

# Quick order – quick delivery

Logistics occupations are characterised by physical demands and deadline pressure

## 28 baua: Facts

Nowadays almost everyone orders something quickly on the Internet. The expectation that the delivery will arrive shortly after ordering influences the working conditions of employees in logistics occupations. They usually have to work very quickly or under time pressure or pressure to perform, adding to their already high physical demands. As a result, employees in logistics occupations are less satisfied with their jobs and report more health complaints compared to employees in other occupations.

### Who are we talking about?

The logistics occupations considered here include occupations in warehousing and storage, postal and courier activities and goods handling. They are described in more detail in the „Classification of Occupations 2010“ of the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) under codes 51300 to 51389. According to the German Microcensus, about 1.2 million people are employed in logistics occupations in Germany, about 30% are women.

The analysis compares individuals employed in logistics to individuals employed in other occupations. Since higher-level training is less common in logistics than in other occupations, both groups are restricted to helpers and skilled workers. Employees with further training qualifications such as a technician's or university degree are excluded. In total, 444 employees in logistics and 9,014 employees in other occupations are considered. The analyses are based on the BIBB/BAuA Employment Survey 2018, which covers approximately 20,000 employees. In the survey, workers were asked to assess how often certain work demands occur in their work. Possible responses were „frequently“, „sometimes“, „rarely“ or „never“. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they are „very satisfied“, „satisfied“, „less satisfied“ or „dissatisfied“ with their work. In addition, they were asked about their health complaints.

### Typical working conditions in logistics occupations

Compared to other occupations, significantly more employees in logistics state that they frequently have to lift and carry heavy loads (56% vs. 30%). Working while standing is also part of most employees' everyday lives (82% vs. 65%). Working under conditions such as cold, heat, wet, moisture or draughts is also more common in these oc-

cupations than in other occupations (47% vs. 26%). This is particularly the case in outdoor occupations, e.g. postal and courier activities. It can be assumed that short delivery times could be one reason why they have to work quickly and are exposed to increased pressure at work (see Fig. 1). Half of the logistics workers report these working conditions, which are less common among employees in other occupations (36% vs. 44%). On the other hand, employees in logistics occupations less often have to manage different tasks at the same time compared to other occupations (34% vs. 55%). Likewise, interruptions at work are mentioned less frequently (34% vs. 44%). However, nearly one quarter reports frequently working at the limits of their capabilities (23%). This proportion is lower in other occupations (17%).

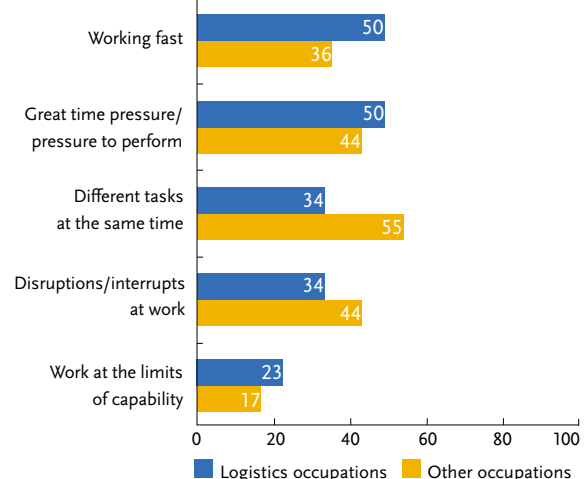


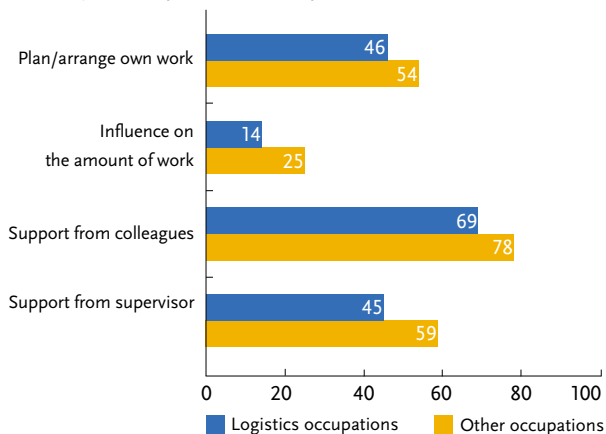
Fig. 1 Psychological requirements (shares for „frequently“, in %)

