Gender sensitive risk assessment should take a participatory approach, involving the workers concerned and based on examination of the real work situations. Both the work and private life needs to be taken into account:

Possible gender differences:

- When we think about hazards at work we are more likely to think of men working in high accident risk areas such as building sites than of women working in health and social care or of female and male cleaners.

The ‘Community strategy on health and safety at work’ 2002-2006 has been ‘mainstreaming’ or integrating gender into Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) activities as an objective to achieve gender equality.

Significant risks to both women and men could be underestimated by taking a ‘gender-neutral’ approach in risk assessment:

- There is segregation between sectors as well as between jobs within the same sector.
- They face different types of demands and strains as well as having access to different resources.
- A further difference can be the way in which they handle these circumstances.
- Biological aspects e.g. male and female reproductive risks can be relevant.

Women and Men are often exposed to different workplace environments:

- Men are more likely to be exposed to heavy loads or ergonomic risks while women are more likely to be exposed to psychosocial risks.
- Men are more likely to be exposed to physical risks while women are more likely to be exposed to chemical risks.

Gender sensitive risk assessment should take a participatory approach, involving the workers concerned and based on examination of the real work situations. Both the work and private life needs to be taken into account:

How it works

**STEP 1**
START OF PROCESS

- Decide to take gender issues seriously and obtain information about them
- Use a participatory approach involving all workers – women and men – at all stages
- Form aims e.g. „equal participation in OSH-measures“

**STEP 2**
HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

- Avoid making prior assumptions about what the hazards are and who is at risk. E.g. musculoskeletal disorders: production and administration workers
- Encourage all (men and female) workers to report issues that they think may effect their safety & health at work
- Don’t forget e.g. part time workers

**STEP 3**
RISK ASSESSMENT

- Look critically at „light work“ e.g. often handled loads
- Consider gender related demands e.g. „men are strong, women are communicative“
- Take home-work interface into account and both men’s and woman’s work schedules

**STEP 4**
SOLUTIONS / MEASURES

- Involve workers in decision making and implementation of preventive measures relevant for their working conditions
- Adapt the measures to the individual needs e.g. protective equipment suitable for woman and „non average“ men

**STEP 5**
EVALUATION

- Make sure all workers are provided with measures
- Monitor the effects of OSH-measures considering working conditions as well as workplace equality

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