



LIDL , LESS PRESSURE FOR BETTER QUALITY

Report on workload and the implications for health and safety at work within Lidl Netherlands.

1. INTRODUCTION

Lidl Netherlands is doing well. At least when it comes to growth and turnover. The market share of Lidl Netherlands is growing in comparison to the competitors, the turnover has increased significantly. Lidl has become one of the largest discounters in the supermarket sector in the Netherlands. For that reason it has invested heavily in the construction of new distribution centers as the most energy-efficient DC in Heerenveen.

But this picture looks less colorful for the employees of Lidl. Indeed, despite several negotiation talks, there is still no new collective bargaining agreement. In addition, we from our own experience as Lidl employees know that there is much to improve in Lidl concerning working conditions. Last year a group of union activists, in cooperation with other Lidl employees, did research into the effects of high stacking and heavy lifting at Lidl. Our study entitled "Lidl, do not strain yourself to your success!" proved a structural work pressure that lead to high stacking and heavy lifting. It also showed that a high percentage of employees Lidl had ongoing severe physical and mental problems. This year we did another research on work pressure and its impact on health and safety at work within Lidl. We conducted a nationwide survey to identify the workload and its effects within Lidl better.

We present the results of our investigation in this brochure. As will be shown in the results, a large majority Lidl staff experiences workload as far too high, even compared to the national average of the working population in the Netherlands. Moreover, it is again clear that the high workload for a considerable number of Lidl employees, both from the distribution centers as the affiliates, has negative consequences for the physical and mental health.

For example, many employees say that at the end of a workday at Lidl they are 'run-down', feeling exhausted and as a result, have difficulty to relax and prefer to be left alone when they come home. This shows that the pressure inside Lidl also has negative consequences for our private life. Moreover, it appears that as many as 1/3 of respondents are left with physical symptoms after working at Lidl. It is also clear that a high percentage employees work unpaid in order to meet the high production standards imposed by Lidl.

The union activists group believes that it must end here! We believe that all Lidl employees have to work under conditions that guarantee our safety and health in the workplace and that are sustainable.

The working conditions should be such that we can enjoy our free time after work and we don't have to take our problems into our private sphere, to our families and friends. Moreover, we think that production standards must be realistic so Lidl employees do not feel forced to do unpaid work. In short, we want to lower the work pressure for better quality of work! The purpose of this brochure is therefore to call on the management of Lidl to commit themselves in order to reach a solution with regard to the heavy workload within Lidl and the negative health effects of Lidl employees. We refer readers to the end of this brochure where urgent improvements are recommended by us.

2. LIDL UNION ACTIVISTS GROUP: FROM EMPLOYEES FOR EMPLOYEES

This brochure is an initiative of the union activist group of FNV commerce. It's been five years since FNV has formed a group of Lidl activists. This is a group of Lidl employees who are also members of FNV. Meanwhile, the group has grown. Lidl activists group consists of 20 employees involved both shop stewards and employees of the distribution centers of Lidl. They worry about the affairs of Lidl and want to commit to improve the working conditions at Lidl. This means that, together with colleagues, trying to identify the problems within their company, thinking about how things can be improved and proposing solutions toward the management of Lidl. FNV trade has trained all activists in order to properly represent the interests of their colleagues.

The activists also function as a contact for colleagues who have questions or problems experienced at their work, collective agreements and rights that occur when working at Lidl. From our own experience we know that a lot of questions remain unanswered in the workplace.



Lidl Union Activists Group

It turns out, for various reasons, that it's sometimes difficult to directly discuss with the leadership of these questions. As each of us works in one of the stores or distribution centers, the questions for us are often recognizable. We love to hear your questions and suggestions and will try to work together with you to solve or implement them.

But for representation of the workers and to enforce solutions, it is necessary that as many of our colleagues join us and FNV. Together we are stronger and we can send a strong signal to our company on behalf of all employees. Many colleagues are already a union member, but it can always be better! In short, if you have questions about your work at Lidl and / or want to actively contribute to the improvement of working conditions in Lidl? Mail us on: Lidlkadergroep@gmail.com. Four times a year we publish a newsletter, which includes many useful tips and information for and from colleagues at Lidl.

