



# **TACKLING RESPIRABLE CRYSTALLINE SILICA TOGETHER: A CROSS-INDUSTRY COMMITMENT**

**18-MONTH PROGRESS REPORT**

**NOVEMBER 2017**



**WORKING TOGETHER TO BEAT OCCUPATIONAL CANCER**

## TACKLING RESPIRABLE CRYSTALLINE SILICA TOGETHER: A CROSS-INDUSTRY COMMITMENT

**Industry representatives and safety and health experts agreed a cross-sector commitment to tackle the risks of exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) in the workplace in November 2016.**

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 came after a roundtable discussion held in March 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 cross-industry agreement had 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 agreed to take action to tackle these objectives and met again in November 2017 to review progress.



## PARTNER COMMITMENTS AND PROGRESS STATEMENTS TO TACKLE RESPIRABLE CRYSTALLINE SILICA (NOVEMBER 2016–2017)



**Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)**  
**Shelley Frost**

### **Commitment**

IOSH's No Time to Lose (NTTL) campaign aims to raise awareness of occupational cancer and help businesses take action by providing free practical resources.

The campaign is highlighting significant carcinogens in the workplace that cause the highest number of cases and deaths. These include asbestos, diesel fumes, solar radiation and silica dust. As part of the silica phase of the campaign:

- We will survey all our NTTL 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 stood at 16,335).

### **Progress statement**

IOSH partnered with the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to launch the 'Working together to beat occupational cancer – spotlight on silica' roadshow. This presentation has been delivered at 20 events around the UK, reaching occupational safety and health professionals and businesses.

The silica phase of NTTL has also been presented at a further 19 events in the UK, including events organised by campaign supporters such as Working Well Together, Costain and the University of Liverpool.

IOSH collaborated with the Society of Safety Engineers Ljubljana, the Center for Safety and Health at Work in Bulgaria and Hong Kong's MTR Corporation Ltd to adapt and translate the NTTL silica dust resources to help raise awareness at conferences overseas.

The campaign was also showcased at 14 events overseas, including the APOSHO Conference in India, the Final Conference of the Joint Action on Comprehensive Cancer Control in Malta, and the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Singapore.

IOSH has worked with a range of businesses – from SMEs such as Dave Cottle Civil Engineering Ltd to large businesses such as Network Rail, Wates Group and Willmott Dixon, and overseas organisations such as the Roadmap on Carcinogens – to develop good practice case studies based on how they have tackled silica dust at work. These case studies can be downloaded from the NTTL website.

In May 2017, IOSH communicated the progress made by partners on the commitment through a mid-point report and a news release – *Commitment to tackle silica dust: Partners on track six months on*.

Through our promotions we have had over 24,500 NTTL silica dust resources downloaded from the campaign website. A further 580 printed packs have been ordered via the website and 1,400 packs have been distributed at events.

In October 2017, IOSH sent a survey to the 36 NTTL pledge signatories who had made a commitment to managing exposure to silica dust at work. Out of the 36 signatories, 17 took part in the survey.

The survey revealed that all participants found the NTTL silica dust resources helpful in their management of silica dust exposure, with the majority using them as part of their employee training packages.

It was also encouraging to see a number of participants eliminating the risk by removing or substituting silica-containing materials and considering mechanisms for controlling dust at source.

Out of those surveyed, 14 signatories have a supply chain. When asked how are they ensuring their supply chain improves its management of silica dust, over 70 per cent said they are actively reviewing contractors' risk assessments for potential silica dust exposure and controls, and ensuring suppliers are attending training sessions organised by the business to raise awareness of silica dust and the NTTL campaign.



**British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS)**  
**Kelvin Williams**

**Commitment**

As the Chartered Society for Worker Health Protection, BOHS is constantly engaged in activities to raise awareness about workplace exposures to materials such as silica. BOHS also provides guidance for employers so that they are better informed about how to control workplace health risks; and advises on the crucial role of occupational hygienists in controlling these risks.

As part of its Breathe Freely in Construction campaign, BOHS continues to run free events for employers (particularly in the construction industry) to provide much needed information about controlling exposures to materials, such as silica. Additionally, the Breathe Freely website ([www.breathefreely.org.uk](http://www.breathefreely.org.uk)) offers a wealth of free, downloadable information and educational resources. BOHS will also continue to work with IOSH and HSE on the series of 'Spotlight on Silica' talks.

