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www.ioha.net
IOHA: overview and past and future activities

Dr Jimmy L. Perkins, professor (retired) of environmental health sciences at University of Texas School of Public Health describes the structure and membership of IOHA, and outlines past achievements, and future activities.

The IOHA was formed in 1987. It is an association of national occupational hygiene organisations or societies and currently there are 34 members representing 31 countries. The US, Japan and Colombia have two member organisations. Together these organisations represent more than 20,000 occupational hygienists around the world.

The map indicates the countries where member organisations exist. While North America is currently completely represented with the fairly recent addition of Mexico, South America has only recently been represented by Colombia and Argentina and, for a longer period, Brazil. There are also active national organisations in Chile and Venezuela. We are hopeful that they too will soon join IOHA. The largest regions of the world unrepresented by IOHA are Asia and Africa. We have had discussions with India and Nigeria, as there are very active organisations either in existence or beginning to formulate in those countries.

IOHA structure

Each of the 34 national organisations has appointed a member to the IOHA Board. Twice a year this board has face-to-face meetings. Of course, not every board member can attend every meeting due to travel costs. Even so, a typical board meeting will have 10 to 20 representatives. Furthermore, board members can participate in the IOHA activities through the various committees that are discussed later.

The day-to-day operations of IOHA are administered by the British Occupational Hygiene Society, under contract with IOHA. Key staff support is provided by Roz Phillips who is the IOHA executive secretary. She is largely directed by the IOHA executive committee, which consists of the President-Elect, the President, the Past-President, and the Secretary-Treasurer. In addition, certain committee chairs may attend Executive meetings to provide updates on committee activities. The Executive committee meets every 4 to 6 weeks via conference call.

Committee structures and the strategic plan

At the beginning of 2016, IOHA implemented a new strategic plan, which included a new vision and mission.

IOHA’s vision is:

A safe and healthy working environment for all

and its mission is:

To enhance the international network of occupational hygiene associations that promotes, develops and improves occupational hygiene worldwide, providing a safe and healthy working environment for all.

We recognise that this mission and vision are very wide. Moreover we recognise that any job is more difficult when a variety of societies, cultures and languages are involved in mutual tasks. Therefore we have set five IOHA Principles:

Strong network... protecting worker health is a seemingly unachievable and overwhelming task that requires individuals to be part of a worldwide network that, if constructed and used effectively, allows the whole network to be greater than the sum of its individuals. IOHA must be the leader in developing this network.

Visible... we must constantly work to assure that the vast quantity of occupational health (OH) knowledge is available to all of the world, not just the countries or organisations from which it originates. This will make IOHA visible as the world's clearing house for OH knowledge.
Resourceful... to be visible we must leverage our limited resources so as to maximise our output. This means that we value human capital.

Tactfully tactical... we are an international organisation and therefore must accomplish our objectives through tact. We are diplomatic, considerate, sensitive, understanding, thoughtful, judicious, and perceptive relative to cultures and social norms. Having limited resources, we must use effective tactics that leverage our human resources (members and individuals) with careful consideration of efficiencies to complete our objectives.

Influential... we aspire to be influential; to be so means that we have created highly visible results through a strong network that optimally utilises resources and respects the cultures and social norms of its members.

This strategic plan has four major goals as follows:
1. Promote occupational hygiene
2. Improve occupational hygiene capabilities and practice
3. Effective networking and knowledge management
4. Robust governance

In the next newsletter we’ll provide more details on these goals.

Round-up from IOHA’s November board meeting

Industrial hygiene campaign to be launched
The American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) is planning to launch a public awareness campaign next year entitled ‘I AM IH’ – to promote the importance of industrial hygiene (or occupational hygiene).

This is a member campaign, which will be publicised at the AIHA conference in Seattle in June.

The AIHA will be looking for stories and videos from around the world relating to industrial hygiene from member associations such as IOHA.

More details on how to get involved will be published in the next issue of the newsletter.

New IOHA President announced
The new President of the IOHA is Dr Doo Yong Park from South Korea KIHA, who has taken over the presidency from Dr Karen Niven. The new President-elect is Ms Andrea Hiddinga from the Dutch Association NVvA.

The announcement was made at the recent IOHA AGM and board meeting, held at the International Society for Respiratory Protection (ISRP) conference in Yokohama, Japan.

The meeting began with a formal welcome from Dr Haruhiko Sakurai, President of JAWE (Japan Association for Working Environment Measurement) and emeritus professor of Keio University.

