

SOCIAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE

THE SERVICES AT A GLANCE

- Prevention of Accidents at Work and Occupational Diseases
- Occupational Medical Care
- First Aid for Accidents at Work
- Medical Treatment after Accidents
- Rehabilitation
- Compensation after an Accident at Work and for Occupational Diseases

In 1887 accident insurance for manual workers became mandatory. Since then more and more sectors of the population have been given the protection of social accident insurance – the social security system has adapted to meet the needs of society. Today more than 5 million people in training or education and workers of all kinds are covered by accident insurance.

In cases of accidents at work or occupational diseases the social accident insurance service cares for its around 5 million insured members with all appropriate means. In cases of private accidents almost all Austrians receive benefits from the social health service, employed persons also receive benefits from social pension insurance. At present around 99% of the population are protected by social security.

Social Accident Insurance Institutions	Insured persons 2000 (rounded)	Accidents in 2000
Austrian Workers' Compensation Board (AUVA)	2.7 million wage and salary earners 1.3 million pupils and students 272,000 self-employed	123,400 54,200 3,300
	Other persons protected in case of accident Approx. 4.3 million insured	1,400
		Approx. 182,000 accidents in total
Social Insurance Institution for Farmers (SVB)	1.110,000 self-employed in agriculture and forestry and their dependants	7,000
Insurance Institution of Austrian Railways (VAöE)	72,000 Austrian railways and Vienna Transport Authority employees	4,200
Insurance Institutions for Public Service Wage and Salary Earners (BVA)	269,000 civil servants at national, provincial and local authority level with permanent tenure	6,000
All Accident Insurers	Approx. 5.7 million insured against accidents: 3.0 million employees 1.4 million self-employed 1.3 million pupils and students	Approx. 199,200 accidents covered by social accident



Strict focus on customer and service orientation results in acceptance in the firms.

THE PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS

The Austrian economy loses two average salaries per working person per year through accidents: 2.2 billion through accidents at work, 2.9 billion through car accidents, 3.6 billion through accidents while doing housework or during leisure time.

Amongst all the numerous causes of accidents one main cause stands out: human behavioural error. Of course, not only the error of the victim of the accident – planners, developers and manufacturers of office and work space make mistakes.

MANAGING SAFETY

Safety at work, on the roads and in private life depends on human behaviour. Therefore it is crucial to encourage safety-oriented and health-conscious behaviour.

The safety experts of the national accident insurance service investigate almost a quarter of a million accidents per year: human error is the main cause – rules are ignored, safety equipment not used, carelessness and irresponsibility sadly have a field day. However, the safety experts do not give up – because they are working to make everybody want to live safely and to be successful in the long term.

Without the individual responsibility and initiative of those involved, safety cannot be increased; teachers and learners, producers and consumers can and must participate.

Safety at work is, above all, a leadership responsibility, and perhaps the most important one. But it also makes a considerable contribution to productivity.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY

Managers and supervisors at all levels cannot delegate responsibility for the safety of production and products, neither to the safety specialists, nor to the insurance institutions. The end of the delegation principle comes at the very latest when gross negligence has been proven. Therefore, there are three weighty arguments for safety: productivity, humanity and legality.

CHECKING SAFETY

Safety measures can be implemented through clear instructions and thorough checks on the part of management. The results can be measured – each and every accident or damage to health at work is a clear symptom of management deficiencies! In serious cases it was not the safety valve that failed but the management. Every manager should bear this thought in mind: “Is the work being done here sa-

fe?” If not, there is only one possible decision: “Don’t work a second longer – because I am responsible for safety.”

OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE

One aim of occupational medicine is to provide protection against harmful influences at work, but it goes much further than that – modern occupational medicine covers the whole person. Insured persons threatened by occupational diseases are given preventative treatment, examinations and vaccinations help to maintain good health.

All places of work (since the year 2000 also including small enterprises) have had medical and safety experts available to them. The new Employee Protection Act (ASchG) in line with European standards will form the basis for more humane conditions at work. The amendment of the ASchG has given the accident insurance institutions the responsibility to co-ordinate small- and medium-sized enterprises (places of work of up to 50 employees).