**Progress statement**

BOHS continues to deliver joint talks with IOSH and HSE on the dangers of silica. BOHS has recently launched a new course, 'Certificate in Controlling Health Risks in Construction', aimed at helping construction site supervisors to better identify and control workplace health risks, including silica.

As part of our Breathe Freely campaign we have delivered four roadshows during 2017, to help raise awareness of the health risks in construction sites (including silica), and how these can be managed. We are also developing additional free guidance materials, which will include specific advice about managing respiratory protective equipment (RPE) in the construction sector.



**Crossrail**  
**Martin Brown**

**Commitment**

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.

**Progress statement**

Crossrail and its partner organisations have been fully supportive of the No Time to Lose campaign and recognise the important changes IOSH has been leading through the campaign. We continue to raise awareness and gain commitment to the reduction of exposure to silica at work through major events, such as our 'Stepping Up' programme, through the Health in Construction Leadership Group, and our daily engagement with the labour force. Crossrail is now entering the final phases of delivery, and the focus is now turning to 'fit out' activities, where we will see a different silica exposure, one which will be more localised and reduced. We will be continuing to seek reduction at source and ensure that dedicated personal protection is properly used where needed.





Health and Safety Executive (HSE)  
Kären Clayton

#### Commitment

HSE is focusing on occupational lung disease (OLD) as one of three key health topics as part of our Health priority plans. HSE's overall vision for OLD is that anyone who goes to work should expect to breathe the same quality of air that they would breathe outside work. Although HSE is taking the lead on tackling OLD, a significant part of what is planned is that we continue to work closely with our partners in the health and safety system to raise awareness about, and ultimately contribute to, a reduction in occupational lung disease and work towards our ultimate goal of clean air in all workplaces.

#### Progress statement

We continue our commitment to tackling workplace exposures to RCS through a variety of interventions, including:

- Launching our Health and Work strategy and Health priority plans at our first annual conference on 18 September 2017, along with the new Go Home Healthy campaign and its associated microsite which has a dedicated lung disease page.
- Providing a more detailed exploration of our plans and how they are developing at the HSE-organised 'Workplace Healthy Lungs Summit' at the QEII Centre on 22 November 2017.
- Working with partners across a range of activities, for example:
  - the establishment of the Healthy Lung Partnership
  - supporting the roll-out of 'Learning Occupational Health by Experiencing Risks' (LOCHER) (an exciting and innovative approach introducing apprentices to health and safety in the workplace)
  - looking at how we can encourage consultants to provide appropriate, proportionate and risk-based advice, and
  - using insight research to help target our communications efforts more effectively.
- We also continue to focus our inspection and enforcement activity where it can have the most effect.



Imperial College London  
Dr Lesley Rushton

#### Commitment

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.

#### Progress statement

I presented the silica phase of NTTL at the Netherlands' Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment's 'Preventing work-related cancer, conference on carcinogens' in May 2016, the Society of Occupational Medicine Conference, and the 26th International Symposium on Epidemiology in Occupational Health (EPICOH) this year.



## International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH)

Dr Jukka Takala

### Commitment

The International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH) 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.

### Progress statement

ICOH has made major progress in building up alliances, in particular, a new 'Coalition initiative' proposed and supported by the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of Finland, the Ministry of Manpower of Singapore, the Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), employer and worker representatives, the European Commission (EC) and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA).

The first outcome of the Coalition were the ILO global estimates of occupational cancer and the related costs. This report was launched at the World Congress on Safety and Health at Work in Singapore in September 2017, which revealed that at least 742,000 people a year are dying from an occupational cancer worldwide. The findings achieved global media attention, and were published on websites, including *ICOH News* ([www.icohweb.org](http://www.icohweb.org)).

At the World Congress, ICOH, IOSH, and Singapore's Workplace Safety and Health Institute organised the symposium on the 'Prevention of Occupational Cancer', where silica dust elimination was highlighted and discussed by many presenters.

Future action will be debated in November 2017 in Geneva, including ILO, World Health Organization (WHO), EC, EU-OSHA, ICOH and the governments of Finland and Singapore. Another concrete outcome is the debate on silico-tuberculosis at a United Nations/WHO ministerial meeting related to the global tuberculosis action.

In September 2017, *The Lancet* and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) website published the latest estimates of occupational cancer caused by silica dust exposure at work, revealing that 47,999 people die a year from it worldwide.

Countries such as Sweden are considering lowering their exposure limit value and EU discussions continue on these issues.

