

Act on Accident Prevention (UnfVGJZ)

January 13, 2016 (Official Gazette of *Jehovas Zeugen in Deutschland*, No. 1, 2016, p. 1 ff.) in the wording of March 31, 2022

List of Amendments				
Serial No.	Date	Source Official Gazette of JZD	Amendment to	Type of Amendment
1	30.03.2022	No. 3, 2022, p. 1	§ 2 par. 3	amended

Preamble. (1) As the Creator of mankind and the Source of all life, Jehovah God has communicated in His word that life—human life in particular—is sacred. (Psalm 36:9) He holds accountable those who endanger or harm life through their lack of due diligence and hence thousands of years ago He gave mankind safety regulations, alongside other life-saving commands, for the purpose of accident prevention. (Ecclesiastes 10:9; Deuteronomy 19:5; 22:8) It is thus apparent that life-saving safety measures are of the highest priority to Jehovah God. This is also expressed through the Christian command to love one’s neighbor. This also requires a high level of protection with regard to safeguarding health and life.

(2) By means of the Act, the Governing Body and the Branch Committee are fulfilling the responsibility to comply with this divine standard of safety for life and health.

§ 1 Scope of application (1) This Act applies to all direct operations at all structural divisions and agencies (§ 5 StRG) of the religious association.

(2) All provisions in the religious law (Preamble, par. 4 StRG) that concern regulations for accident prevention and safeguarding life form a part of this Act. They are hereafter referred to using the term “safety.”

(3) Everyone must carefully observe the State safety regulations that are binding on all persons. The Branch Committee decides upon the religious-law adaption of safety regulations that are not universally applicable.

§ 2 Actions of the religious association. (1) Actions attributable to the religious association are assessed according to the religious law of the religious association and its self-concept.

(2) The religious association is not responsible for the autonomous, personal religious practice of members of the religious association, even when the objective of their actions coincides with that of the religious association.

(3) One activity in particular that is autonomous and not attributable to the religious association is the preaching activity carried out by members (§ 13 StRG) as a personal practice of religion, even though the religious association makes the infrastructure, equipment and other aids available.

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§ 3 Head of safety. (1) The one responsible for compliance with safety regulations (§ 1, pars. 2, 3) is the person to whom the responsibility and duty for an area or assignment has been transferred. His duties mainly include:

1. Identifying possible hazards within the area of responsibility,
2. Specifying necessary measures for hazard prevention and mitigation,
3. Implementing the specified measures,
4. Examining the effectiveness of protective measures,
5. Adapting and modifying protective measures according to current technology, or changing duties and activities,
6. Regulating access to areas with particular hazards,
7. Providing training and instruction for persons operating within his area of responsibility, especially regarding existing hazards and necessary protective measures,
8. Assigning safety-relevant activities to persons operating within his area of responsibility, designating concrete tasks and powers as well as maintaining records of these.

(2) At the branch office (§ 6 StRG), each department overseer serves as a head of safety.

(3) The head of safety essentially has the power to make further regulations for the purpose of preventing accidents and ensuring safety within the scope of his assigned area of responsibility and his entrusted duties.

(4) The Act gives the head of safety the power to appoint a safety expert where necessary, advisable or required by State regulations. The safety expert must possess the necessary qualifications, abilities, specialist knowledge and experience to perform this function. If necessary, the Branch Committee can issue a written certificate of appointment.

(5) If the type of activity or equipment requires specialist technical knowledge, it must be ensured that the activity is carried out and supervised by suitably qualified experts. This can be done by commissioning a specialist company or someone who has acquired the relevant technical knowledge. The head of safety can transfer the selection of qualified persons to the safety expert who in turn evaluates the qualifications and specialist knowledge required for the activities to be performed.

§ 4 Status and rights of the safety expert. (1) The safety expert is not bound by instructions when exercising his specialist knowledge.

(2) The safety expert informs the head of safety about any instructions that he considers necessary. The latter will either personally ensure that these instructions are implemented within his area of responsibility or he will delegate this task to the safety expert. If the safety expert is not personally charged with implementing the task, he must monitor the skilled implementation of the instructions.

(3) If the head of safety and the safety expert disagree about the nature and scope of the instructions, the Branch Committee is responsible for making a final decision as to whether and how instructions should be implemented. A record must be kept of this decision.

(4) The safety expert is given the opportunity to acquire and maintain the necessary qualifications and/or expert knowledge for his area of responsibility.

(5) The safety expert has the duty to continue his studies and update his newly acquired knowledge.

(6) The safety expert supports the head of safety in training personnel in his area of expertise. The head of safety decides which persons may receive training. Within his area of expertise, the safety expert is responsible for evaluating who has the needed qualifications and specialist knowledge and for which tasks. He should keep records to this effect.

§ 5 Evaluating activities and equipment. (1) When evaluating activities, particular attention must be paid to the following:

- Design, selection and set-up of the workplace as well as the substances, machinery, appliances and equipment in use, and especially how these are handled,
- Physical, chemical and biological effects and emissions,
- Qualifications and training of the persons involved.

(2) When evaluating the machinery, appliances and equipment in use, the nature, extent and deadlines for recurring inspections as well as the qualifications and competence of the persons conducting the evaluation must also be specified. When determining the inspection periods, the recognized rules of technology as well as any applicable State regulations must be taken into account. The evaluation should factor in all hazards that may arise when using machinery, appliances and equipment, especially due to the:

- Machinery, appliance or equipment itself,
- Conditions in the surrounding environment,
- Activity.

(3) The evaluation may only be carried out by qualified persons.

(4) An evaluation should be conducted before the initial operation of any piece of machinery, appliance or equipment or before an activity is performed for the first time. This should be reviewed periodically and updated if necessary. In particular, an evaluation must be conducted when safety-relevant changes are made to the activity or the conditions in the surrounding environment, as well as in the event of accidents. The current technology must be taken into consideration. Where needed, the safety measures should be adapted and their effectiveness demonstrated.

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§ 6 Maintaining the safety of machinery, appliances and equipment. (1) In order to ensure the long-term safety of machinery, appliances and equipment, the head of safety must, unless stipulated otherwise by State regulations, have these devices checked:

- before their first use,
- after modifications or repair work,
- as well as recurrently in accordance with the inspection deadlines in § 5, par. 2, by a person qualified to conduct an inspection.

(2) The type and scope of the inspections must be performed in accordance with the evaluation in § 5, par. 2 or apply the recognized rules of technology.

§ 7 Duty of all persons involved to cooperate. (1) Persons involved in an area of activity are obligated to follow the safety regulations issued by the religious association and the instructions from the head of safety and the safety expert. They must show caution and foresight as they care for the health and safety of all persons carrying out activities. This includes proper use of the machinery, appliances, tools, work materials, transportation, protective equipment and personal safety equipment made available.

(2) Persons must immediately cease their activities if it is established that there are defects in the protective measures and risks to health and safety, and they must promptly report these to the head of safety following § 3, par. 1 or the safety expert following § 3, par. 4.

§ 8 Decisions reserved for the Branch Committee. (1) The following measures require a decision from the Branch Committee:

1. The adaption of State legislation into the religious law § 1, par. 3, p. 2,
2. The decision outlined in § 4, par. 3.

(2) The following measures require the approval of the Branch Committee:

1. Further regulations as laid down in § 3, par. 3,
2. The appointment of a safety expert as laid down in § 3, par. 4.

Approval is deemed to have been granted if the Branch Committee raises no objection within four weeks of the submission of the proposed measure.