RESEARCH AND TRAINING

Work materials, equipment, machines and processes are being examined. The aim of this research: more humane and safer working conditions.

The pan-European accredited Safety Technology Monitoring Office compiles audit reports and certifies sample construction plans. It can also provide “audited safety standards” on request, in line with international standards.

For “Training for Safety”, specialist journals of the accident insurance institutions, posters, leaflets and films are available. Specialists give information to individuals or advise organisations. The “Safety Resource Book” is indispensable for quick reference. Courses and conferences increase the safety of people while working and training.

CD-ROMs and computer programmes provide safety at the touch of a button, valuable information on this can also be found on the internet (<http://www.auva.or.at>).





FIRST AID

First aid is a human duty. However, one should help one's (injured) neighbour only if one knows how to. The accident insurance service organises first aid courses.

44,000 first aiders are trained per year. Places of work are advised on equipping their emergency facilities; the ambulance services are provided with modern vehicles and teaching media. Optimal rehabilitation of accident victims begins with efficient first aid. The excellence of the rescue chain – first aider, emergency service, ambulance, emergency doctor's car, rescue helicopter and the high quality of treatment – microsurgery, replantation techniques and intensive care – decides between life and death.



ACCIDENTS AT WORK

Accidents at work are accidents which in their cause, locality or time, are connected with the occupation or training which is insured.

Insurance cover also applies to journeys and activities connected with occupations or training. In case of doubt, definitely inform your employer or trainer, as they are legally obliged to inform the accident insurance institution of the accident.

Particular accidents are regarded as being the same as accidents at work, even if they involve people who have no accident insurance. These include accidents which occur when rescuing a person whose life is in danger or when do-



nating blood and accidents which involve the members or helpers of rescue organisations. Accidents which occur while the person is acting as a workers' repre-

sentative or taking part in occupational training are regarded as the equivalent of accidents at work.



OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES

Since 1928 occupational diseases have been regarded as being equivalent to accidents at work: social accident insurance provides treatment, rehabilitation and compensation.



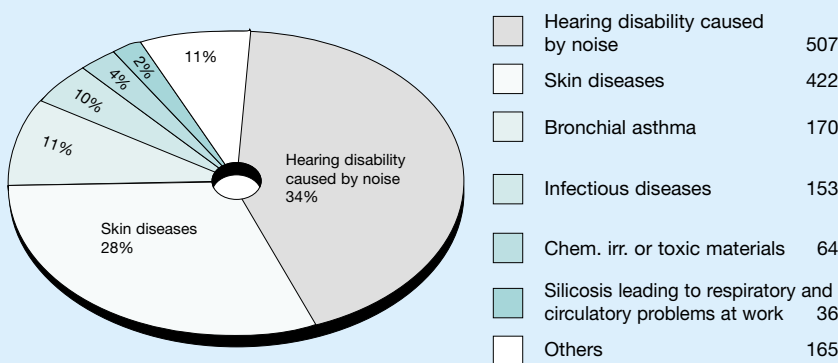
Occupational diseases are impairments to health which are caused by the insured occupation: the ASVG lists at present 52 different occupational diseases. Sicknes- ses which are not included in the list are also covered by a general insurance clause but proof must be brought that they are caused by the insured occupation.

The spectrum of occupational diseases changes with the working conditions. New dangers in the working world caused by new materials require not only new types of diagnosis and therapy but also new preventive measures. Prevention is, after all, the main concern of occupational medicine. Impairment of health can only be prevented by more humane working conditions and ergonomically designed places of work. Therefore social health insurance has also been empowered to take preventive measures against occupational diseases. In addition, the comprehensive occupational medicine service should contribute towards a health-oriented life- style.