3. LIDL ACTIVISTS GROUP 2010-2015

Within these five years we, as an activists group, undertook a lot of work. Some examples of the activities which we have been working on in recent years are:

- Visits to stores: we have visited several stores to increase our awareness and to talk with colleagues to find out what their experiences are and where they encounter. This was for us to take map out if there is a common issue which we can discuss with the employer.
- Council board-campaign: during the last elections for a new council board we conducted a nationwide campaign to get members of our group in the framework or. This was a success and got us 3 spots in the council board.
- We participate in sector-wide FNV consultation on how we can get the collective bargaining resumed.
- Offering of a petition, to the management of distribution centers in Heerenveen and Tiel, about respect and decent jobs. Followed by an agreement about the expulsion of packaging standards in distribution, enough protective clothing and equipment is present in the workplace, the significant improvement of all the technical facilities, etc.
- International solidarity: since five years, the activists group have intensive contacts with trade union colleagues from the supermarket sector in Chile. In Chile the employees have managed to organize themselves well and with that they've managed to get a lot of working improvements. During our solidarity project with the Chilean colleagues, we have learned much from each other when it comes to building union activists groups and addressing problems in the workplace such as high pressure, intimidation, lack of involvement of young people, etc.
- The report "Lidl, do not strain yourself to your success!". This report is a result of working with the method that we have learned from our colleagues in Chile. For three years the union activists group works with the method of "production mapping"; a way to map issues systematically. The current brochure is also a result of this method.
- The activists group has recently compared the Staff and Organization Manuals to the collective agreement and current law and found issues were redirected to Lidl HQ. As a result there have been changes in these manuals.
- Four times a year newsletters is send to members to inform them about current issues within Lidl, changes in legislation, collective agreements news and other relevant information.

4. LIDL ACTIVISTS GROUP GOES INTERNATIONAL!

In this brochure we present the results of our research on the problem of excessive workload within Lidl. The systematic mapping of production and identifying the harmful effects of activities in Lidl stores and distribution centers is a method that is taught in an international exchange with trade union colleagues from the supermarket sector in Chile, South America. For several years the Chilean unions workers, within the supermarket chain LIDER and its distribution center LTS, have been using the production mapping method. And they have achieved their impressive results when it comes to enforcing better working conditions!

For example, the trade union in the Chilean distribution center LTS is for more than 95% organized! This high degree of organization of the distribution workers have given them a strong voice in determining the workload and wages. Also this type of tracking helped the activists in the Chilean supermarkets to improve their working conditions. For instance, the cashiers mapped their earnings and successfully demanded a wage increase.

FNV activists traveled to Chile three times to Santiago de Chile to see how to do that in practice. They received a training in the production mapping method and got a close-up view on how strong the trade union organization was in the workplace. Also activists from Chile came to the Netherlands to explain their workplace organization.



The example of our trade union colleagues in the Chilean supermarket sector makes it clear that working conditions in our company can only change for the better if the employees working together and make a fist. We hope that more colleagues will join us to help us in improving the working conditions in Lidl! The international exchange has inspired the union activists group to systematically identify and map issues in the workplace together with colleagues. As a concrete result we present in this brochure which we recently mapped with regard to the workload.

5. LIDL GROUP IN THE BREACH OF LESS WORK PRESSURE

Last year the union activists group campaigned on workload. That campaign was specifically about how the excessive workload is reflected in the number of high and top heavily stacked pallets and boxes that needed to be dragged at Lidl. For one year the activist group inventoried, aided by colleagues in the DCs and stores, the consequences were brought by freight that was too high, too heavy and were employees had to stack too much over their heads. We also mapped how many pallets fell over due to high and top-heavy freight.

The collected material showed that because of the work pressure, freights were structurally stacked too high and that a high percentage of Lidl employees had serious physical and psychological symptoms. Based on our findings, we made a number of concrete recommendations for the management of Lidl to improve working conditions at this point. The campaign was a great success: the recommendations made under the activists group on the basis of the study were largely adopted by the Lidl management. We are very happy that Lidl started working with some of the recommendations from our research. This is a compliment to the employees and activists who have kept the situation systematically monitored.