As IOHA President, Dr Karen Niven formally responded and expressed appreciation for the kind invitation to hold the Board meeting in Japan and the warm welcome they had received. The IOHA also expressed its thanks to Dr Shigeru Asuka, executive director of JAWE, who had managed the logistics and made the meeting run smoothly.

The meeting also discussed revamping some of the committees and refreshing the membership. Roles and responsibilities have been reviewed, as well as the structure of the committees.

Potential new members of the IOHA include India, which seems very positive about joining the organisation. Discussions are also in the pipeline with Nigeria and Thailand as well as Venezuela, Chile and Peru.

The ISRP conference focused on encouraging improvements in the safety and comfort of respiratory protection, with the aim of achieving wider use and acceptance of respiratory protection. The overall aim is to reduce exposure, so fewer people become ill from exposure via inhalation.

The next board meeting will be hosted by the American Industrial Hygiene Association in Seattle in June.

Hosting conference sessions
The IOHA is currently in discussions with the International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) about holding themed sessions at each other's conferences. The next ICOH congress is due to be held in 2018, in Ireland and the IOHA will be holding its next conference in Washington in the autumn of 2018.

The sessions would focus on joint campaigns around carcinogens and non-communicable diseases, such as silicosis and asbestosis.

Immediate Past-President, Karen Niven says: “We are having a great dialogue exploring how we might do that so we are hoping this could be a very successful collaboration.”

New relationship with the WHO
The IOHA has renewed its application for NGO status with the World Health Organization – 18 years after it was first granted.

The submission is currently being evaluated and it is hoped that the application will be approved by the end of the year.

The IOHA is planning to deliver training courses as a WHO product on non-communicable diseases, such as silicosis and asbestosis, over the next two years.

More details will be available in the next issue of the newsletter.

National accreditation scheme
Three new associations have gained approval for their certification schemes – in Australia, Italy and Norway – following a review of the schemes by the National Accreditation and Recognition Scheme.

IOHA Newsletter
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AHRA’s entry to the International Association has also been a very important step for Argentina. We are grateful for the staunch collaboration from IOHA staff at the beginning of 2016, having decided to start the certification process of our professionals through the Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA) for 2017.

These achievements have now been strengthened as Argentina will become the headquarters of the Seventh Pan-American Congress of Occupational Hygiene in 2018.

There is much to be done in Argentina and we are hoping for a generational change to transform our plans into reality. Our prevention system has historically only moved forwards where it has been economically profitable, so we aware that the obstacles to preventing professional illnesses are political and economic, rather than technical, scientific or medical.

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and upgraded to be able to provide professional services for ensuring better workers’ health protection in Indonesia, and eventually it is hoped that they will contribute to improving human resources. Essentially, the workers’ community helps to create a better future generation for our nation. Therefore, the need for a professional association is vital for providing IH practitioners with a place to grow and achieve the required competencies.

The Indonesian Industrial Hygiene Association (IIHA) is a non-governmental organisation (NGO), which was established on 12 January, 2016. IIHA has become a member of IOHA and the Asian Network of Occupational Hygiene (ANOH), and currently has about 360 members who come from various industries throughout Indonesia. IIHA strategic goals for 2016–2019 include:

- increase industrial hygiene awareness among stakeholders i.e. government, industries, workforce and community;
- improve competencies; and
- enhance networking and collaboration to extend IIHA influence.

Networking and collaboration with international associations including IOHA is a key goal for IIHA in achieving the strategic goals.

We aim to work closely with IOHA and its members to support each other. IIHA is keen to use the benefits of being an IOHA member to get access to best practice and update information on research, scientific studies, technologies, regulations and standards, lessons learned and training. IIHA is also happy to collaborate with IOHA and its members on those aspects. This will provide opportunities for IIHA and its members to contribute to workers’ health protection not only in the local community, but also in the wider international community.

**Disclaimer**

While great care has been taken with the compilation of this newsletter, IOHA, its Directors, the editor and the authors of articles accept no responsibility for opinions, errors and omissions that may be made in this Newsletter. The responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles rests solely with their authors and does not constitute an endorsement by the IOHA.

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**Upcoming meetings**

**BOHS - OH2017**
25-27 April 2017, Harrogate International Centre, UK
Occupational Hygiene 2017 is the leading international conference in the field of worker health protection in the UK, focusing on occupational hygiene and the prevention of occupational ill-health and disease. Registration starts in December 2016.


**The American Industrial Hygiene Conference and Expo (AIHce)**
4-7 June 2017, Seattle, Washington
Registration opens on 5 December for the AIHAs annual conference - now in its 77th year. The meeting focuses on the important trends, needs, and research that impact worker health. Industry suppliers have joined in this yearly experience, adding new technologies, training, and connections that make IH/OH professionals more efficient in their pursuit of protecting worker health.

