Controlling Exposures to prevent occupational lung disease in the construction industry

Control exposure and breathe freely

Occupational hygiene is about identifying, evaluating and controlling risks to health in the workplace. Occupational hygienists have the knowledge and skills to help you protect your employees.

Let’s get going by deciding to manage health as well as safety.

Sign up to our Management Standard and commit to a contract for health.

Then begin to breathe freely.

Join us and be part of the solution

www.breathefreely.org.uk

99% health
Approx 13,000 died from work-related disease

1% safety
133 workers died in accidents at work

99% health
Approx 13,000 died from work-related disease

1% safety
133 workers died in accidents at work

Approx 13,000 died from work-related disease

133 workers died in accidents at work

Do you breathe freely?

www.breathefreely.org.uk
Control exposure and **breathe freely**

Occupational hygiene is about designing, evaluating and controlling risks to health in the workplace. Occupational hygienists have the knowledge and skills to help you protect your employees.

So let’s get going by deciding to manage health like safety.

Sign up to our Management Standard and commit to a contract for health.

Then begin to **breathe freely**.

Join us and be part of the solution

[www.breathefreely.org.uk](http://www.breathefreely.org.uk)

---

99% health  
Approx 13,000 died from work-related disease

1% safety  
133 workers died in accidents at work

---

The figures are for British Industry as a whole. HSE Statistics 2013/14

---

**Do you breathe freely?**
Every year in the UK, still, about 13,000 people die from diseases which are caused by the work that they do, or used to do. Last year, in comparison, precisely 133 people died from accidents at work. In other words, 99% of deaths caused by work can be attributed to ill-health, and 1% to poor safety.

And as responding, though, is that we can protect workers' health and actually improve productivity by good occupational hygiene. By designing hazards into the workplace, we are killing them, as well as curing them.

People spend most of their time in the house and exposure is unavoidable. We need to know what the hazards are and take action. Let's get hazard reviews in the workplace, so you can raise the level of awareness.

That's where our Breathe Freely campaign comes in.

Breathe Freely. A collaborative approach.

Breathe Freely is a collaborative, working partnership with LandSecurities, Mace and Constructing Better Health, and with support from many others.

1. Recognise the hazards and breathe freely.

a) Nearly all construction workers could be exposed to respirable dust.

b) Respirable dust substances can cause chronic respiratory and skin disease and conditions such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) which includes asbestosis, silicosis, asthma, pulmonary oedema, pneumonia, and cases fatal lung diseases. Like lung cancer, pulmonary fibrosis (eg. when working with asbestos) can cause permanent ill-effect.

c) The diseases caused can affect the whole body and become a poor one if it's broken or not used properly or at all. It should also mean training and communication, supervision, maintenance, and toolbox talks.

2. Control the risks and breathe freely.

a) If you can generate better awareness of its causes as well as how to do it, then you can have a good business case for it. We have evidence that better occupational hygiene is better business.

b) This might mean sourcing different products and materials in the first place, changing work methods and habits, segregating work areas, implementing hazard controls, and change, and that helps to make change happen.

Consult the experts and breathe freely.

At BOHS, we believe that construction employers - managers and supervisors - have a key role to play in improving hygiene risks. YOU can protect your employees by making sure hazards are recognised, risks are evaluated and exposures are effectively controlled.

And we can help you do that by providing the information, resources and signposting to the stream and expert that you know are needed to.

The invisible nature of many of the substances that workers breathe in

The long latency of their effects

Controls are often inadequate
Treat health like safety and breathe freely

Breathe Freely. A collaborative approach.

BLOG is leading the collaborative working with partners, Mace, LandSecurities, Mace and Constructing Better Health, and with support from many others.

We know that we cannot solve the health hazards in construction by identifying the hazards, eliminating them, and making sure they are never repeated.

People are exposed to hazardous and harmful substances and work environments most often are not always safe or healthy. Employees have to breathe in substances which are hazardous only if exposure to them happens over a long time. Other substances can lead to debilitating or chronic diseases. Some substances are only hazardous when they are breathed in. Other substances can also be harmful when swallowed or absorbed through the skin. But any exposure, even at the minutest levels, to other substances can affect them.

Not every risk to health is a high risk. Low level exposures to some substances are hazardous only if exposure to them happens over a long time, others cause immediate disability, or death occurring any time after exposure. Risk can arise from job role, job content or increased dependence on the workplace environment, the work before involves the methods of working, all things which can affect exposures.

Many occupational hazards cannot be seen by the naked eye. And many of these effects don’t appear until years after jobs end. Other health hazards are not so obvious. But any exposure to hazardous and harmful substances can lead to debilitating or chronic diseases. Some substances are hazardous only if exposure to them happens over a long time, others cause immediate disability, or death occurring any time after exposure. Risk can arise from job role, job content or increased dependence on the workplace environment, the work before involves the methods of working, all things which can affect exposures.