LIDL: VERTIL JE NIET AAN JE SUCCES!

Rapport over de schadelijke gevolgen van te hoog, te zwaar en te lang stapelen en tillen binnen Lidl Nederland



Unfortunately some information came to our ear that the situation has not yet been changed for the better in all the distribution centers. For example the DC in Tiel had adopted the situation for the better. However, in other DCs, such as in Heerenveen, this problem persists. This is also in accordance with the signals we get from the stores. In different stores freights are stacked less high but there are still stores where the pallets are stacked too high and too heavy. We therefore call on the Lidl HQ to keep a close eye on this problem in all distribution centers and stores and to ensure that the new rules regarding pallet height and weight is consistently implemented. As we stated in the previous campaign brochure: we don't want that the successes of Lidl are at the expenses of the health of workers.

After presenting the report, there are visible improvements. Some improvements have been partially implemented and others completely. In practice you see that each region in how to deal with these changes. Below is a list of recommendations from our previous research and the changes proposed to the Lidl management. Once more we ask the Lidl management to adjust the new proposed regulations to the reality of their own employees as we have mapped.

Required staff improvements	New regulations
For DCs. a maximum pallet height of 1,80m	Partially pledged: Pallet Height are 1.75m + 1 box. Height adjustment is a positive development, provided that this one box is not larger than 5 cm and not heavier than 10 kilograms. Furthermore, the pallet height to the DCs should still be in negotiation with the suppliers.
Packages of 20kg heavier and not stack higher than 1.50m	Partially pledged: The upper layer of boxes of the pallets which move to the stores from the DCs have to be re-addressed at a maximum of 1.75m height of the pallet. These boxes will not exceed 10 kilos heavy. Our worries are what 'upper layer' precise content. As explained here, it is our recommendation for boxes up to 20 kilograms not exceeding 1,50m.
2nd electric pallet jack and additional hand pallet jacks	Pledged: Many stores have been given extra pallet jacks. However we were informed that the electric pump jack, in the context of efficiently, are not allowed in the stores during opening time. Logically, we would like to have electric pump jack which we CAN use during opening time.
Protective clothing of good quality and extra safety shoes	Pledged: There will be new raincoats and jackets. However, there are still challenges concerning safety shoes. Which are of poor quality and good sizes are not provided everywhere.

End to pressure and intimidation from executives	Pledged: The management has promised to look into this matter.
Normal filling time per pallet	Pledged: It was agreed that no packaging norm shall be accepted! The management has indicated that employee must be able to stack freights in "practical time". However, it came to our notice that this regulation has not been applied to temporary workers and Polish workers: they still get packaging norms imposed. This can not be right!
Good information provision on rules concerning lifting and stacking.	Pledged: There are now new courses given to anyone about ergonomic stacking and lifting.
Compliance with these rules and supervision of the executives in DCs and stores.	Pledged: The management has indicated it once again to the attention of management.
Deployment of additional personnel at times when it is needed.	Partially pledged: In the context of efficiency there will be extra employees in the morning and the evening to fill up the stores. However, these employees consist mainly of youths from 16 to 17 years who are scheduled for 2 to 4 hours, which still could conflict with the Law on Working Hours if not is taken into account the school schedules and rest periods for young people.
More rotation of duties.	Pledged: It was discussed that there is little room for rotation in duties, but where it is possible this will be implemented.
Free admission for the union and the union activists group within DCs and stores to map the above problems.	Pledged: It has been promised that the union and activists group has free access in stores and distribution centers. Executives should not be judged by the work they do for the activists group.