Every year, the American Industrial Hygiene Conference and Expo (AIHce) is the premiere destination for thousands of IH/OH professionals, including industrial hygienists, EHS specialists, safety, and risk management professionals, all of whom are responsible for the safety, health, and environment of today’s workplaces.

**Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists - AIOH2016**
3-7 December 2016, Gold Coast, Queensland
The 34th Annual Conference & Exhibition will be held at the RACV Royal Pines Resort on the Gold Coast in Queensland. For further information, please visit [https://aioh.cvent.com/AIOH2016C](https://aioh.cvent.com/AIOH2016C).

And looking ahead, AIOH2017 will be held at the National Convention Centre in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory between 9-13 December 2017.

**International Congress on Occupational Health - ICOH 2018**
Dublin has won its bid to host ICOH 2018. The congress is a global occupational health event, held every three years, that attracts over 2,000 professionals. The 2018 Congress will be held in the Convention Centre Dublin. The OHSI will be working alongside the Facility of Occupational Medicine to prepare for the prestigious event.

Visit our website for an up to date list of events: [www.ioha.net/ioha-events](http://www.ioha.net/ioha-events)
‘Caring for our wellbeing’ was the theme of the Southern African Institute for Occupational Hygiene (SAIOH) Annual Conference, which ran from 26 to 28 October 2016.

Claudina Nogueira, SAIOH council member, reports that the conference was attended by approximately 160 delegates, and there were 37 oral and poster presentations delivered as part of the scientific programme, which included several keynote addresses. Richard Spoor, of attorney Richard Spoor Inc, gave a keynote presentation on the impact and ramifications of a Constitutional Court judgment on whether the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA) extinguishes the common law right of mine workers to recover damages from their employers, when they have a claim under the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act (ODMWA).

This was delivered with a brief survey of the silicosis class action litigation, its implications and direction; the response from industry and the State; and Mr Spoor's proposal for a better way forward in terms of the protection of mine workers’ health and safety and compensation.

The second keynote presentation on biological agents was given by Dr Tanusha Singh from the South African National Institute for Occupational Health (NIOH), who emphasised that good occupational health practice needs to be an integral part of infection control, aligned to relevant legislative requirements.

The third keynote presentation, from Dr Caradee Wright of the South African Medical Research Council, dealt with solar UV radiation-induced skin cancer as an occupational disease. Presentations were also given on dermal exposure and the South African Department of Labour (DoL), as a collaborator and contributor to the SAIOH Conference. The DoL presentations covered the following topics:

- criteria for the registration of occupational health service providers by the DoL;
- a case study on the benefits of engineering controls;
- in-house ergonomics programmes and case studies;
- occupational hygiene stressors in diving activities; and
- proper control of exposures to chemical agents.

Dr André van Jaarsveld of BSS Africa gave the fourth keynote, entitled “The implementation and management of an effective fatigue management strategy in the workplace”.

Two pre-conference professional development courses (PDCs) were offered:

- fundamentals in whole-body vibration assessment and evaluation; and
- biological risk management.

The meeting also included a presentation session from representatives of SAIOH and its sister organisations, the South African Society of Occupational Medicine (SASOM) and the South African Society of Occupational Health Nursing Practitioners (SASOHN). This centred on closer collaboration between the three anchors of occupational health service provision – occupational medicine, occupational health nursing and occupational hygiene. The newly established Occupational Hygiene Approved Inspection Authorities Association was formally introduced to SAIOH conference delegates in the same session.

The final session included the topic chemical and physical stressors.

This year’s conference included a number of accolades, including an award for best student poster presentation for Marelé Keyter, from North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus) for her research topic “Particle size and metal composition of gouging and lancing fumes”. Mr Renier Nortjé, from the same university, won the award for best student oral presentation for his research topic “Characterisation of nickel in platinum refining process dust”. Top achiever awards went to:

- Thato Nau (community service work at the Free State Department of Health during 2015) in the category occupational hygiene assistant;
- Miriska Gerber (Douglas Manufacturing Ltd, Auckland, New Zealand) in the category occupational hygiene technologist; and
- Zoe Selenati-Dreyer (Anglo American) in the category occupational hygienist

Malaysia Industrial Hygiene Association - MIHA ICE 2016

The Malaysian Industrial Hygiene Association (MIHA) had its first International Conference and Exhibition, MIHA ICE 2016, from 18-20 October.

The theme of the conference, Managing OSH through Challenging Times, was chosen for industrial hygienists to leverage other OSH professionals to strengthen industrial hygiene implementation in this challenging business environment.