More often than workers in other professions, logistics workers report prescribed work performance (40% vs. 33%) or a prescribed output or time (40% vs. 32%). In

addition, their work is characterised by processes that are repeated in every detail (69% vs. 57%).

### Few resources, low job satisfaction

Unfavourable working conditions such as the aforementioned can be detrimental to health, whereas job resources (see Fig. 2) can moderate the consequences. In logistics occupations, only 46% of employees have the opportunity to plan their own work (other occupations 54%). In addition, fewer employees state having an influence on the amount of their work (14% vs. 25%). Likewise, social support from colleagues is markedly less available in these professions (69% vs. 78%). The same applies to support from superiors (45% vs. 59%).



**Fig. 2** Decision latitude and social support (shares for „frequently“, in %)

In line with the previous results, job satisfaction in the logistics occupations industry is lower in all subdimensions as well. Particularly low levels emerge with respect to workers' satisfaction with their physical working conditions (62% vs. 76%), further training opportunities (58% vs. 71%) and opportunities for advancement (45% vs. 55%). However, this is hardly reflected in the overall level of satisfaction. (85% vs. 89%).

Logistics workers are slightly less likely to perceive their overall health as „less good“ or „bad“ compared to other occupational groups (21% vs. 18%). Particularly striking are the results regarding pain in the legs and feet (36% vs. 26%), in the arms (35% vs. 25%) and in the knees (37% vs. 28%) as well as in the lower back (61% vs. 52%). In accordance with these results, a considerably higher proportion of respondents reported suffering from physical exhaustion (48% vs. 40%).

### Conclusion

In logistics occupations, various unfavourable work requirements accumulate, in particular physical demands, fast work and time pressure or pressure to perform. In addition, logistics workers have fewer resources at their disposal that would enable them to better cope with these demands. Therefore, it is particularly important for logistics workers to meet work requirements with a health-promoting design. For this purpose, a risk assessment, followed by appropriate actions, needs to be carried out. Detailed information on risk assessments can be obtained from the responsible employer's liability insurance association for trade and goods logistics (Berufsgenossenschaft Handel und Warenlogistik) as well as from the website of the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin).

### Further Information

- 1 M. Melzer, A. Hubrich, 2014. Einfluss arbeitsbezogener und individueller Ressourcen auf positive Aspekte der mentalen Gesundheit. 1. Auflage. Dortmund: Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin. Verfügbar unter: [www.baua.de/dok/8657354](http://www.baua.de/dok/8657354)
- 2 U. Steinberg, F. Liebers, A. Klußmann, 2014. Manuelle Arbeit ohne Schaden. Grundsätze und Gefährdungsbeurteilung. 4. Auflage. Dortmund: Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin. Verfügbar unter: [www.baua.de/dok/8658182](http://www.baua.de/dok/8658182)
- 3 Bundesagentur für Arbeit, Hrsg, 2011. Klassifikation der Berufe 2010 – Band 1: Systematischer und alphabetischer Teil mit Erläuterungen. Nürnberg: Bundesagentur für Arbeit.
- 4 Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin. Arbeitsbedingungen – BIBB/BAuA-Erwerbstätigenbefragung [online]. Verfügbar unter: [www.baua.de/arbeitsbedingungen](http://www.baua.de/arbeitsbedingungen)
- 5 Bundesanstalt für Arbeitsschutz und Arbeitsmedizin. Gefährdungsbeurteilung [online]. Verfügbar unter: [www.baua.de/gefaehrungsbeurteilung](http://www.baua.de/gefaehrungsbeurteilung)