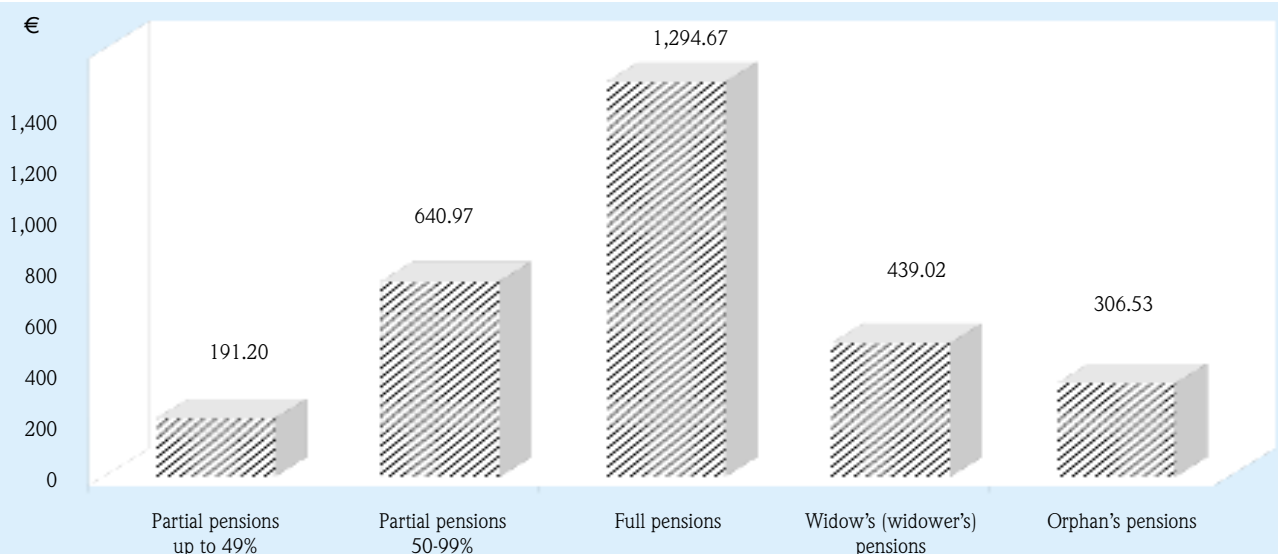


OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES EMPLOYEES (2000)

Numbers and Percentage



Average amount of accident pensions December 2001



THERAPY AFTER ACCIDENTS



Medical research is a requirement for health and life to be saved even after the most severe injuries. These measures include combating shock, intensive care, microsurgery, nerve repairs, human “spare parts” and comprehensive medical rehabilitation from efficient first aid to post-accident care into advanced age.

Increasingly intensive care of accident victims has led to a significant decline in the number of deaths and in the number of new claims for benefits for the severely disabled – a positive development not only from the human but also from the economic standpoint.

Every year around 650,000 accident victims are given medical treatment in Austria. 20% of all working days lost through illness and around 3% of all deaths are due to accidents.

Post-accident therapy is designed to overcome, using all available means, the impairment of health or injury to the body caused by an accident at work or an

occupational disease and the resulting reduction in earning capacity. Post-accident therapy is also responsible for preventing any further deterioration in condition following an injury or sickness.

Medical aid, medication, health aids of various types (e. g. wheelchairs, prostheses) are free of charge.

The accident insurance institutions also provide care in hospitals, especially in the accident hospitals.

Therapy after accidents is provided as long and as frequently as necessary, if the effects of the accident or occupational disease could be mitigated or the capacity to work improved, or when treatment is required to prevent the situation from worsening.