With 17 committees and 12 volunteers, the three-day event successfully gathered about 200 delegates from different parts of the world.
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MIHA ICE 2016 kick-started with a day of professional development courses delivered by highly experienced IH experts such as Philip Hibbs, Dr Perry W Logan, Dr Jalaluddin Dahalan, Wan Sabrina Wan Mohamad and Norhashima Mydin, followed by two days of conference where participants and invited speakers shared their knowledge and recent new findings in the world of industrial hygiene. Twenty one technical papers and 11 posters were presented during the conference and there were 12 exhibitors of various products and service providers.

Another highlight of MIHA ICE 2016 was the inaugural Industrial Hygiene International Students’ Symposium.

Fifty nine students took part in this, coming from nine universities in Malaysia and South Korea. This was the first gathering of IH students in the region and succeeded in highlighting the importance of the younger generation in the future of workers’ health and safety.

We had top academician, Professor Doo Yong Park of Hansung University, to speak at the symposium, to harvest the spirit and enthusiasm of the students in their field of studies. Five students presented their papers to share their research findings and to discuss the opportunities to enhance their research study.

Overall, it was a major success for the first ever IH International Students’ Symposium.

With the great success of the first MIHA ICE 2016, MIHA are going to host the next MIHA ICE 2018 with another series of professional development courses, more paper presentations and the next International Students’ Symposium.

Norwegian Occupational Hygiene Association - Annual Conference

At the end of October, the Norwegian Occupational Hygiene Association held its annual conference in Bergen, with more than 130 participants taking part.

The conference was opened on 31 October by the chair of the local conference committee after which there were two days of professional development courses (PDCs). The first day focused on statistics for occupational hygienists, and the next on whole body and hand-arm vibration.

The conference’s main theme was communication of risks in the work environment for the individual employee, the management, the protection unit and the media.

A range of experienced lecturers gave the attendees good advice on how to communicate risks to different audiences.

There were special sessions devoted to the perception of health risks based on odours and the mechanisms behind odour-triggered illnesses, experiences with the use of proactive key performance indicators (PKPI) at workplaces and what is needed for the work environment to be profitable.

After this afternoon session, the association held its AGM.

On the last day of the conference a presentation was given by physician, professor and author Ingvard Wilhelmsen entitled “Sick of concern? What is dangerous?”. This lecture was highly relevant to understanding how to communicate our results.

Norwegian Occupational Hygienist of the Year – 2016: Randi Hag

The Norwegian Occupational Hygienist of the Year 2016 is Randi Hag, who was presented with her award by the president of the Association during the conference dinner.

This award is given by the board of the Norwegian Occupational Hygiene Association to a person who has contributed something special to the profession in Norway.

President of the association, Lise-Mette Bekkengen praised Ms Hag for being “a fearless person who is not afraid to have contact with the media or others to promote our profession. This is illustrated by the fact the person was observed on national television talking about the improper use of protective equipment”.

Ms Hag has had a long and varied experience as an occupational hygienist. She was a chemical engineer at first, then became a civil engineer in organic chemistry, and then a certified occupational hygienist at the end of the 1990s.

She has worked in the office of Labour Inspection, as deputy head and head of analysis of organic compounds at the Labour Inspectorate Regional Laboratory in Bergen, has been employed by numerous occupational health services, worked in NUTEC, and has been contracted to various oil companies operating in Norway.

After that, she worked at the county hospital in Bergen, with a special focus on indoor climate and exposure to anaesthetic gases.

Most recently, Ms Hag has worked as an occupational hygienist in an occupational medical department conducting assessments of patient exposure, and establishing better tests for detecting skin allergy.

The president also highlighted her engagement in voluntary work, having worked for many years as a volunteer in Bergen. She added: “Of most importance for her is always protection of workers’ health.”
The International Labour Organization (ILO) is increasing collaboration and coordination activities as part of a flagship programme aimed at achieving sustainable progress in occupational safety and health. Judith Chamberlain, risk management assistant editor for Chemical Risk Manager, reports.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) believes better occupational safety and health is now a critical need, particularly in low and lower-middle income countries. The UN agency says the demand for improvement is being driven by governments, employers, workers and communities, as well as a huge range of organisations from development banks, private and public investors, through to multinational corporations sourcing through global supply chains and civil society.

Occupational safety and health (OSH) has been a priority of the ILO since it was established almost a hundred years ago. Recent tragic events, such as the collapse of the factory at Rana Plaza in Bangladesh, have resulted in the redoubling of its efforts to improve standards across the globe.