Many measuring opportunities are not identified by the naked eye. It’s easy to think that you don’t need to worry about health and safety. But short-term exposures to hazardous substances can cause respiratory irritation. Long-term exposure to these substances can lead to debilitation or chronic disease. Respiratory irritation can also arise from other substances such as noise, heat, and cold.

We need to take steps to understand the substances and work environments we are already dealing with, we need to know what will change, and how to help that change happen.

Where that’s where our Breathe Freely campaign comes in.

Breathe Freely.

1. Recognise the hazards and breathe freely.

All construction workers should be exposed to training, and healthcare and health services.

• General indoor hazards

• Noise

• Dust

• Wood and other dusts

• Allergens

• Welding fume

• Lead and other biological agents

• Substances

• Herbs and spices

• Exhaust fumes, smoke, and other vapours and mists

That means all just dusts and chemical hazards. You’ll find a full list of hazards in our workplaces. There are also physical hazards such as noise, vibration and high and low temperatures, and physical activities such as lifting and handling heavy objects.

There are 52 hazardous substances which we know cause diseases. The others are substances which are hazardous only if exposure to them happens over a long time. Some cause immediate disability, or death occurring any time after exposure. Risk can arise from job role, job content or increased dependence on the workplace environment, the work before involves the methods of working, all things which can affect exposures.

2. Evaluate the risks and breathe freely.

Not every risk to health is a high risk. Low exposure levels to some hazardous substances can cause temporary effects or no effects at all. But any exposure, even of the included hazards, to other substances can cause health problems. Some substances can only cause immediate disability, or death occurring any time after exposure. Risk can arise from job role, job content or increased dependence on the workplace environment, the work before involves the methods of working, all things which can affect exposures.

Many measuring opportunities are not identified by the naked eye. It’s easy to think that you don’t need to worry about health and safety. But short-term exposures to hazardous substances can cause respiratory irritation. Long-term exposure to these substances can lead to debilitation or chronic disease. Respiratory irritation can also arise from other substances such as noise, heat, and cold.

This might mean sourcing different products and materials in the first place, changing work methods and habits, segregating work areas, implementing engineering controls and testing of controls and on-going monitoring. A good control method such as rosin-free or rosin reduced solder.

3. Control and breathe freely.

When you understand the health hazards and have evaluated the risks, then they need to control their exposures to them. People at work – that means everyone, employers and employees – then they need to control their exposures to them.

We have a “Management of Health in Construction Protocol” (MHICP), which is the definitive list of UK sources of relevant information, and guidance and regulations, other links take you to more detailed helps.

Consult the experts and breathe freely

At BOHS, we believe that construction employers - managers and supervisors - have a key role to play in minimising health risks. YOU can protect your employees by making sure hazards are recognised, risks are evaluated and exposures are effectively controlled.

And we can help you do that by providing the information, resources and training to the service and experience that you know your organisation needs.

For practical help – there are two key tools that we recommend (2015) - if you cover common risks, such as respirable crystalline silica, personal protection in COSHH & HSE and hazard notes.

Sign up for Health in our industry (HI) Management Standard.

“Good” hygiene into a construction site context

We need to understand the substances and work environments we are already dealing with, we need to know what will change, and how to help that change happen.

Consult the experts and breathe freely

At BOHS, we believe that construction employers - managers and supervisors - have a key role to play in minimising health risks. YOU can protect your employees by making sure hazards are recognised, risks are evaluated and exposures are effectively controlled.

And we can help you do that by providing the information, resources and training to the service and experience that you know your organisation needs.

For practical help – there are two key tools that we recommend (2015) - if you cover common risks, such as respirable crystalline silica, personal protection in COSHH & HSE and hazard notes.

Sign up for Health in our industry (HI) Management Standard.

“Good” hygiene into a construction site context

We need to understand the substances and work environments we are already dealing with, we need to know what will change, and how to help that change happen.

Consult the experts and breathe freely

At BOHS, we believe that construction employers - managers and supervisors - have a key role to play in minimising health risks. YOU can protect your employees by making sure hazards are recognised, risks are evaluated and exposures are effectively controlled.

And we can help you do that by providing the information, resources and training to the service and experience that you know your organisation needs.

For practical help – there are two key tools that we recommend (2015) - if you cover common risks, such as respirable crystalline silica, personal protection in COSHH & HSE and hazard notes.