In Austria the AUVA runs seven accident hospitals, a hospital for internal occupational diseases and four rehabilitati-



Foto: AUVVA-Archiv

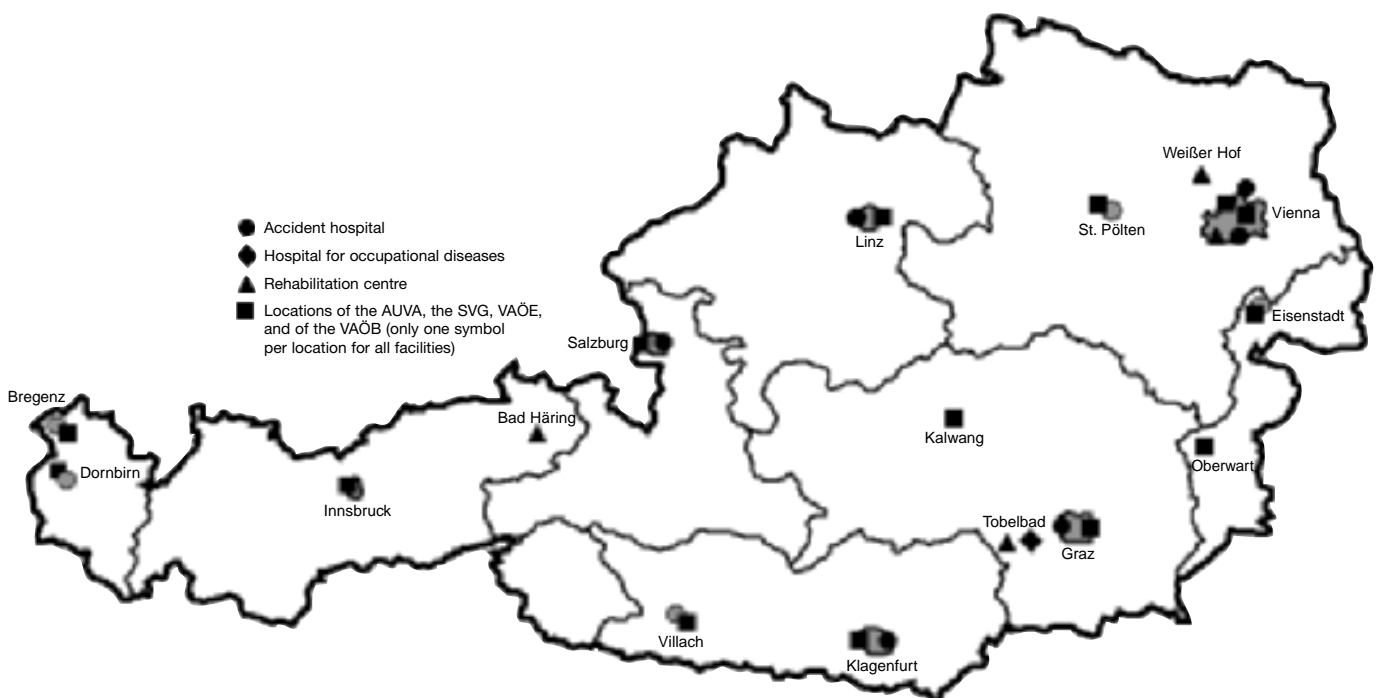
on centres for the treatment of accident victims.

Rehabilitation centres for accident victims are situated in Klosterneuburg, Tobelbad, Bad Häring and in Vienna's 12th district.

There are also other rehabilitation centres under contract located in Althofen and Harbach/Austria, Bad Heviz/Hungary, Rovinj and Opatija/Croatia.



FACILITIES OF THE SOCIAL ACCIDENT INSURANCE



REHABILITATION

After a severe injury a person needs help beyond the immediate medical treatment. The person must be restored both physically and mentally. Rehabilitation in the wider sense begins in the accident hospital. The Social Counsellor takes care of the family situation, job and personal problems of the injured. Ideally, treatment in a rehabilitation centre begins immediately where medical treatment ends. A team of experts helps the disabled person to find his/her accustomed place in his/her family, profession and in the community again.

Help from society is particularly important; a human approach to disabled people at work, at school or in private life makes rehabilitation easier.

Rehabilitation should enable the insu-

red to work in his/her previous, or another, job and to take part as independently as possible in the life of the community.

Help in finding a job is given in close co-operation with the government employment agencies and can extend to adapting the place of work appropriately.