Similarly commitments to improve OSH have been made by the European Commission in its Strategic Framework (2014-2020), by the G20 in ministerial declarations in Melbourne, Ankara and Beijing (2014, 2015 & 2016) and by the G7 in its Berlin Ministerial Declaration (2015). The promotion of safe and secure working environments for all workers is also firmly embedded in the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

Global action for prevention

This growing drumbeat for action has led the ILO to develop and launch OSH – Global Action for Prevention. With a simple vision – the programme aims to create a global culture of prevention and achieve real reductions in the incidence of work-related deaths, injuries and diseases.

To achieve this the ILO will work to deliver innovative and integrated actions supported by the active engagement of strategic partners. These actions will work to create and sustain the necessary conditions to improve occupational safety and health in countries that have requested the ILO’s assistance.

The breadth and depth of occupational safety and health requires a comprehensive approach, so the flagship programme has developed an intervention framework...

Chief of the Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Safety and Health Branch at the ILO, Nancy Leppink says: “The breadth and depth of occupational safety and health requires a comprehensive approach, so the flagship programme has developed an intervention framework based on an understanding of what conditions are necessary in a country to improve and sustain OSH. When a country wants to work to improve OSH in its workplaces, an assessment of these conditions and opportunities to improve them is needed to determine how improvements in OSH can be achieved and how various parties can play a role.”

The necessary conditions are:

- legal, regulatory and adjudicative frameworks that address and integrate OSH, including relevant laws and technical regulations;
- systems for enforcement and compliance with occupational health and safety in workplaces, including public, private and non-governmental systems that are independent or coordinated;
- employer and worker capabilities and capacities at global, national and enterprise levels;
- social dialogue that supports OSH;
- financial resources for investment;
- occupational health services;
- employment injury insurance programmes that support prevention;
• professionals, institutions and networks; and
• indicators and innovative methodologies for data collection.

The global programme’s areas of particular focus will include improving occupational safety and health in small and medium-sized enterprises, encompassing both formal and informal enterprises and workers. In addition, it will focus in particular on the construction and agriculture sectors and workers working under conditions that make them more vulnerable, initially focusing on young workers aged 16-24.

**IOHA's role in the programme**

Because of the breadth and scope of the global action programme, in addition to the expertise and experience of the ILO, there is a need to draw on organisations like IOHA to help assess the necessary conditions in countries, and to help develop interventions based on that assessment. The ILO view such groups as a source of significant expertise, experience and resources, such as training and tools, but often they do not have resources and infrastructure to put them to use. Consequently these strategic partnerships will work to the benefit of both the ILO and the flagship strategic partner organisations.

Ms Leppink says: “As strategic partners, organisations will not only assist the ILO, but will also have the opportunity to collaborate and learn from each other as the projects are developed and implemented.”

As strategic partners, organisations will not only assist the ILO, but will also have the opportunity to collaborate and learn from each other as the projects are developed and implemented.

The ILO and IOHA have a longstanding relationship. The IOHA is included in the ILO’s Special List of NGOs. To be on the list, the aims of an organisation need to be in harmony with the spirit, aims and principles of the ILO Constitution and the Declaration of Philadelphia. The main criteria for admission to the list are the length of the organisation’s existence, membership, geographical coverage, its practical achievements and the international nature of its activities. A further requirement is that the organisation has an evident interest in at least one of the fields of activity of the ILO.

Ms Leppink says: “IOHA is great on the ground – there is a critical need in many countries to develop professionals who can work to improve OSH in workplaces. Occupational hygienists are exactly the kind of OSH professionals that many countries need. So enlisting IOHA experience, expertise, and resources as a strategic partner can provide significant support to projects with the objective of developing OSH professionals in a country.”

She adds: “We were pleased to see there was an immediate interest of donors to engage in an ILO global OSH programme.”

So far the programme has made progress on a number of fronts:
• currently a US-funded project is working on many aspects of the flagship, such as awareness raising and training of young workers on OSH;
• a project funded by the EU is supporting research on OSH in global supply chains focusing on agriculture, which will be used to inform and develop intervention strategies;
• South Korea is funding a project that will support the development and increase the capacity of networks of OSH institutions, agencies and organisations; and
• The Disney Foundation is supporting a project that will develop OSH awareness raising strategies for young workers and entrepreneurs.

And for the immediate future, the ILO is hoping to start making progress on building its strategic partner relationships. “While working on these cornerstone projects, we are now at the stage of implementing the operational phase of the intervention framework for the programme and in the next six months we hope to have identified and engaged strategic partners and begun developing assessment protocols and assessment tools for each necessary condition.”