Sign up for Health in our industry (HI) Management Standard.
Every year in the UK, still, about 13,000 people die from diseases which are caused by the work that they do, or used to do. Last year, in comparison, precisely 133 people died from accidents at work. In other words, 99% of deaths caused by work can be attributed to ill-health, and 1% to poor safety.

As we continue, though, there is no point pretending that these statistics are acceptable. Good occupational hygiene is good for health, for business and for society. It helps to build healthy and productive workplaces.

People are not machines. They work and interact - they are not just numbers to be crunched. And someone has to ensure that the operating system is in good working order. People and machines are not either-or systems. Companies and their workers need both. And underpinning both is the concept of occupational hygiene.

Wherever in the chain of production, and wherever the hazard is, occupational hygiene is needed to ensure it is controlled. This is why the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) publishes information on workplace hygiene. It is why we have the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. It is why we have the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). It is why we have the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Some of the challenges that we face today are not new. In the 1970s, we were fighting against asbestos. In the 1980s, we were fighting against lead. In the 1990s, we were fighting against radon. In the 2000s, we are fighting againstarius. The world is changing, and that helps to shape that change happen.

That’s where our Breathe Freely campaign comes in.

Breathe Freely. A collaborative approach. BOHS is leading the collaborative working in partnership with RIIA, HSE, LandSecurities, and other Constructing Better Health, and with support from many others.

1. Recognise the hazards and breathe freely.

All construction workers could be instructed to prevent, control and monitor dust and exposure to many other airborne substances.

2. Evaluate the risks and breathe freely.

Not every risk to health is a high risk. Low exposure levels to some hazardous substances can cause only the mildest of effects or no effect at all. But some exposure, even of the most lethal substances, can cause debilitating or even fatal diseases. Some of these diseases can develop many years after the exposure, and the nature of the disease can change, and that helps to shape that change happen.

3. Control exposure and breathe freely.

When you understand the health hazards and have evaluated the risks, then you’re in a position to effectively control exposure.

At BOHS, we believe that construction employers - managers and supervisors - have a key role to play in managing hygiene risks. You can protect your employees by making sure hazards are recognised, risks are evaluated and exposures are controlled effectively.

And we can help you do that by providing the information, resources and guidance to the decision and the expert that you know they need.

If you want to know what “good” looks like - or how you can achieve such results - sign up to our Health in Industry (HI) Management and Training courses which have been developed specifically for the construction industry. They can help you to standardise and enhance your processes.

And for anyone who still wonders - we have evidence that good occupational hygiene is good for business and the need to keep everyone alive.

Breathe Freely.

Recognise, evaluate, control, breathe freely.

Consult the experts and breathe freely.

The invisible nature of many of the substances that workers breathe in.

The long latency of their ill effects.

Controls are often inadequate.

At BOHS, we believe that construction employers - managers and supervisors - have a key role to play in managing hygiene risks. You can protect your employees by making sure hazards are recognised, risks are evaluated and exposures are controlled effectively.

And we can help you do that by providing the information, resources and guidance to the decision and the expert that you know they need.

If you want to know what “good” looks like - or how you can achieve such results - sign up to our Health in Industry (HI) Management and Training courses which have been developed specifically for the construction industry. They can help you to standardise and enhance your processes.

And for anyone who still wonders - we have evidence that good occupational hygiene is good for business and the need to keep everyone alive.

Breathe Freely.

Recognise, evaluate, control, breathe freely.

Consult the experts and breathe freely.

The invisible nature of many of the substances that workers breathe in.

The long latency of their ill effects.

Controls are often inadequate.

At BOHS, we believe that construction employers - managers and supervisors - have a key role to play in managing hygiene risks. You can protect your employees by making sure hazards are recognised, risks are evaluated and exposures are controlled effectively.

And we can help you do that by providing the information, resources and guidance to the decision and the expert that you know they need.

If you want to know what “good” looks like - or how you can achieve such results - sign up to our Health in Industry (HI) Management and Training courses which have been developed specifically for the construction industry. They can help you to standardise and enhance your processes.

And for anyone who still wonders - we have evidence that good occupational hygiene is good for business and the need to keep everyone alive.
Controlling Exposures to prevent occupational lung disease in the construction industry

Control exposure and breathe freely

Occupational hygiene is about identifying, evaluating and controlling risks to health in the workplace. Occupational hygienists have the knowledge and skills to help you protect your employees.

Let’s get going by deciding to manage health like safety.

Sign up to our Management Standard and commit to a contract for health.

Then begin to breathe freely.

Join us and be part of the solution www.breathefreely.org.uk

99% health
Approx 13,000 died from work-related disease

1% safety
133 workers died in accidents at work

These figures are for British Industry as a whole. However, the picture is likely to be the same in the Construction Industry. HSE Statistics 2013/14

Do you breathe freely?