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## OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

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Recent technological developments in the postal and telecommunication services have led to the need to rationalize existing processes through mechanization and automation in order to speed up services, diminish their costs and improve productivity. It should be noted, however, that the major shift from manual to mechanized techniques has entailed new types of health hazards and problems in these industries, such as stress (see fact sheet on violence and stress - pdf, 120k), repetitive strain injury (RSI) and microwave radiation. For instance, the process of sorting and coding mail or parcels in the postal service requires the visual recognition (reading) of a letter address presented in a very short time, on a visual display terminal (VDT). While VDTs do not present any radiation or other definite health hazards, it is recognized that sorting and coding work may cause eyestrain. The hazard is often compounded by relevant factors such as long working hours causing fatigue-induced accidents particularly in the evening, strictly regulated working hours, and various kinds of noise.

Conventional hazards arise from working at heights, on poles or pylons, and excavating for cable-laying in telecommunications services. Since telecommunications rely extensively on electricity, its safe use is a prerequisite for any meaningful occupational safety and health in this field.

### Links for further information

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- Encyclopaedia of Occupational Safety and Health <http://www.ilocis.org/>
- Information on ergonomic hazards <http://www.ilo.org/safework/lang--en/index.htm>