As Ms Leppink says the ILO hopes the programme can bring about significant international change through combining everyone’s efforts. “A key priority of the flagship programme is to create the means for concerted action to improve OSH, bringing together strategic partners in order to have the greatest impact on improving worker health and safety.”
Award-winning project improves textile workers conditions in Vietnam

Tackling the lack of knowledge and poor conditions for workers in the shoe and fabric manufacturing industries in Vietnam is the aim of a groundbreaking project being led by a team of industrial hygienists. Judith Chamberlain, risk management assistant editor for Chemical Risk Manager, finds out more.

Vietnam has one of the fastest growing clothing and footwear industries, supplying products to brands around the world. According to the country's Textile and Garment Association output is growing around 13% a year, and the sector is expected to employ three million people in 2020, when exports are expected to be worth $25 billion.

However, knowledge of occupational safety, especially relating to exposure to some of the hazardous substances used in apparel production, is low.

Through a foreign exchange programme, the Dutch Occupational Hygiene Society (NVvA) has supported a project to visit factories in the country to map what support is needed.

The project is run by André Winkes, an industrial hygienist and safety engineer with consultancy Arbo Unie, along with two others Koen Verbist and Hester Dekker. The work has been done in conjunction with the Fair Wear Foundation (FWF), an independent, non-profit organisation that works to improve conditions for workers in garment factories. FWF is active in 11 production countries in Asia, Africa and Eastern Europe. Mr Winkes was awarded a grant from NVvA, which supports one project involved in improving working conditions in developing countries each year. He says: “This was our second time of applying so we were really pleased to get it.”

The project involves working with the Dutch government and the textile companies who sell to the Netherlands and Europe, as well as local auditors, to assess social working conditions and safety to provide simple audits on it, and the chemical substances used.

Last June, Mr Winkes went to Vietnam to look at the textile industries where they were printing T-shirts and shoes. “We found that larger companies were managing quite well, but the smaller companies were not so good – in particular the way chemicals are used needs to be improved.”

**Shocking conditions**

The conditions that workers face are quite shocking, he adds. For example, there are people working with concentrations of solvents in the air that are 5-10 times higher than those allowed in Europe. There are also huge levels of skin exposure with other chemicals, so a lot of people will be sensitised, and there are young women...
working with solvents that are hazardous to their reproductive health. Machine safety is also an issue.

Mr Winkes says there is also a serious lack of information. “They do have some systems out there, but they are either not effective or not used in the proper way. The employers may have some idea, but the workers know very little about the risks they are facing.”

Part of the problem is that in Vietnam most of the chemicals come from China or South Korea. In the US and Europe, they are supplied with safety data sheets so people know the risks, but in Vietnam the sheets have very limited information or they are published in English or Chinese, which most workers in Vietnam cannot speak.

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Mr Winkes and his colleagues went on an information gathering exercise and gained lots of useful data from organisations such as Vivas – a Vietnamese workers’ group, which was very cooperative. They also had a meeting with the Fair Wear Foundation auditors who informed them of the level of knowledge and what needs to be learned.

Other organisations included the Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam, which plans courses to educate employers, and Better Work Vietnam, which aims to make a significant impact on the lives of workers and their families, the performance of enterprises, and the economic and social development of countries involved. The Vietnamese organisation of industrial hygiene, which has just been launched, also participated.

Next steps

Now that they have gathered the data, Mr Winkes’s team is planning to have another meeting with the Fair Wear Foundation and the big buyers in the Netherlands and Europe in February to tell them what they have found and their ideas for improvement.

“So far the big textile buyers are not happy with what they have seen or heard so we are hoping that they will exert pressure on the producers to conform to regulations. These companies are keen to help but sometimes they don’t know the second line suppliers further up the line so this is a problem that needs to be tackled.”

Also, the information gathered will provide Fair Wear Foundation with some tools to assess levels of chemical exposure, which can now be part of the audit.

In March, the team is planning to return to Vietnam to give training courses on working safely with chemicals. Some of the key issues they will address will include how to recognise dangerous substances and simple measures that can be taken to avoid risks.

On the plus side, Mr Winkes has found that people are interested in being involved but there is a low level of knowledge, and many people just do not realise there is a problem.

As far as we know we are the only people doing this though it is hard to know. The good news is that people are very willing to listen and are willing to change.

He says: “As far as we know we are the only people doing this though it is hard to know. The good news is that people are very willing to listen and are willing to change.”

An unexpected bonus of the project is that all the different organisations that Mr Winkes has contacted have got to know of each other’s existence. “We have brought people together who didn’t know about each other’s work and got people talking which is a great added benefit.”

