TACKLING RESPIRABLE CRYSTALLINE SILICA TOGETHER: A CROSS-INDUSTRY COMMITMENT

CANCER CAUSED BY WORK CLAIMS THE LIVES OF AT LEAST 666,000 PEOPLE A YEAR WORLDWIDE.
1 DEATH EVERY 47 SECONDS

WORKING TOGETHER TO BEAT OCCUPATIONAL CANCER
Industry representatives and safety and health experts have agreed a cross-sector commitment to tackle the risks of exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) in the workplace.

It is a global commitment to be implemented across all duty-holders, including clients, contractors, workers and organisations’ supply chains, and across any size of organisation.

The agreement comes after a roundtable discussion held in 2016 at The Shard, in London, hosted by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) as part of its No Time to Lose campaign. The campaign aims to raise awareness and understanding of occupational cancer and to help businesses manage the risks through education and the provision of helpful resources.

The roundtable focused on identifying how leaders from across industry sectors can work together to reduce the number of people falling ill through exposure to RCS in the workplace.

The talks made clear that great work is being carried out by responsible organisations across the globe to minimise the risks associated with RCS. It remains, however, that millions of working people are still exposed to RCS each year, and there needs to be a greater level of awareness and understanding of its dangers. There really is no time to lose, and this is why this new cross-industry agreement has been struck by those leaders involved in this year’s roundtable discussion. It is an agreed plan of action that will pool the knowledge and resources of some of the leading organisations involved in managing the risks of RCS, with the aim of achieving three principal objectives:

1. To work together to reduce exposure to RCS through effective monitoring and management of dust
2. To increase awareness and understanding of the potential health risks associated with exposure to RCS in order to change attitudes and behaviours
3. To share good practice on the management of RCS across industry sectors

The group has agreed to take action to tackle these objectives and will meet again in November 2017 to review progress.
Shelley Frost
Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)
- We will survey all our No Time to Lose campaign pledge signatories to find out how they have improved their monitoring and management of dust (directly or through their supply chain or networks) as result of the campaign. We will analyse and report our findings.
- We will monitor and measure the progress of partners against their commitments and give feedback to the group on the steps taken.
- We will identify three non-UK organisations and three SMEs who have taken action on silica and produce case studies from each of these to share with our partners.
- We will increase awareness and understanding of the potential health risks by promoting our campaign materials and by developing promotions to reach SMEs and non-UK workers. We are aiming for 25,000 downloads of our silica pack by October 2017 (as of December 2016 this stands at 16,335).

Kelvin Williams
British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS)
As the Chartered Society for Worker Health Protection, BOHS is constantly engaged in raising awareness about workplace exposures to materials such as silica, and provide guidance for employers so that they are better informed about how to control the risks, and on the crucial role of occupational hygiene in doing this.

BOHS will continue to produce resources and run free events for employers (particularly in construction) who need more information about controlling exposures to materials such as silica: the Breathe Freely campaign (www.breathefreely.org.uk) offers a wealth of free resources. BOHS will also continue to work with IOSH and HSE on the series of ‘spotlight on silica’ talks.

Dr Lesley Rushton
Imperial College London
Our research into the burden of occupational cancer in Britain found that nearly 800 people a year die from lung cancer caused by silica exposure at work. It’s vital that we work collectively to take action. I will be raising awareness of our research around the UK and internationally to help get important messages out to industry and signpost delegates to IOSH’s No Time to Lose campaign and its practical resources, as well as other initiatives from organisations in this group.

Dr Jukka Takala
International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH)
The International Commission on Occupational Health would be pleased to collaborate with interested stakeholders in order to establish a globally-endorsed programme to eliminate exposures at work to silica and other substances and agents causing cancer. This may include new alliances and coalitions involving international and regional organisations such as ILO, WHO and EU; research bodies such as ICOH member institutes; member associations and individual members; as well as governments, inspectorates, industry and worker organisations, and ICOH sister institutions such as ISSA and IALI; and, of course, IOSH.