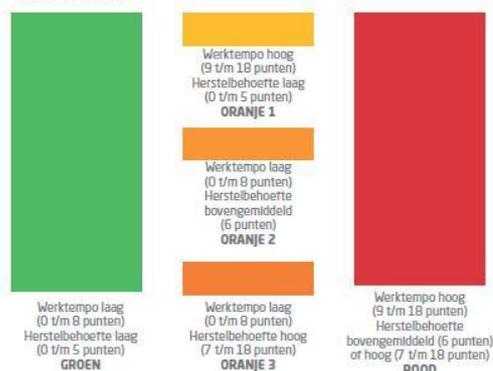
6. PRESSURE RESEARCH RESULTS 2015: HIGH PRESSURE AND UNPAID WORK.

High pressure and its consequences

To measure the workload among Lidl employees in 2015, the activists of Lidl have conducted a survey among their colleagues. During 4 months in 2014 and 2015 they conducted a survey on a total of 304 people. Which included both shop stewards, store managers, assistant managers and distribution staff. The survey gives insight into the consequences of the production standards of Lidl for the employees in the work rate and the amount of work, and the consequences for the physical and mental health of employees. The survey provides suggestions of Lidl employees to solve the problems with pressure at Lidl.

Kun je aangeven welke gevolgen de productiviteits-eisen van Lidl voor jou hebben? Stress
 Lichamelijk klachten
 Verplicht tot (onbetaald) overwerk
 Slechtere werksfeer
 Ontevreden klanten
 Niet thuis met gezin kunnen eten
 Anders, namelijk ...

Testresultaat



The results show firstly that both the pace and the pressure inside Lidl are experienced as hard and difficult, especially compared to the national average*: 16% of surveyed Lidl employees say they have problems with the pace of work. That is nearly 4 times the national average (4.3%)! 26.5% of the respondents indicated problems with the workload, which is over three times the national average (8.2%)! The high pressure is further evident by the fact that 64.7% of those who completed the survey, find that they have to do too much work. Also, the national average is high (50.8%), which is already alarming in itself, but at Lidl this is another 14% higher! Furthermore, almost 50% have to work extra hard to finish something and 42% of Lidl employees say they have to rush at work. These levels are significantly above the national average, with 34.3% and 29.0% respectively.

Work pace and amount of work

Asked Questions	Lidl employees	National average
Has problems with the work rate	16%	4,3%
Has problems with the workload	26,5%	8,2%
Has to do too much work	64,7%	50,8%
Must work extra hard to get something off	48,9%	34,3%
Must hasten	42,5%	29%

Although the pace of work and the workload on the whole is much too high, there are also differences per function within Lidl. Of the 4 researched functions (shop steward, DC employee, assistant manager and manager), the assistant branch managers have the most sense they have to do too much work, to have to work extra hard to finish something and to have to constantly feeling of haste. However, as regards to the overall pace of work and the workload it is mainly the DC staff indicating that this is much too high. The messages we get, are mainly about Polish workers in the DCs. And that there are still packaging norms, and this could explain these high rates.

Work pace and amount of work

Asked Questions	Shop stewards	DC Staff	Assistant manager	Manager
Has much work to do	63,2%	58,8%	76,9%	55,5%
Must work extra hard to get something off	46,5%	52,9%	62,7%	50,0%
Has the sense to rush	40,7%	52,9%	51,9%	50,0%
Has problems with the work rate	16,3%	52,9%	15,1%	16,7%
Has problems with the workload	27,3%	64,7%	24,5%	27,8%

This high pressure translates itself in the fact that a large number of employees take the consequences of hard work into their home situation. "In other words, Lidl employees indicate that there is little recovery time of the working pressure after they leave the shop or DC. Also, the percentages are much higher than those of average working class in the Netherlands. 39% of the employees mention that at the end of the day they are 'knackered' while "only" 16.8% of the national average mention it. 28% of Lidl employees feel they are rather exhausted at the end of the workday, against 13.4% nationwide. The percentage of Lidl employees that has little interest in others thru fatigue is almost twice as high as the national average: 16.2% in Lidl and 8.5% nationwide. The numbers of employees who say they have a hard time to relax, have difficulty concentrating and prefer to be left alone when they come home are all higher than the national average, with 19.1% against 11%, 10.8 against 7.2% and 17.7% against 11.8%, respectively. These figures therefore show that the workload not only has consequences for the work experiences in the workplace, but also influences the private sphere of many Lidl employee!

