

WORKING LIFE RECOMMENDATIONS IN CASE OF DRONE THREATS

The social partners, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health together have prepared these recommendations for workplaces in case of a drone threat. The Ministry of the Interior has supported the preparation of the instructions with information on emergency warnings, general instructions for the population and obligations related to independent preparedness.

The recommendation is based on the situation in summer 2026, where armed drones may occasionally stray into Finland and, as a result, the rescue authorities may issue emergency warnings. During a drone threat, the authorities advise people to go indoors because moving outdoors is not safe. The emergency warning and the instructions issued by the authorities must be followed.

Public authorities may issue an emergency warning if there is a threat to life or health or a risk of significant damage to property. An emergency warning may be issued for a specific area or the entire country. An emergency warning issued during a drone threat, for example, means that there is a real danger.

Drone threats can be very different from one situation to another. The dangerous area is large because there may be several drones operating over a wide area. Drones vary in size, and some may be as large as small aircraft. They may also move at high speeds. Because drones can change direction, the situation may develop quickly. The authorities determine the dangerous area based on a threat assessment. Their main priority is to ensure people's safety.

It is estimated that drone threats will occur very sporadically, take place in the early morning and last for a short time (e.g. three hours).

The recommendation remains in force for the time being as long as the current situation remains unchanged. It may be updated if necessary. The parts of this recommendation concerning employees also apply to public officials.

Any sector-specific safety and preparedness guidelines must also be considered at each workplace in case of drone threats.

1. Securing functions related to life and health when emergency warning is in force

The instructions of the emergency warnings issued by the authorities must be followed. Moving outdoors in the area specified in the emergency warning may be dangerous. You should therefore avoid going outside and stay indoors whenever possible.

However, there are certain functions in society that cannot be shut down or reduced during an emergency warning without directly endangering people's lives or health. Because of this, it may be justified to travel to work if the continuity of the functions cannot be secured in another way.

The number of such functions is very limited and mainly concern acute tasks related to securing life and health, e.g. in emergency medical services and other functions critical to life and health. Within the social welfare services, such functions exist in 24-hour institutional care for older people, for example. There are also functions in the industry and energy generation that require a certain

number of employees to ensure the continuity of safe operations and production in all circumstances.

These are the most critical functions of society in which even a short-term disruption may endanger the lives or health of employees, patients, customers or local residents. Each workplace must assess whether such consequences could arise if a certain task is not performed for a few hours and the situation cannot be resolved through e.g. working hours arrangements. Possible sector-specific guidelines must be considered when making such an assessment at the workplace.

By law, the employer must prepare for the protection of persons, property and the environment in dangerous situations. The employer must therefore update workplace-specific safety plans in case of a drone threat. Based on the content of the emergency warnings and possible sector-specific guidelines, the employer must evaluate whether the activities it engages in require all or some employees to travel to the workplace and whether the work is continued despite the emergency.

Changes to shift arrangements can be made at workplaces based on legislation, collective agreements for employees or public officials and employment contracts. During an emergency warning issued due to a drone threat, the continuity of critical functions should be ensured primarily by continuing the shifts of those employees already at the workplace. If, in order to perform a critical task, the shift is continued e.g. based on the practices of the workplace, by other agreement on the employer's initiative, or as emergency work, the payment of wages will happen in accordance with the law, the collective agreement for employees or public officials or the employment contract.

Employees who are uncertain whether or not they should travel to the workplace must contact their employer.

2. Payment of wages when work cannot be performed

Drone threats are estimated to last only a short time and to mostly occur in the night and early morning. They are also estimated to occur very sporadically. For this reason, their impact on working life is limited.

Despite the fact that the social partners interpret the current labour legislation and the obligation to pay wages differently, they recommend that, in order to strengthen comprehensive security, employers pay wages to employees and public officials in situations referred to in this statement when the person is prevented from performing their work due to an emergency warning due to a drone threat issued by the authorities.