The ICOH 2018 Congress, on 29 April – 04 May, in Dublin, has selected occupational cancer as a key topic, including the opening keynote and the Congress Policy Forum. The silica burden will come up in several contributions.



**Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM)**  
**Professor John Cherrie**

#### **Commitment**

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.

#### **Progress statement**

The Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM) is committed to helping to improve working conditions for people around the world and we have a strong interest in protecting workers from the effects of harmful dusts. We fully support the IOSH No Time to Lose (NTTL) campaign and the cross-industry silica commitment, which will have an important impact.

We have raised awareness of the silica commitment and the NTTL campaign amongst our staff so that they can properly emphasise the need for strict control of exposure to respirable crystalline silica when they meet with clients. In particular, in discussions with construction companies, organisations involved in supporting the railway infrastructure and companies employing stonemasons, we were able to highlight better ways to control exposure to silica.

We have engaged with an international researcher investigating the risks from silica exposure in tunnelling to help share knowledge of best practice in controlling exposure. We have published a scientific paper that includes a health and economic impact assessment for a range of carcinogens, including respirable crystalline silica, which is being used to underpin possible changes to European regulations. Professor Cherrie has published an editorial in the journal the *Annals of Workplace Exposures and Health*, which promotes the idea of continuous improvement in exposure controls, and highlights the approaches taken in Europe through the NEPSI initiative to reduce silica exposure.



**Mineral Products Association (MPA)**  
**Kevin Stevens**

#### **Commitment**

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.

#### **Progress statement**

##### **MPA Health Surveillance Chest X-Ray Programme**

Building the RCS evidence base has continued to grow, we have now conducted 2,000+ chest x-rays, also capturing the recorded work history of individuals and the identification of minerals and processes. Further work is now being conducted to ensure we include a broad spectrum of job roles before beginning to collate and analyse data collected.

Whilst the primary objective was to provide an evidence base from the effects of exposure, it has become apparent that this programme has had a far-reaching impact on the individual and is considered an investment in employee health.

The programme discovered a larger number of non-work-related health conditions that would have otherwise gone undetected and have allowed successful early intervention; such as heart conditions, tumours, collapsed lung and orthopaedic conditions and degenerative disease.

### Safer & Healthier by Sharing Initiatives

MPA recognises the positive impact its members are continuing to make by sharing good practice with the following videos representing a portion of the membership's contribution to removing, controlling and educating its employees from exposure to RCS. Equally important is making the information available for other sectors to share and develop.

Sibelco Real Time Dust Monitoring  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ujgmtcncfb0>

FM Conway Asphalt Plant Dust/Fume Extraction  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSL640Xuc8g>

CPI Euromix Commercial Hoover HEPA filtration  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIX3qbbx4AM>

Aggregate Industries Asphalt Plants  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vkyurext9h8>

Forterra Drilling into Precast Structures  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZA\\_ukq7O5x8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZA_ukq7O5x8)

Forterra Automated Mixer Wash  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iVRRZ30\\_GA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iVRRZ30_GA)

Cemex Robotic Wrecking  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFt2hu1\\_e0w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFt2hu1_e0w)

Tarmac Road Planer Dust Control System  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AOj-O3vocQ0>

### Education and awareness

A further four RCS workshops have been delivered at MPA Safer & Healthier by Sharing Days at regional events across the UK.

We are continuing to work with trade associations in Europe, informing them of the benefits from Safer & Healthier by Sharing and encourage the use of the Chest X-Ray Programme as best practice for health surveillance.

MPA member companies continue to deliver in-house training on the potential risks from exposure to RCS and the proportionate control measures that must be used to reduce that risk.

### Publications

Building on industry guidance already in circulation, we launched the *Safe Working with Readymix Concrete Products* User Fact Sheet. Produced for the downstream user, focusing on SME construction companies, the fact sheet includes relevant tasks that have the potential for exposure to RCS and the use of appropriate and proportional control measures.



### Network Rail

Keith Morey and Kris Jeffrey

### Commitment

Network Rail, in support of its pledge to the No Time to Lose (NTTL) 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.

### Progress statement

Network Rail continues to drive change within the management of dust. As part of our continuous improvement, an independent review was commissioned to undertake a strategic review of ballast supply and handling with respect to the generation of ballast dust and the risks associated with Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS). The strategic review was processed to comprise five main stages:

- A review of the ballast specification and dust specifications and comparison against worldwide standards for ballast supply
- Baselining the material supplied by the quarries to understand natural variation in the material supplied by the quarries
- Process mapping of the ballast supply process to identify potential weaknesses in the process
- Sampling of the ballast at key points in the process to understand variations in the ballast at different stages of the process and to examine the impact of any weaknesses identified in the process mapping exercise
- Recommendations for process amendments and an assessment of the cost of implementing such processes.