* The results of the FNV Quick Test Workload compared with the general population of Benchmark research SKB. This benchmark includes data from more than 100,000 employees in the period 2009 to / m 2013 (www.skb.nl).

Recovery after Work

Asked Questions	Lidl employees	National average
At the end of the day really knackered	34.4%	16.8%
Feel quite exhausted at the end of their shift	27.8%	13.4%
Has very little interest in others coming home from work	16.2%	8.5%
Can at the end of the day hard to relax	19.1%	11.0%
Has trouble concentrating in free time after work	10,8%	7.2%
Must be left alone after coming home from work	17.7%	11.8%

In addition to the consequences as regards recovery after work, the heavy workload within Lidl also shows a large number of employees to have negative physical effects. In our report last year we gave an indication of the physical consequences of too high, too heavy and too long stacking and lifting within Lidl. When we indicated that our research showed that about 16% of the employees surveyed affiliates physical complaints by lifting and stacking. We also indicated that this percentage would probably be much higher in a larger sample. This assumption proves correct: in this study, which is held under much more employees, shows that almost a third of the employees physical symptoms left over from working within Lidl: approximately 33.3%! A comparison of the various features shows that experienced by all groups surveyed the DC staff here is by far the most physical symptoms: a whopping 66% of respondents said they got physical complaints from working within a DC! After these respondents, the shop stewards have the most trouble with physical complaints by work: 39.3% followed by assistant managers and managers. These differences may naturally explained by the different activities associated with the various functions, and where the DC staff and store employees often do heavier physical labor by stacking, lifting and dragging boxes commensurate with the (assistant) managers.

Physical complaints from work

Asked Questions	Shop stewards	DC Staff	Assistant managers	Managers
Physical complaints by work	39,3%	66%	23,1%	16,7%

The results above regarding physical symptoms related to working within Lidl makes clear that the conclusion of our investigation last year unfortunately remains true: the gains made at Lidl Netherlands still at the expense of physical and mental health a large portion of the employees!

Unpaid work

Besides the negative psychological and physical consequences, the survey indicates a significant negative consequence of the heavy workload within Lidl: the phenomenon of unpaid overtime. Our survey shows that many employees keep working after clocking to maintain the high productivity that is demanded from the Lidl management. 23% of the total number surveyed said they consciously clock to continue work unpaid. One-third of surveyed employees does this every day and half of Lidl employees do this every week. More than half of the staff operates an hour or longer unpaid. The reasons given for this is "to finish work" (approximately 78.2%) and is also indicated by 63.6% that they work unpaid to maintain their productivity. Our investigation has revealed that the earnings of Lidl is achieved by the unpaid work of the staff!

The unpaid work within Lidl varies by function. Especially the branch managers seem to work structurally unpaid hours for Lidl: no less than 68% of branch managers who completed the survey, clocks sometimes to consciously work unpaid and three quarters of them work for an hour or longer after they clock. This occurs on a regular basis: 36.8% do so daily, 47.7% do so weekly and 15.4% work a few hours each month for free. The second major group doing unpaid work, the assistant branch managers, with 32.4% of the respondents. Of the surveyed shop stewards clocked 9.7% to consciously work unpaid and under the DC workers who indicated there was no one to clock and then worked further.

Overclocked to consciously work	Percentage
All respondents Lidl employees	23%
Store employees	9,7%
Assistant branch managers	32,3%
Branch managers	67,7%

Besides the survey, several activists have explained what work pressure means to them and what's causing this. An assistant branch manager gave example of constantly being called back and forth. Employees of the distribution center told that there are too few people so you have to solve a lot of things by yourself. DC staff gets called to other departments and when they return to their own department, there has been created a lot of work pressure in their absence. Schedules are often tight, and if for some reason someone renounces, there is a lot more pressure on their colleagues. Also in the stores, employees are asked to do several things at once. This creates pressure and a hectic atmosphere among colleagues.

