervisor and the OHS representative.

Safety observations, logging of close calls and investigation of accidents are aimed at preventing accidents and reducing risks.

## 5.1 Safety observations

A safety observation is a notification of a hazard related to work. It can also be a proposal for improvement or an example of a safe practice.

Report all safety observations to your supervisor, unless another agreement has been made at your workplace. The supervisor will consider measures for reducing the possibility of an accident. When safety observations increase, there will be fewer close calls and accidents. Such observations should be reported to everyone according to the practices at your workplace – in the best case scenario, you prevent an accident from happening to you or to other people.

### An example of a safety observation

“The front of the mailboxes at Kaikukoski 6A had not been sanded at 4:35 am on the 6th of February. I left a card in the customer's mailbox on the 4th of February, but there had been no change”.



## 5.2 Reporting close calls

A “close call” is an incident where an occupational accident almost took place: you got away from the situation with a scare, without any personal injuries or property damage.

If you have a close call, it is important that you do not cover up the incident. Report it to your supervisor. The supervisor is obliged to establish the events that led to the incident and consider how to avoid a similar situation in the future. Such preventive action reduces the risk of an accident.

### Find out how close calls are reported at your workplace.

A tried and true procedure is as follows:

1. Immediately write down a close call on a separate paper form or directly in the electronic information system. You should include a photo of the scene, if possible.
2. The primary objective is to improve the work and working conditions, not to look for guilty parties or personal mistakes. Write down the following details:
  - a) What happened, and where and when did it happen? (circumstances, parties concerned, work done, deviations, outcome, preceding events)
  - b) Why did it happen? (Which factors contributed to the creation of a close call?)
  - c) In your opinion, how can similar situations and accidents be prevented in the future?
3. Submit the notification to your supervisor. The supervisor will think about what needs to be done.
4. After a close call, all employees should be told what lessons were learned from the situation. This helps avoid similar situations in the future.

### 5.3 Action during an emergency

If a dangerous situation takes place, stay calm. Call for help for yourself. The phone number of the emergency response centre is 112. If possible, download the 112 Suomi mobile application in your phone and use it as a primary option, so the emergency response centre is automatically informed of your location.

After you have called the emergency response centre, you can also call the emergency number of the night desk (if such a number exists). It is a good idea to call the night desk after alerting actual help from 112, because they know your delivery area and can also provide assistance.

The night desk also gives instructions for exceptional situations, such as:

- You need help with the delivery.
- You are unable to continue your work.
- The delivery is disrupted or delayed.

Remember that the mobile phone you have with you is a safety instrument. You can use it to contact the authorities or the night desk if you feel threatened or harassed.

### 5.4 Investigation of accidents

Accidents, even small and seemingly insignificant ones, are investigated so that similar accidents can be prevented from occurring again. After every accident, decisions must be made on which safety measures, guidance, training and communication preventing similar accidents are required at the workplace, and to whom such information primarily pertains.

Investigators do not look for a guilty party, but establish what happened and why it happened. An accident is not in anyone's interest, nor is it a desired event – that is why the reasons they happen must be examined carefully and the necessary measures must be taken to prevent similar accidents. One of the investigative methods for establishing root causes is to ask five times "Why?".

Ask your supervisor and the OHS representative for further information about accident investigation.

Occupational safety is made up of daily actions, and safety thinking must be a part of all activities by the employer and employee.

The goal is zero accidents!



*Be healthy when you leave home for work every day!*

## 6 Action during a general emergency

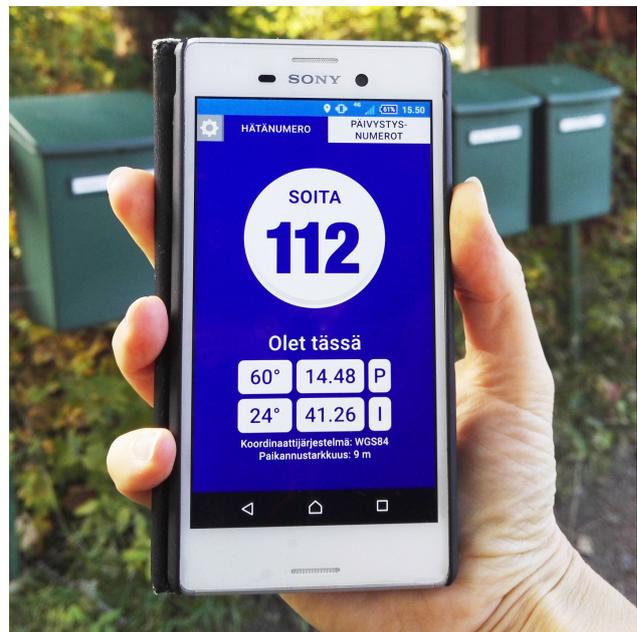
If you see an emergency or are involved in one, save all people who are in immediate danger and call the emergency response centre at the number **112**. Try to limit the damage (put out a fire, help accident victims, etc.). Remember your own safety.

If you do not dare to do anything in the situation, stay calm and call for help. Report the incident to the night desk as soon as possible.

### Tell the emergency response centre operator

- who you are
- what has happened
- where you are (street address and city/town)
- how many people have been injured.

Answer all questions asked of you. Do not hang up the phone until you receive permission to do so.



## 7 Useful links

Loads are lighter when you work together.  
Stress factors in the work of deliverers  
and the relative strain of the employees.  
The Centre for Occupational Safety 2014.  
[http://www.ttl.fi/fi/verkkokirjat/Documents/  
Kuorma\\_kevenee\\_yhteistyolla.pdf](http://www.ttl.fi/fi/verkkokirjat/Documents/Kuorma_kevenee_yhteistyolla.pdf)

Correct way to lift objects [Oikea nostaminen],  
The Finnish Spinal Health Association  
<http://selkakanava.fi/nostaminen-ja-kantaminen>

Ergonomics of driving a car [Autolla ajamisen  
ergonomia], The Finnish Spinal Health Association  
<http://selkakanava.fi/nain-matkustat-ilman-selkakipuja>

The Centre for Occupational Safety  
[ttk.fi](http://ttk.fi)

Investigation of hazardous situations and accidents,  
The Centre for Occupational Safety 2016  
[ttk.fi/julkaisut](http://ttk.fi/julkaisut)

112 Suomi mobile application  
<http://www.digia.com/112suomi>







The Centre for Occupational Safety, tel. 09 616 261, [www.ttk.fi](http://www.ttk.fi)

## Deliverers' Occupational Safety

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All jobs have their own hazards and workload factors. According to the law, these must be systematically and adequately identified and controlled to protect employees. This guide has been prepared to increase awareness of accident and workload factors related to the work done by deliverers, and of how to prevent them in order to avoid accidents and occupational diseases.

The guide can be used as support material in, for example, familiarisation into the work for supervisors and employees, workplace reports on occupational health care, and development and risk assessment of occupational safety and health. The subject areas of the guide can also be reviewed, as themes, during meetings of occupational safety and health committees, in training events, joint meetings as various bulletins. The Deliverers' Occupational Safety guide is suitable for everyone – for deliverers interested in their work and line organisations, as well as for employees of occupational safety and health and occupational health care organisations.

Decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping, curved orange lines in the bottom left corner.

**Better work**