The first stage of the project will finish in June and then Mr Winkes is hoping to get new funding from the big companies to continue with the work.

Further Information:
Dutch Occupational Hygiene Society (NVvA) www.arbeidshygiene.nl
US Osha issues occupational exposure guidance for respirable crystalline silica

The US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Osha) has published a new compliance guide to help small business employers comply with its respirable crystalline silica standard for construction.

Sections of the guide correspond to the major provisions of the standard. Each describes the provisions in easy-to-understand language and gives details to help employers better understand the standard’s requirements.

The first step for an employer is to determine if the standard applies to its work. If it does, an employer has two options for limiting employee exposure:

• specified exposure control methods; and
• alternative exposure control methods.

The guide’s sections include information on both as well as respiratory protection, housekeeping, medical surveillance, and more.

Osha announced its final rule on occupational exposure to respirable crystalline silica in March. This set a new permissible exposure limit (PEL) of 50micrograms per cubic metre of air calculated as an eight-hour time-weighted average (TWA).

The new PEL is approximately 50% of the previous one for general industry, and about 20% of the previous one for construction and shipyards.

The rule comprises two standards:

• one for construction; and
• another for general industry and maritime.

Both took effect on 23 June. Enforcement of the final rule in construction is due to begin on 23 June 2017. Enforcement for general industry and maritime is set to begin a year later on 23 June 2018.

Osha says a separate compliance guide for general industry and maritime should be available in December.

Further Information

Commission issues guide on respirable crystalline silica

The European Commission has published guidance for national labour inspectors that deal with respirable crystalline silica (RCS) on construction sites.

It aims to increase inspector confidence, when addressing and regulating RCS risks.

Released by the Senior Labour Inspectors’ Committee (Slic), the guidance focuses on construction activities because:

• they are widespread across member states;
• they have high risks, both in terms of potential for exposure (personal) and the large number of workers potentially exposed (societal); and
• this sector is not a participant in the European Social Dialogue.
Agreement (Nepsi) on workers’ health protection, through the good handling and use of crystalline silica and products containing it.

Slic advises the Commission on the enforcement of health and safety throughout the EU.

**European trade union body releases guide to EDCs**

The European Trade Union Institute has released a guide to endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs).

Endocrine disruptors: an occupational risk in need of recognition examines the story of how the dangers of EDCs were revealed and calls for a mobilisation against the substances.

Currently only available in French, an English language version will be released by the end of the year.

**Further Information**


**Niosh updates worker nano exposure tool**

The US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (Niosh) has updated its nanoparticle emission assessment technique (NEAT).

The technique uses condensation particle counters to identify tasks that can result in emission of airborne nanoparticles.

The new version:

- places a stronger emphasis on full workday exposures;
- incorporates background monitoring, to address the problem of contamination from incidental nano-sized particles; and
- emphasises the importance of integrated filter sampling in the worker’s breathing zone over the use of direct reading instruments (DRIs).

DRIs are non-specific aerosol monitors, subject to interferences such as background incidental particles.

The updated sampling strategy consists of the following steps:

- collect basic workplace information (work flow, number of workers, tasks performed, materials used, other indicators of potential exposure);
- design and implement the sampling plan (full-shift and task-based integrated filter sampling, DRIs, evaluate engineering controls);
- risk assessment (evaluate data, including background and engineering controls, use hierarchy of controls to develop mitigation strategies for exposure potential, and communicate potential risks); and
- risk management (confirm ongoing control of risk by performing additional measurements, if necessary)

Niosh says that the updated technique can be used to guide facilities in determining exposure potential for workers, handling or using engineered nanomaterials. By doing this, the facility can then work to control exposure, making use of mitigation strategies and the hierarchy of controls.

NEAT version 2.0 is described in a paper, published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene.

**Further Information**

Tool: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4956539/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4956539/)

**EU bodies launch Roadmap on Carcinogens website**

Several EU organisations have launched a Roadmap on Carcinogens website. It will support their three-year programme, aimed at reducing exposure to carcinogens in the workplace.

The initiative is based on a roadmap for voluntary action that seeks to promote use of occupational exposure limit (OELs), set out in the carcinogens and mutagens Directive.

The website acts as a hub for related activities, such as joint working to develop best practice. It also gives details of relevant events, for example, a seminar on carcinogens in the workplace on 24 October.

Organisations involved include the EU Council presidencies of 2016 (Netherlands) and 2018 (Austria), the European Commission, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and the European social partners, Etuc and Business Europe.

