



International Occupational Hygiene Association Newsletter

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Contents

Letter from the Editor

IOHA Board Meeting, New Orleans, 2-3 June 2001

AIHCE 2001 – New Orleans, 4-7 June 2001

- Paul Oldershaw honoured with the William P. Yant Award
- News from Committees
- Control Silica Exposures in Construction - a Project of the ACGIH Construction Committee

Economic recession: an opportunity for the Occupational Hygiene professionals? by Radu Branisteanu

Occupational Health in Sweatshops, by Garrett Brown

Information on the Fight against Silicosis in Europe, by Carsten Möhlmann

EU Information, by Kurt Lechnitz

News from the ILO

Conferences

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Note from the Editor: As this Newsletter was ready to go online, the terrible events of 11th September 2001 took place in the USA. Therefore, the IOHA president is sending the message below, which I believe reflects what we feel, although no words can describe our shock and sadness over such a tragedy. In view of the physical dangers and resulting pollution, our profession has a role to play in the aftermath of the tragedy, and we see, with appreciation, that relevant institutions in the USA, companies and many colleagues have volunteered to help in the hope of decreasing health risks. I would also like to express great admiration to the incredible commitment, sense of duty and courage of very special groups of workers – such as the firefighters and policemen, who gave their lives with no hesitation in the hope of helping people.

Message from IOHA President:

September 11th was - for all of us - a day of horror and shock. The inhuman attack on New York and Washington goes beyond any imagination. It has changed the world. On behalf of the International Occupational Hygiene Association, I send my deepest sympathy to America and its people.

Kurt Lechnitz, IOHA President

Letter from the Editor

Dear Colleagues

First of all I must apologize for the delay of this Newsletter, which I hope you did not notice much since you must all have been enjoying your Summer vacations. I will be brief because we have many interesting contributions, as you may see in the Table of Contents.

We had a very good IOHA Board meeting in New Orleans; some highlights are presented in this Newsletter. The AIHCE was very exciting with lots of activities going on; I will just report to you on some points concerning Committee meetings. We must congratulate our Past IOHA President and Board Member Dr Paul Oldershaw for being the recipient of the 2001 William Yant Award.

Occupational hygiene is emerging as a needed profession in different parts of the world (see the article from Romania). Our profession has to also look at the social dimensions of work, hence I believe that the article on Sweatshops by Garrett Brown is very timely. I would ask that colleagues involved with assessing exposure to silica pay particular attention to the two contributions dealing with this item, as a greater exchange of experiences in this respect will enhance the work of all involved.

My best greetings to all

Berenice Goelzer E-mail: berenice@goelzer.net

IOHA Board Meeting, New Orleans, 2-3 June 2001

The Board Meeting was very productive and demonstrated the impact that IOHA can have on the development of occupational hygiene at the national level. Issues discussed included Certification, international collaboration, collaboration with countries trying to set up occupational hygiene associations, and the IOHA new site. (See on Photo 1 the IOHA Board members present at this meeting).



Photo 1

Certification: A Summary (by Vernon Rose) of the “IOHA International Workshop on Certification of Occupational Hygienists” London, November 1999, was presented in the IOHA Newsletter of May 2000. I am glad to announce that the second edition of IOHA’s publication on Certification, which includes the report from the 1999 London meeting as well as the IOHA proposed Model for a certification scheme, is online; the direct link is:

<http://www.ioha.com/epubs/ioharef/iohacertsurv.htm>

A Report from the first meeting of the Certification Committee, held on 4 June 2001, will be presented in the next issue of this Newsletter (December).

International collaboration:

IOHA’s support to the 2001 Venezuelan Occupational Hygiene meeting was very important. In fact, the Board agreed that member associations could consider IOHA as a co-sponsor of their own annual conferences/seminars, including the use of the IOHA logo on the announcements and programmes. Unfortunately, at the moment, there are no funds available from IOHA towards such co-sponsorship.

The visit by Paul Oldershaw to Romania was very productive and IOHA support is critical for the development of the newly formed Romanian Society. The Board agreed that the Executive Committee should liaise with Romanian contacts with regard to the needs of the new Society.