7. UNION ACTIVISTS GROUP COOPERATES WITH THE OCCUPATIONAL DISEASES OFFICE OF FNV

Long exposure to excessive pressure can lead to overstrain and burnout. You feel tired, tense, irritable, emotionally unstable, sometimes you have trouble focusing and often sleep poorly. If symptoms of overstrain are severe and last long, we speak of a burnout. If burnout is predominantly caused by the work that can be classified as an occupational disease. High pressure can also lead to physical symptoms, as also illustrates the research at Lidl. Also those complaints, as they predominantly caused by work, be classified as an occupational disease. If you think you have an occupational disease by pressure can sign up at Occupational diseases Office of FNV.

Occupational diseases Office of FNV supports members of the FNV to the financial damage caused by recounting an occupational disease, the employer or his insurer. These may include loss of income due to prolonged illness, which people enter the WIA. Think you have an occupational disease or want more information? You can always contact the Occupational diseases Office of FNV.: fnv.nl/beroepsziekten, E-mail: info@bbz.fnv.nl , T: **020-5816692**.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

During our campaign, "Lidl, do not strain yourself to your success" the union activists group focussed all the attention on the problem concerning an excessive workload within Lidl Netherlands. Specifically, when we mapped how an excessive workload leads to stacking too high, too heavy and lifting too long within Lidl. We also signaled various negative psychological and physical consequences of this excessive workload. The Lidl management has now implemented some of our recommendations from that investigation. With this course, we are very satisfied. However, it could be better! Not all of our improvements have been made. This is urgent to create a company where the employees have safe, healthy and sustainable work. The urgency of making improvements with regard to safe and healthy working within Lidl Netherlands shows once again from this survey with work pressure as the main theme.

The results we have presented in this brochure show that the workload within Lidl is very high. The number of employees which has problems with the pace of work within Lidl is as much as almost 4 times as high compared to the national average. The Lidl employees have more than three times as much problems with the workload compared with the national average. Also, our data indicate that these high workload has several negative consequences, both at work and in the private sphere of Lidl employees. For example, many employees said that at the end of a workday at Lidl they are 'knackered', feeling exhausted and as a result, have difficulties to relax and prefer to be left alone when they come home. Moreover, it appears that as many as 1/3 of respondents get physical symptoms over working within Lidl! Finally it becomes clear that a high percentage of Lidl employees work unpaid in order to meet the high production standards imposed by Lidl. The union activist group feels that these issues related to the workload within Lidl must come to an end: we want lower pressure for better quality!

We therefore call on Lidl to make the following changes:

- There should be consultation with the managers about the most healthy and sustainable productivity for his / her shop. This research should also take into account the average amount spent by the customer and branch-specific issues such as whether or not a bake-off department. In order to find a solution to the high pressure inside Lidl we must search for the options to utilize the store optimally instead of imposing a standard formula for all stores.
- Our research shows that the workload is structurally too high because productivity is set too high. Productivity must therefore be held structurally lower in order to reduce the workload at shop level.
- There should be more people employed in the workplace to reduce the workload individually.
- Some costs must be set out of productivity: hours of training, inventorying and the hours of managers, so that more people can be scheduled. These people are not present in the workplace but by counting them they do press the productivity.
- There should be an end to unpaid working out of clock all employees. To achieve this, more people should be scheduled in order to reduce the workload of managers and assistant managers.
- To decrease the workload there should be a better monitoring of existing legislation indicating that workers at the vegetable department and bakery department shouldn't also help out at checkout.
- Rosters must be made in consultation with employees and at least 3 weeks in advance to be hung in the cafeteria.
- There should be a clear procedure when there are fewer people at work than scheduled; where responsibility is not to be borne by the employees but primarily rests with management.
- There must be solutions to specific problems, such as improved cash chairs to avoid back injuries.
- DC and shops should be encouraged to work more closely with each other, rather than compete against each other.
- There should be better communication between different departments in the DCs to streamline the logistics process, thus reducing the workload.
- Give employees more prospects by offering them permanent jobs instead of offering them a maximum temporary contracts without perspective. This also reduces the workload, because you do not have to train new people every time.



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