3. Reconciling work with advisory to take shelter during a drone threat

Each workplace should find the means to minimise the risks to the health and safety of employees and to reduce the harm to employers. To ensure occupational safety, the employer must, on the basis of the risk assessment, take the necessary measures to minimise the risks by available means. As regards the specified critical tasks, work performed indoors continues during the emergency and wages (with any increases or overtime pay) are paid for it in accordance with the law and the collective agreement for employees or public officials.

Means of reconciling the drone threat and work may include:

Remote work or changing the workplace

Working remotely enables work while taking shelter during a drone threat. For example, expert work can be performed as remote work, and, as an exception, other tasks can be assigned to be performed remotely (e.g. participation in online training).

Changing the workplace may also be possible in some situations. For example, visits with clients can be moved to another location away from the affected area. In the case of mobile work critical to the functioning of society, the principles related to the organisation of such work and the taking of shelter must be addressed at workplaces.

Changes to work shifts

Necessary changes may be made to work shifts within the framework of legislation, collective agreements for employees or public officials and employment contracts. At the beginning of a threat, the employer may agree with the employees on shift that the shift will be extended in order not to cause disruption to work. This applies especially to the critical functions of society. Emergency work laid down in section 19 of the Working Time Act may also be considered if the conditions for it are met. In this case, the supervisory authority (occupational safety and health authorities) must be notified of emergency work without delay and the procedures laid down in the Act must be followed.

4. Instructions and practices related to drones must be discussed in advance at workplaces

The employer and employees must together discuss the instructions for a possible drone threat and any effects these may have on the performance of work, the employer's obligation to pay wages and the travel to work after the threat. In addition, other issues related to emergency planning, flow of information, taking shelter and safe organisation of work can be addressed. The aim is to reach an agreement between the employer and employees on these issues at workplaces.

The matters to be addressed include at least:

- What effects can a drone threat have on the workplace?
- Which tasks can be performed remotely?
- How do changes in work or work shifts affect payment of wages?
- Are there tasks at the workplace that require travelling to the workplace during a drone threat?
- How do employees responsible for critical tasks travel to work if public transport is shut down?
- In which way is non-critical work performed outdoors suspended and where do these employees take shelter?
- How will emergency warnings related to a drone threat be communicated at workplaces and how will they be responded to?
- How can the restrictions resulting from emergencies be reconciled with the need to maintain functions critical to society?
- Does a previous assessment of possible risks at the workplace need to be updated to ensure occupational safety?

- After the threat ends, how do employees return to work within a reasonable time? When determining a reasonable time, the circumstances that depend on e.g. care responsibilities and the length of the commute must be considered.
- How will work and childcare be reconciled in a situation where early childhood education and care services are closed?

5. During drone threats occupational accidents are assessed according to the law

During drone threats, any accident of an employee is assessed in accordance with the provisions of sections 21–25 of the Occupational Accidents, Injuries and Diseases Act (459/2015) as usual. This applies to situations where an employee is either at the workplace or outside the workplace, e.g. on the way from home to the workplace. A drone is an external factor referred to in section 17 of the Act which may cause an incident that may result in disability or death for which compensation will be paid as an occupational accident.

Occupational accident insurance is a cause-based system, the compensation for which can be reduced if the injured person has contributed to the injury (Section 61 of the Act). If, due to the nature of the work, it is necessary that the employee travel to the workplace, the preconditions for reducing the compensation due to a possible neglect of an official regulation do not exist under the provision. The Occupational Accidents, Injuries and Diseases Act also does not acknowledge the possibility that compensation could be refused in full due to the injured person's contribution to the injury.

6. Further measures

The social partners and the Government will continue to monitor the situation related to drone threats and update the recommendations if necessary.

The social partners will advise their member unions to assess possible measures in each sector to implement this recommendation in practice and in case the number of drone threats increases substantially from the current estimate.

The social partners, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health will monitor the situation and the additional payroll costs arising from drone threats. In case the situation picture changes or drone threats become more common, thereby resulting in substantial payroll costs for employers, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment will carry out a study on how the costs could be equalised. The starting point of the study is that the equalisation model does not generate any costs to the general government or employees.