



# Spotlight on... occupational cancers

The Considerate Constructors Scheme's '**Spotlight on...**' initiative focuses on different areas associated with improving the image of construction, and raises awareness among registered sites, companies and suppliers about the issues and how to help.

Through taking action to tackle the topics highlighted, everyone within the industry can play an important role in making a difference, and ultimately improving the image of construction.



# Spotlight on... occupational cancers

**Spotlight on... occupational cancers** aims to raise awareness of the risks involved in construction work and the importance of taking proactive measures to protect and safeguard all the workforce.

There are several types of cancer which affect the workforce, but skin and lung have been identified as the two main cancers affecting the industry.

It is difficult to determine the true extent of occupational cancers as in many cases individuals fail to develop any noticeable symptoms until many years later. Despite this, the following facts have been identified:

- There are 14,000 new cases of occupational cancer per year
- Over 40% of the total occupational cancer deaths arise within the construction industry
- 99% of occupational deaths are caused by work related ill-health and 1% of deaths are related to poor safety
- Asbestos is responsible for the largest proportion of occupational cancer, with an estimated 50% of deaths and 1 in 3 newly occurring cases of occupational cancer caused by exposure to asbestos
- Construction workers are 6 times more likely to develop skin cancer than the general population

## How the issue is being tackled

The issue of occupational cancers is often addressed as part of the larger topic of the health and wellbeing of the workforce. Most construction organisations will have policies and procedures in place to appropriately manage and minimise the risks to ensure employees are not being exposed to damaging UV radiation or hazardous substances such as silica dust or asbestos.

Many sites display literature such as posters and leaflets, provide weather protection including sun cream dispensers and neck protectors, as well as training to appropriately manage the risks present on site. Toolbox talks are also used to inform and educate the workforce about occupational cancers and some construction companies invite specialists on site to give talks on occupational health risks, including cancer awareness.

## What to do now

Please visit the Scheme's website [www.ccscheme.org.uk](http://www.ccscheme.org.uk) and the Best Practice Hub [www.ccsbestpractice.org.uk](http://www.ccsbestpractice.org.uk) to find a wealth of advice and useful information, case studies and links to other organisations and bodies which will enable you to find out more about dealing with occupational cancers.

The Scheme will update the websites as new information and case studies are identified. To share with the industry how you are tackling occupational cancers, please email [enquiries@ccscheme.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ccscheme.org.uk)