Collaboration with CEN, ICOH, ILO and WHO continue to be very fruitful; many joint activities are ongoing and some examples are hereby mentioned. IOHA is collaborating with the ILO in the preparation of a practical document, under the “tool kit project”, and a joint venture for an Implementation Guide for Occupational Health Management Systems is being envisaged. At the 5th IOHA Scientific Conference in Bergen, a Joint Session on Shiftwork is being arranged in conjunction with members of an ICOH Expert Group. IOHA has also been formally invited by ICOH to participate in the next ICOH congress in Brazil 2003.

Change of President: Vernon Rose presented his President’s Report and installed Kurt Lechnitz as the new President of IOHA (see Photo 2). Kurt presented Vern with a personal memento in recognition of his hard work for IOHA. Vern Rose thanked Paul Oldershaw, now retiring from the IOHA Board (the Board will really miss him !), for his hard work on behalf of IOHA, and Kurt Lechnitz presented him (Paul) with a personal memento (see Photo 3).



Photo 2



Photo 3

Election of IOHA Vice-President 2001-2002: Heather Jackson, from Australia, was unanimously elected to this position. The new IOHA Executive Committee can be seen on Photo 4.



Photo 4

Communications Committee: The Board Members on the Communications Committee for 2001-2002 are Danilo Cottica, Martin Newell and Ton Spee. Dave Zalk managed to get us a WWW domain, namely:

<http://www.ioha.com/>

IOHA is very grateful to BOHS for having “lent” its site so far, but it is nice to have a site of our own. Dave’s efforts in this respect are also highly appreciated.

AIHCE 2001 – New Orleans, 4-7 June 2001

Paul Oldershaw was honoured with the William P. Yant Award

The prestigious William P. Yant Award, of the American Industrial Hygiene Association, is given to a person, residing outside the USA, who has made outstanding contributions to occupational hygiene or a related field. The 2001 Yant Award was very deservedly given to Dr Paul Oldershaw who has made tremendous contributions to our profession over the years.

Dr Paul Oldershaw heads the Health Sciences Division of the UK Health and Safety Executive, the enforcing body for occupational health and safety. Paul is a peculiar blend of regulator, hygienist and health scientist. He is a Past President of the British Occupational Hygiene Society, and of the International Occupational Hygiene Association. He has long been involved in health and hygiene issues at an international level - in the European Union and with WHO and ILO. He has a particular interest in asbestos, pesticides and in risk assessment and communication. Dr Oldershaw holds a PhD in Chemistry and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, and a Fellow of the British Institute of Occupational Hygienists.

Although the full text of his excellent Yant Lecture (See Photo 5), entitled “Competition for Riches” will be published in the AIHA Journal, in view of its importance, some highlights are hereby presented.



Photo 5

“Competition for Riches” - Yant Award Lecture 2001, given by Dr Paul Oldershaw

He took as his theme: “A competition for riches” – a quote from Samuel Johnson describing the industrial revolution in the UK in the 18th Century. It was a social change he regarded as not being for the good of the spirit of the people and “It also hurts the bodies of the people, for you will observe that there is no man that works at any particular trade, but you may know him from his appearance to do so. One part or the other of his body being more used than the rest, he is in some way deformed.”

Dr Oldershaw surveyed societal and industrial change underway across the world, not one new industrial revolution, but several and at a pace of change that presented substantial challenges to the hygiene community and how it delivered proportionate preventative action.

In the industrialised economies of Western Europe and North America there is a rapid decline in the ‘traditional’ heavy industries associated with many of the harmful agents that have formed the basis of hygiene training and practice for many years. There is a marked movement into service industries; businesses centered on the processing of information; call-centres. Concerns were increasingly focused on health decrements relating to musculoskeletal injury and stress which now greatly outnumbered in cases and cost to society those relating to e.g. chemical exposure, which with the notable exception of asthma were probably well understood and controlled.

The age structure of the working population was changing. A continually low birth rate combined with lengthening life expectancy, a fitter old age and the social and financial drivers to longer employment would lead to increasingly long working lives. The acceptability of an occupationally related ill health decrement would be judged against a difficult baseline of expectancy from a previous generation used to, and benefiting from, a heavy manufacturing economy. At a societal level, the cost of the ageing population made it increasingly important to be able to extend gainful and fulfilling employment and more attention will have to be given to adapting working practices to accommodate normal age related decrements both to prevent ill health and to preserve the increasingly scarce skills base.

