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Occupational (workplace) cancer

- CANSA's Environmental Health Campaign will focus on the risk of cancer at the workplace
- The World Health Organization (WHO) states that lung cancer, mesothelioma and bladder cancer are among the most common types of cancers at the workplace.

Occupational (workplace) cancer causing agents

There are 132 chemicals and compounds that are implicated in occupational cancers

Examples among the most common in South Africa are:

- **Asphalt fumes (coal tar pitch):** road tar workers
- **Benzene:** workers with petrochemical compounds such as diesel fumes
- **Hexavalent chromium:** workers with compounds include electroplating, welding, and chromate painting
- **Formaldehyde:** workers in the synthetic chemical industries and in beauty salons
- **Coke oven emissions:** workers at steel industries



<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/cancer/npotocca.html>

Occupational (workplace) cancer causing agents

- Painters are exposed to hydrocarbon and chlorinated solvents, dyes, polyesters, phenol-**formaldehyde**, which may cause lung cancer
- Increased risk is predominantly associated with **hexavalent chromium** compounds; which may cause lung cancer in chromate producing industries and among chromium platers and chromium alloy workers. The metal chromium is used for making steel. Chromium (VI) and chromium (III) are used for chrome plating, dyes and pigments, leather tanning, and wood preserving

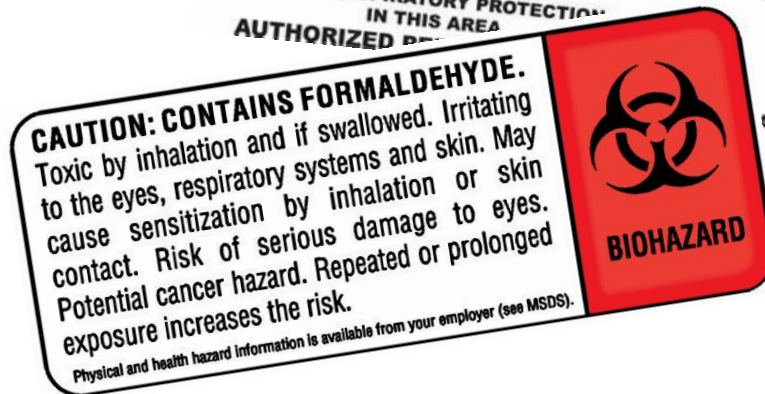
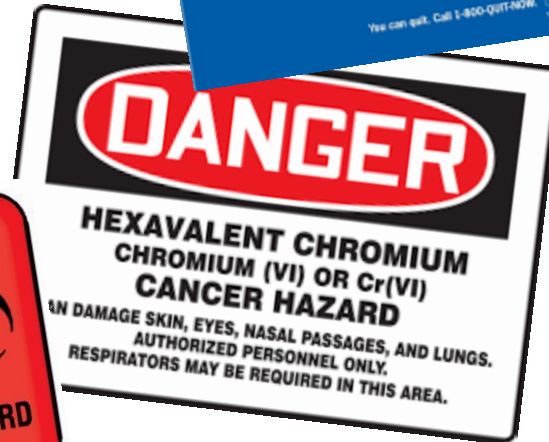


Occupational (workplace) cancer causing agents

- Occupational exposure to **benzene** may occur in the chemical and petroleum industries, which may cause leukaemia
- Coal tar pitches and **coal tar vapour** are encountered in a variety of occupations including coke production, coal gasification and roofing. These mixtures produce cancers of the skin and at other sites; including the urinary and respiratory systems. Work in iron and steel founding is also associated with an elevated risk of lung cancer



Examples of workplace cancer causing agents



Occupational Health and Safety Act

The scope of application of the occupational Health and Safety Act entails:

- information and training
- duties of persons who may be exposed to hazardous substances
- assessment of potential exposure
- air monitoring
- medical surveillance/biological monitoring of exposure to hazardous substances
- respirator zone personal protective equipment and facilities
- record keeping
- safe handling of hazardous substances
- control of exposure to hazardous substances
- maintenance of control measures
- prohibition of smoking, consumption and storage of food and beverages in HCS zones
- labeling, packaging, transportation and storage
- disposal of hazardous substances
- offences and penalties for transgressions





Occupational Health and Safety Act

- The National Institute of Occupational Health (NIOH) functions within the Occupational Health and Safety Act
- The primary responsibility of NIOH is to develop and support occupational health initiatives to improve and maintain the health of the South African workforce which is estimated to be about 11.5 million workers
- The establishment of the NIOH within the National Health Laboratory Service with funding from the Department of Health, which is a major stakeholder in the agenda
- NIOH has become an internationally recognised national resource for developing and supporting effective occupational health services in South Africa

<http://www.nioh.ac.za/>

Employees duties and responsibilities as per the Health and Safety Act (not limited to the following)



- Take care of her/his own safety at work
- Wear prescribed protective clothing and equipment
- Comply with employers procedures and safety rules
- Report unsafe or unhealthy conditions to the employer
- Employees should always carry out and obey lawful orders and obey the health and safety rules and procedures laid down by the employer
- No employee may intentionally or recklessly interfere with damage or misuse things provided for health or safety; this includes safety equipment and personal protective equipment



<http://www.labourguide.co.za/health-and-safety/379-health-a-safety-and-the-employee>



Hazardous Substances Act

South Africa Regulations under the Hazardous Substances Act is the overall laws governing hazardous substances:

“To provide for the control of substances which may cause injury or ill-health to or death of human beings by reason of their toxic, corrosive, irritant, strongly sensitizing or flammable nature or the generation of pressure thereby in certain circumstances, and for the control of certain electronic products; to provide for the division of such substances or products into groups in relation to the degree of danger; to provide for the prohibition and control of the importation, manufacture, sale, use, operation, application, modification, disposal or dumping”

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