If the insured goes back to work but receives full remuneration only after a certain training period or after reaching a certain degree of skill, then the accident insurance institution can pay an appropriate income supplement for this transitional phase. If necessary, supplements or loans can also be given to buy work clothes or equipment.

During vocational training disabled people receive a transitional benefit which corresponds to at least 60% of their previous earnings.

As further resocialisation measures, a home can be adapted or acquired and financial aid given towards purchasing a motor vehicle.



SPORT FOR THE DISABLED

Sport is an important factor for successful rehabilitation: sports activities promote health, social contacts and achievement. The social accident insurance supports both sport for the masses as well as promoting top-class sportsmen and women, and attaches great importance to sport in its rehabilitation centres, working together with sports organisations for the disabled.



FINANCIAL COMPENSATION

- Disability pension
- Integrity compensation
- Care benefit
- Surviving dependants pension
- Assistance to a surviving spouse
- Partial reimbursement of funeral expenses

Disability pension

If an accident at work or occupational disease results in a reduction of the ability to work of at least 20% for more than three months, the accident insurance must pay a disability pension.

The full pension is granted in cases of 100% incapacity. This is equal to two thirds of the assessment basis. The partial pension corresponds to the lower degree of reduction of capacity.

The disability pension is calculated as an annual pension, but is paid in monthly instalments 14 times a year. Persons with at least 50% disability are considered **severely disabled**. They receive an **additional pension** amounting to 20% of their disability pension and a **children's supplement** for each child under the age of 18 amounting to 10% of the pension (including the additional pension). In certain cases the children's supplement is extended beyond the child's 18th birthday (if the child is in full-time education or vocational training, or if the child is incapable of earning).

A disability pension which is likely to be paid out temporarily can be settled by the social accident insurance as a total compensation package in the amount of the probable expense. At the end of the period of total compensation, an application for any (further) right to a pension has to be claimed.

Calculation of pensions

Disability pension is calculated according to the **assessment basis** and the **extent of reduced ability to work** caused by the accident at work or occupational disease.

The surviving dependants pension is calculated according to the assessment basis of the insured person.

Assessment bases

As a rule, the assessment basis is the sum earned in the last year in employment, before the accident or onset of the occupational disease up to the maximum contribution basis.

For certain categories of employment there are fixed bases for assessment, e.g. for

Self employed small traders EUR 9,655.72 (higher insurance cover possible!)

Farmers EUR 15,198.11 for the calculation of

severe disablement, widow's and widower's pension . EUR 9,655.72 for the calculation of

all other pensions EUR 4,827.49 in connection with Art. 181 para 1 ASVG if the sum total of all assessment bases exceeds EUR 15,188.91

Integrity compensation

The services of the social accident insurance scheme were extended as of 1 January 1990 by the provision of integrity compensation.

The following requirements must be met:

- The insured event (accidents at work or occupational diseases) must have been caused by grossly negligent disregard of the employee protection regulations by a third party.
- The physical or mental integrity of the insured must be severely and permanently impaired as a result of the insured event.
- The insured must be eligible for a disability pension as a result of the insured event.

The integrity compensation is paid once only and is calculated according to the severity of the damage to integrity.

Care benefit

If, as a result of an accident at work or an occupational disease, it seems likely that nursing care will be required for more than six months, then care benefit will

be paid according to the regulations of the Federal Care Benefit Act (if a full pension is granted).

Pension for surviving dependants

If an insured person dies as the result of an accident at work or occupational disease (even if the direct cause of death arises consequentially years later) the accident insurance will pay:

- widow's or widower's pension
- orphan's pension
- pension to siblings without income and parents in need

The widow's or widower's pension is 20% of the assessment basis. If the earning power of the widow (widower) is reduced by half or if the widow has reached age 60 (or the widower age 65) then the pension is 40% of the assessment basis. In the event of remarriage a cash payment is made amounting to two and a half times the annual pension, which is then discontinued.