Kevin Stevens
Mineral Products Association (MPA)
The Mineral Products Association will support the ‘No Time to Lose’ commitment statement and its partners by:
- continuing with its Safer & Healthier programme, promoting positive messaging, demonstrating the benefits for employers and employees from investing in lifelong health.
- working with all partners and colleagues within its supply chain and beyond, to make air quality and dust control key elements of workplace risk management.
- supporting the industry and its stakeholders to engage with the latest available technology in occupational health monitoring. We will encourage individuals to contribute their results, and member companies to share their workplace monitoring data, so that we can establish a stronger evidence base. The analysis of both will facilitate an informed and proportionate risk management approach to controlling exposure from respirable crystalline silica.
- raising awareness and sharing best practice – we believe these are vital to improving workplace health. Using our Safer and Healthier by Sharing initiative, we will make available our information through SafeQuarry.com and SafePrecast.com web and app technology, which connect over 30,000 people across 160 countries.

Keith Morey
Network Rail
Network Rail, in support of its pledge to the No Time to Lose campaign, will actively promote and raise awareness among its workforce regarding respiratory hazards such as silica, by using the IOSH dual-branded material as well as internal mechanisms. By pro-actively improving the general awareness of exposure to silica and providing guidance on how to minimise exposure, we will enable a sustainable approach to the management of the long-term health and wellbeing of our employees.
Kären Clayton  
*Health and Safety Executive (HSE)*  
HSE launched the Helping GB Work Well strategy early in 2016. Two of its key themes, ‘Tackling ill-health’ and ‘Acting together’, directly relate to this commitment. HSE has also recently launched its Health and Work Strategy, which includes a focus on occupational lung disease. We are committed to tackling workplace exposures to RCS and will continue to do this through a variety of interventions. This includes coordinating and managing existing respiratory disease-related partnerships, developing others, and working closely with other organisations in support of relevant campaigns and initiatives; establishing and facilitating a new leadership body to coordinate activity on occupational respiratory disease; and focusing our inspection and enforcement activity where it can have the most effect.

Claire Dickinson  
*Office of Rail and Road (ORR)*  
ORR continues with its pro-active inspection activity and encourages duty-holders in the rail sector to raise standards of dust control. We will include the No Time to Lose materials at engagement events and continue to include the topic in presentations with the rail sector and at the sector health conference. Colleagues will collaborate and engage with the industry’s Ballast Dust Working Group that has developed materials and promotes the sharing of good practice across the industry.

Professor John Cherrie  
*Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM)*  
IOM will publicise the commitment to its clients and other stakeholders, and will promote the idea that relevant organisations should make dust control a key element of work activity where respirable crystalline silica is present. This could be in the form of some sort of factsheet, sent or given to clients.

Paul Haxell  
*Park Health and Safety Partnership*  
Park Health and Safety Partnership will continue, as it has always done, to raise the awareness of health risks and to support organisations in mitigating such risks. Reducing, and ultimately preventing, silica exposures will be given a renewed focus within our work on major construction projects and throughout all the work by our occupational hygienists and other professionals.

We will do more to support IOSH and its No Time to Lose campaign to help make the world of work a safer and healthier place, including raising awareness through our own communication channels to client organisations and their professional teams.

Steve Hails  
*Tideway*  
The ambition of Thames Tideway is to transform occupational health and wellbeing in the construction industry. We recognise the risk that silica can present to our workers and we’re committed to raising awareness and to reducing workplace exposures through design and enhanced engineering controls. We will ensure our findings are shared to enable the whole construction industry to raise the bar and ensure a healthier future. We will continue to collaborate through the Health in Construction Leadership Group and promoting the No Time to Lose and Breathe Freely campaigns throughout our supply chain.

Bud Hudspith  
*Unite the Union*  
Silica dust kills thousands of workers every year – Unite is committed to improving controls on silica and challenging employers and regulators at every level to achieve this. Where relevant, we expect to see explicit commitments in tender documents on the control of silica dust.

Martin Brown  
*Crossrail*  
Crossrail will continue to promote its good practice guide on air quality to its contractors and other key stakeholders, through our Learning Legacy website. We will use major events, such as our ‘Stepping Up Weeks’ and the Health in Construction Leadership Group, and media opportunities to raise awareness and gain commitment to the reduction of exposure to silica at work.

Dr Jukka Takala  
*Workplace Safety and Health Institute*  
The Workplace Safety and Health Institute is pleased to collaborate in the No Time to Lose campaign and IOSH’s silica-related activities and in particular those related to this agreement. This includes research and other knowledge-enhancing action and collaboration with global, Asian and ASEAN partners.