By undertaking these five broad steps, it was intended that we would be able to better understand the risk exposure for Network Rail and provide a range of mitigations that could reduce the risk of exposure.

The review findings included a number of recommendations, of which several were already being progressed as part of improvement work streams.

We will shortly be commencing a communication campaign to further support raising of awareness utilising the dual-branded NTTL silica material. We have engaged with IOSH and have utilised speakers in support of enhancing the understanding of the NTTL campaign and our commitment to reducing exposure to harmful substances. We continue to work with different teams within the organisation to enhance exposure monitoring and sharing of best practice via the various working groups.



**Office of Rail and Road (ORR)**  
**Claire Dickinson**

### **Commitment**

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.

### **Progress statement**

ORR has continued working with Network Rail and its supply chain to secure improved engineering control of silica dust in ballast handling and track renewals operations. This includes a programme of retro-fitting pressurised operator cabs and water spray dust suppression to existing high output ballast cleaners, as well as continuing to improve dust control at ballast handling depots. ORR sought advice from HSE occupational hygiene colleagues on this work, and has shared learning on good practice with HSE and the wider industry through the Ballast Dust Working Group (BDWG).

We continue to steer BDWG priorities, particularly around improved engineering control and health by design; face fit testing and the importance of clean shaven checks; and RCS health surveillance. We worked with the BDWG to agree a review of industry RCS exposure monitoring data for track renewals work. Two research reports on ballast handling have now been published by the Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB): these should help to support better COSHH assessments and include useful 'wise buyer' guidance on an exposure monitoring programme for silica.

ORR inspectors remain alert to the risks from silica and the control standards required when carrying out track inspection work. Our Inspector Assistants are currently looking at management of silica dust from construction type tasks during rail property maintenance and refurbishment, using formal enforcement where appropriate to secure improved control.

We have published internal guidance on RCS in the rail industry to support our inspection work. ORR continues to actively promote both the IOSH NTTL campaign resources and HSE's Go Home Healthy campaign on lung disease via the BDWG; at the rail industry's annual health and wellbeing conference; and via our quarterly health programme updates and e-bulletins received by subscribers across the industry.



## **Park Health and Safety Partnership**

### **Michelle Twigg**

#### **Commitment**

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.

#### **Progress statement**

As an organisation with a strong bias towards managing health like managing safety we have continued to engage a variety of organisations around the risks relating to silica exposure.

Our occupational hygienists are engaged by clients on several major UK construction projects where they provide support and advice to mitigate exposure to silica, alongside monitoring exposure in practice. We have developed expanded health risk registers for our clients and ensured that silica risks are identified, properly considered and improvements in working practice are developed and implemented.

At Battersea Power Station, we have created a silica standard for the client, audited activities against the standard and facilitated improved risk control arrangements with the contractors on the project. We are also supporting Tideway with the development of their essential standard for silica and working with design teams on other projects to achieve reduced exposure to silica.

More widely we have delivered a programme of designer health awareness workshops with silica as a major theme. This has output a variety of design guides and Red, Amber, Green (RAG) lists which serve to improve designer knowledge and facilitate reduced exposure.

We continue to support BOHS on their Breathe Freely campaign and are undertaking audits to assess the improvement in reducing exposure to respirable dust.

Looking forward we are seeking to engage more widely with design professionals covering both architects and engineers.

We speak at IOSH events in support of the NTTL campaign, often partnering on behalf of BOHS, as our consultants volunteer to support both organisations. In addition, Park has representatives supporting Working Well Together groups and promote NTTL campaigns at Safety & Health Awareness Days.

When we make presentations to other organisations, we signpost to the NTTL website as a source of information and actively encourage others to support the campaign.



**Tideway**  
Steve Hails

### **Commitment**

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.