The orphan's pension is 20% of the assessment basis for each orphan with one parent, and 30% for an orphan with no parents. It is paid to every orphan up to the age of 18 (and thereafter only if the child is in full-time education or vocational training, or when he or she is unable to earn as a result of sickness or disability).

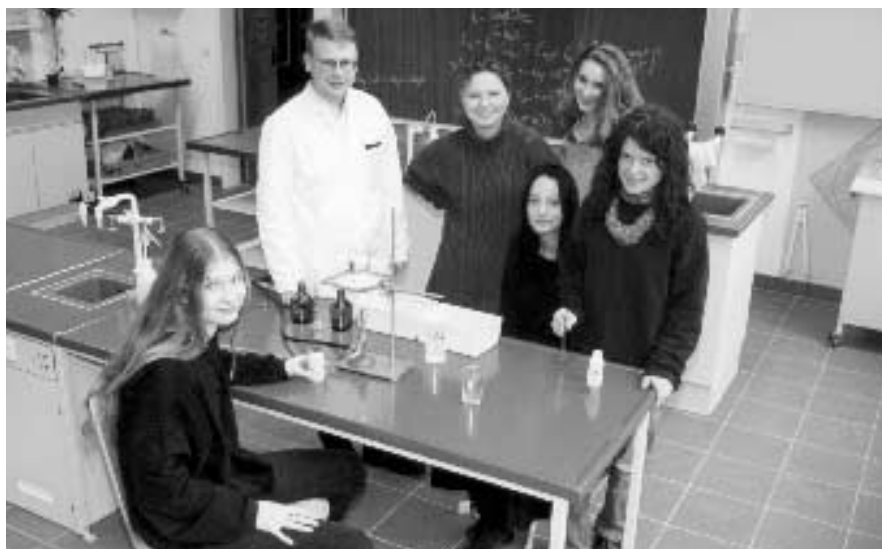
All pensions to surviving dependants, taken together, may not exceed 80% of the assessment basis.

Supplements, partial reimbursement of funeral expenses

If the widow or widower of a severely disabled person has no claim to a widow's (widower's) pension because the death of the insured was not due to an accident at work or an occupational disease, then he or she obtains a single supplementary payment amounting to 40% of the assessment basis.

If the death of the insured was due to an accident at work or an occupational disease, the accident insurance covers part of the funeral expenses, the amount payable being 1/15 of the basis for assessment for one year.





PROTECTION FOR SCHOOLCHILDREN AND STUDENTS

Since 1977 schoolchildren and students have been included in the social accident insurance scheme. Accidents which are connected with education or training will lead to receipt of a social accident insurance benefit. Such accidents would include accidents which take place during lessons or lectures, ex-

cursions, school skiing trips, school camps and other school-related events. The insurance also covers accidents on the way to or from school or university as well as to and from the school events mentioned above.

Nationality is irrelevant in the case of schoolchildren. Students are covered by accident insurance if they have Austrian citizenship or citizenship of a country with which a social security agreement exists. Other students are insured if they graduated from high school in Austria or their parents have been liable for Austrian Income Tax for at least five years. Students preparing for entrance exams for entitlement to study at higher education establishments are also insured. The insured need not pay contributions; the insurance is funded by contributions from the employers and from the Family Burden Alleviation Fund.

THE BENEFITS

Benefits in kind

For benefit to be claimed the Austrian Workers' Compensation Board must be notified of the accident by the educational institutes.

The Head of the school or educational institute has a statutory duty to register accidents.

Schoolchildren and students who receive treatment following an accident in an accident hospital or an accident department under contract are covered by the Austrian Worker's Compensation Board. Treatment in another hospital or by a doctor under contract is covered by social health insurance. The health insurance deductible for dependants receiving hospital care is reimbursed on application. Costs for private or "special category" treatment are not reimbursed. The costs of transporting the injured person from the place of treatment to home can be partially or totally reimbursed by a special supplement on application. Where needed, comprehensive occupational, social and medical rehabilitation services can be supplied.

Spectacles and similar aids are replaced if the destruction of the spectacles occurred at the same time as the physical injury. Damage to property alone is not compensated.