**Further Information**

Website: [www.roadmaponcarcinogens.eu/](http://www.roadmaponcarcinogens.eu/)

**Research suggests weakness in key exposure tools**

A study to assess two exposure assessment tools at measuring airborne chemicals in work environments has suggested that they may under and overestimate the level of risk in different situations.

Hanna Landberg at Lund University in Sweden reviewed two tools, recommended by Echa for use with REACH: Stoffenmanager and the Advanced REACH tool (ART). She considered seven different industry sectors relating to wood, printing, foundries, spray painting, flour milling, industrial chemicals and plastic mouldings.

In the study, Stoffenmanager overestimated scenarios with low measured exposure and underestimated those with high measured exposure. The tool functions well when assessing powders and other solids but less well when it is liquids. In contrast, ART systematically underestimated exposures, mostly prominently in scenarios concerning solids.
The use of exposure modelling tools for estimating chemical airborne exposure has increased, since REACH came into force.

Stoffenmanager is aimed primarily at small and medium enterprises, for near-field and same far-field exposure. ART is aimed at experts for use with REACH, for near-field and different far-field exposure.

Ms Landberg presented at the Epidemiology in Occupational Health Conference (Epicoh) in Barcelona.

**Echa updates worker exposure assessment guidance**

Echa has updated its guidance on occupational exposure assessment in the context of REACH.

This provides advice to registrants on how to carry out such an assessment, which under REACH is required for registration of certain substance categories. It describes how to both build the exposure scenario and estimate the exposure.

The document, chapter R.14: occupational exposure assessment, is part of the Guidance on information requirements and chemical safety assessment (IR&CSA). It links to the recently updated Framework for exposure assessment (see below).

The updates, in this version of the guidance, either provide additional tools and parameters to support occupational exposure assessment and exposure scenario-building under REACH, or provide further explanation to improve understanding.

Changes to the document include:

- introduction of sections on assessment workflow and principles (R.14.3 and R.14.4);
- redrafting of section R.14.5 on exposure determinants to include extended information on exposure scenarios and means of exposure control;
- introduction of section R.14.5.4 on sector-specific worker exposure descriptions (Sweds);
- redrafting of the section on measured data (R.14.6.3) to focus on principles to consider rather than number of data points required;
- updating and streamlining of information on modelling tools (R.14.6.6);
- addition of the BEAT model to the list of tools (A.14-1.4.3 in appendix R.14-1); and
- addition of a section on exposure assessment for applications for authorisation (R.14.7).

Echa advises registrants that existing chemical safety reports (CSRs) will only need updating if affected by the following issues:

- use of exposure estimation tools: sources of uncertainty on their use and domain of applicability have been further detailed in the guidance (see appendix R.14-1);
- risk management measures: section R.14.5.2 includes information on closed systems and ventilation;
- acute exposures: the updated guidance further clarifies the applicability of estimation tools; and
- glove material: section R.14.5.3 on personal protective equipment clarifies that an effective glove for the registered substance should be described in the Iuclid dossier.

**Further Information**


**Echa updates exposure assessment guidance**

Echa has updated its guidance on exposure assessment for the determination of REACH safe use conditions.

The document, Framework for exposure assessment, is part D of Guidance on information requirements and chemical safety assessment (IR&CSA).

Echa published the original – Exposure scenario building – in May 2008. It added a footnote, to the document in July 2008, and made some corrections in 2012. Now it has completely redrafted it, based on its experience with exposure scenario building and chemical safety assessments from the first two registration waves.

New elements include:

- an overarching generic workflow on exposure assessment;
- the principle that users should understand how the lifecycle of a substance is influenced by the different compositions and forms it may have during use, or in the environment. These include transformation products that may occur during use, and the related hazard characteristics; and
- the principle that users should integrate exposure assessment and risk characterisation “per contributing scenario”.

Extended elements include:

- the principle that users should make as much as possible of information generated by downstream sectors on uses, and conditions of use, relevant to their processes and products. These include use maps, specific consumer exposure determinants (Spercs), specific environmental release categories (Sceds) and sector-specific worker exposure descriptions (Sweds); and
- the principle that users should take advantage of standardised templates, phrases; and exchange-formats when communicating exposure scenario information down the chain.

The agency says that it has increased consistency in relation to other guidance documents on use and exposure and removed duplications. It has also integrated relevant sections of Part F of IR&CSA, which has become obsolete.

**Further Information**

**Product safety news and resources**

Chemical Risk Manager is an online publication designed specifically to support professionals managing the risk of chemicals in the workplace, through the supply chain, and in products. It delivers news and resources to help them with practical challenges in their day-to-day roles.

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