### **Progress statement**

- Our Occupational Hygienists have written the essential standard for managing silica and undertake monthly reviews against this standard, we've seen a downward trend in our lagging respiratory health indicators.
- The designers' guide has been written and is now in a consultation phase with the project's designers. We already have some great examples of how our teams have reduced or eliminated health risks at the design stage, for example how welding activities were significantly reduced by using mechanical fixings or welding at the surface instead of in the shaft.
- The first BOHS Certificate in Controlling Health Risks in Construction (CCHRC) is taking place this month and will now be available to all managers and supervisors throughout the duration of the project.
- Every 12 weeks we stop work to focus on a particular area of health, safety or wellbeing. We call them 'RightWay Live' events. Our April event had a focus on respiratory disease, where we utilised some of the NTTL materials and our Occupational Health Service Team used engaging ways to raise awareness including the use of pigs' lungs.



**Unite the Union**  
Bud Hudspith

### **Commitment**

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.

### **Progress statement**

Much of our activity around respirable crystalline silica (RCS) has been about getting others to recognise the problem and do something about it.

We have promoted the No Time to Lose campaign within the Union and in various tripartite committees and forums in which we are involved with HSE and employers.

No Time to Lose and silica dust have featured regularly in reports to all Unite National Industrial Sector Committees.

Unite also has a guidance leaflet about silica. This guidance is about to be updated, and discussions are continuing with the United Steel Workers in North America, and Workers Uniting, about the possibility of joint campaigning, as the US considers a proposal to set a limit for silica dust which is half that in the UK.

Unite has never accepted the current UK limit, as it was set at a level which recognised that a high percentage of workers exposed to silica dust over a working lifetime would develop silicosis. The UK limit did not take account of the fact that respirable crystalline silica is a known cause of lung cancer.

We are still due to update the Unite booklet on silica dust, although we have been delaying this in light of developments in the US, since we want to refer especially to the improvements there which may or may not be sustained. There is also some additional material from the HSE Workplace Health Expert Committee (WHEC), the EU and, of course, IOSH.

We have continued to contribute to issues around silica dust in the broad ceramics industry, and in construction. However, we remain disappointed in the failure of the construction industry, or at least the major players, to make specific reference to controlling silica dust in their tender documents.

Personally, I am involved in discussions about COSHH essentials and silica essentials, and in the Healthy Lung Partnership, organised by HSE, where exposure to respirable crystalline silica remains one of the key causes of lung disease.



**Workplace Safety and Health Institute**  
**Dr Jukka Takala**

**Commitment**

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.

**Progress statement**

The Singapore Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and the Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Institute had a key role in the World Congress in Singapore in September 2017, where the silica burden was discussed in several fora.

The WSH Institute had a major contribution to the ILO global estimates on occupational cancer. See the Global Estimates of Occupational Accidents and Work-Related Illnesses 2017 report.

The WSH Institute and MOM are key partners of the Coalition initiative being organised and supported now by the ILO, ICOH, EU, Finland and others.

WSH Institute is, in particular, interested in better Asian and ASEAN knowledge and data.

## SILICA COMMITMENT ROUNDTABLE, ICC BIRMINGHAM, NOVEMBER 2017

**In November 2017, we convened a second ‘Tackling Respirable Crystalline Silica Together’ round table event. During our discussion, it was encouraging to see clear progress had been made by all partner organisations across industry sectors in relation to their silica commitment.**

Representatives from organisations including the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS), International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH), Imperial College London, Institute of Occupational Medicine (IOM), Mineral Products Association (MPA), Network Rail, Office of Rail and Road (ORR), Park Health and Safety Partnership, Tideway, and the Workplace Safety and Health Institute in Singapore took part in the discussion and shared how they have tackled RCS.

The talks emphasized that the commitment has started a conversation on this serious health issue, and great work has been implemented by all participant organisations to tackle it, as demonstrated in this report.

There has been considerable activity to raise awareness of RCS in the UK and globally, with organisations using IOSH’s No Time to Lose campaign, BOHS’s Breathe Freely campaign and HSE’s Go Home Healthy campaign to help communicate the message.

Academics shared new research on RCS, which revealed that around 48,000 deaths are caused by exposure to silica dust at work worldwide, every year.

Participating businesses shared great examples of good practice implemented at work from designing out the risks at the start of a project to educating the workforce through e-learning and videos. In addition, health surveillance initiatives were highlighted that capture and record the work history of individuals and impacts on their health.

Representatives also shared their perceptions of awareness and behavioural issues they felt need to be addressed more effectively. These include raising awareness of RCS to sub-contractors, SMEs and younger workers; providing better information on how to undertake health surveillance; and sharing good practice widely through online communications channels and short, accessible, engaging tactics such as video via social media.

The group will look further into these issues and ideas, identifying how they can be tackled as the campaign moves forward.






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