The entitlement to benefit in cases of **denture fitting** after accidents continues until the last dentist's visit after the second or adult teeth have grown in or the jaw is fully developed.

Financial compensation

Disability allowance

If the reduced capacity to work caused by the accident is at least 20% and the impairment lasts for more than three months, a lump-sum "disability allowance" is paid out.

In 2002 this amounts to:

reduced earnings capacity of	
20%	EUR 527.73
30%	EUR 1,147.49
40%	EUR 2,118.21
for each	
additional 10%	EUR 529,44
at 100%	EUR 5,294.40

The following are covered by insurance: Schoolchildren and students at

- general compulsory schools,
- vocational schools and academies,
- general compulsory high schools,
- physical education training colleges,
- agriculture and forestry colleges,
- universities, art colleges and theological academies,
- teacher training schools

Disability pension

If the reduction in earnings capacity is at least 50% and lasts for more than three months, the insured has a right to claim a disability pension (14 times a year). This pension is paid out from the point at which the insured is likely to complete school education and would have begun work. The amount of the pension is dependent on the assessment basis and the degree of reduced capacity.

Assessment basis for 2002:

from age 16	EUR 4,827.49
from age 19	EUR 6,437.27
from age 25	EUR 9,655.72

This would mean, for a 100% reduction in earnings capacity for example, a pension amounting to (2002):

from age 16	EUR 229.86
per month	
from age 19	EUR 306.51
per month	
from age 25	EUR 459.75
per month	

The benefit is reduced correspondingly for lower levels of incapacity.

Pupils and students who require care as the result of an accident at work or occupational disease receive a care benefit from the Austrian Worker's Compensation Board even before they receive a disability pension.

In case of death there is a partial reimbursement of the funeral expenses. Survivors also receive pensions if applicable.

All amounts listed above are increased in accordance with the Pension Indexation Act.

As part of the full service provided by the social security institutions, all applications, information and notifications to one social security institution can be handed in to any branch office of other social security institutions. However, to ensure that the matter in question is dealt with as quickly as possible, we recommend contacting the relevant institution directly.



PROTECTION FOR AID ORGANISATIONS

Members and auxiliaries of the following aid organisations are covered:

- the Voluntary Fire Brigade
- the Voluntary Water-Weir Service
- Voluntary Ambulance Services
- the Austrian Red Cross
- the Austrian Mountain Rescue Service
- the Austrian Lifeguard Service
- The Austrian Rescue Dogs Brigade
- Avalanche Warning Commissions
- Air Rescue Service
- Radiation Detection and Measurement Groups

If an accident is associated in its location, timing or cause with training, practice or active duty of the listed aid organisations, then the accident is considered equivalent to an accident at work. Trips to and from these activities are also covered.

Voluntary helpers of the aid organisations or the professional Fire Brigade in active duty are also protected. In addition, people in active duty involved in organised ambulance services providing doctor's help in emergencies in Austria are covered if the ambulance service is not profit-oriented (e.g. Emergency Doctor Service) and no payment is received for the service.

The insurance coverage also applies to the above-mentioned activities in the case of an occupational disease.

The insurance coverage according to law is not subject to the payment of contributions, even when the person in-

involved is not covered by the social accident insurance scheme in any other activity.

Important:

Voluntary aid organisations can have their members included in an additional insurance arrangement.

The additional insurance arrangement gives a guaranteed minimum assessment basis which is one-and-a-half times the assessment basis for self-employed persons and is newly calculated every year. Furthermore, inclusion in additional insurance extends insurance coverage to the official tasks entrusted to these organisations by law.

The members of the organisations are covered by the additional insurance without paying contributions. The contributions are paid by the organisations and the State in equal proportions.



The "International Social Security Association" has over 300 member organisations from all over the world. This possibility to exchange ideas and experiences also improves safety at work.



"Rehabilitation International" works world-wide to improve the living conditions of disabled people. The accident insurance scheme in Austria works closely together with the 130 member organisations.