The redeveloping economies of the Eastern European bloc have to match the heavy demands of re-entering a competitive global economy with the expectations of their population, and address the problems of ill health now being revealed as a legacy of the past 50 years. There is no shortage of committed individuals, but industrial hygiene is not established at a professional level in these countries and assistance is needed.

In many other parts of the world there is a similarity to the industrial revolution of Dr Johnson, but at a much increased pace. A movement from the land to towns. The entry of women into a manufacturing workforce.

Increased expectations and a need to share the benefits of industrialization. A concern for the environment – indeed this is evident worldwide.

In that industrial hygiene is essentially a practical discipline based on the application of a good scientific knowledge to improve the working conditions of people and ideally prevent industrial disease there are, Dr Oldershaw believes, some important lessons for the hygiene community and others to bear in mind.

The hygiene profession is very unevenly distributed throughout the world. It is most present in the mature industrialized economies of the northern hemisphere. It is in its infancy or absent in many countries. If it is to have influence in these times of change when there are so many other demands on resources it must organize. IOHA is making real progress in helping representative bodies to be established.

- Many of the problems now being encountered in one society are well known and possibly controlled in another. Information transfer is crucial, and poorly delivered.
- Information is not enough, it requires adequately trained individuals in place to use it effectively. Training needs to be practical and highly appropriate to the needs of the user. Modular training has much to commend it; formal recognition is very important indeed in many societies and this needs to be borne in mind in considering hygienist certification. We should be inclusive not damagingly exclusive.
- The 'tools of the trade' developed in one set of circumstances may well not be appropriate to another. For example, the cost of establishing, measuring, quality assuring and regulating exposure limits may be a luxury that should be avoided by many. It is highly useful for some agents and in some regions but its usefulness for all agents, especially chemical agents, should not be presumed. There may well be much better uses to which the resource could be put.
- In many cases preventative hygiene action will need to be delivered by an array of health or safety related professionals. This is not a defect. It depends on the practical possibilities and established health structures in each country. Opportunities for collaboration should be embraced, not resisted and we must not become too wedded to the idea that a hygiene profession is the only – even the best – way to deliver control.
- Health is not an absolute commodity. It depends on a societal view of what is acceptable. Concerns in one industrial context should not be uncritically exported. For example, issues such as minor neurological effects; possible human health effects of hormone disrupting chemicals; hypothetical risks from electromagnetic fields etc are all worthy subjects for consideration and may well be reflected in our standards. These come at a cost and the user should be able to judge whether this is a use of resource they wish to make. A process needs to be established to produce balanced decisions involving all stakeholders.
- The stakeholders are changing with the change in the structures of industry and it will be an increasingly important challenge to identify them and arrange a means of engaging with them. They will be concerned with very varied problems. Much better ill health information is needed to inform and guide the debate.

The value of hygiene-science and practice is well established. It has met the challenges of the Industrial Revolution. It is faced with great and more rapid changes. The profession needs to adapt to these. It is faced with its own revolution.

Paul Oldershaw (E-mail: paul.oldershaw@hse.gsi.gov.uk)

Some News from ACGIH and AIHA Committees

ACGIH International Committee: Although, as we all know, ACGIH has been hit by the consequences of unfair and costly lawsuits, this Committee is full of enthusiasm and has plans for some action, even with no funds available. One important action will be the preparation of a document with practical guidance for developing occupational hygiene training activities; this will follow the guidelines just published by PAHO/WHO, but will also include details such as suggested curriculum, logistics aspects and infrastructure

minimum requirements. The Committee has been working on a checklist of very practical aspects (including office space, equipment, library, etc.).

ACGIH Air Sampling Committee: The 9th edition of the Air Sampling Manual has been published and will be revised again in 5 years (so it is the guideline for now).

ACGIH Construction Committee: Please, see next article.

AIHA/IAC - Americas Subcommittee: As always, this meeting had wide participation, as there is great interest in occupational hygiene in Latin America. It is heart warming to see such enthusiasm and commitment among the occupational hygienists already practicing in this Region (often under difficult circumstances and little recognition). Among many proposed future actions, there was the engagement of collecting material and advice on Certification of Occupational Hygienists to be shared with colleagues of the Region.

Control Silica Exposures in Construction - a Project of the ACGIH Construction Committee

So many construction activities – so little exposure data! - Your help (and data) is needed!

A database is being compiled from public, private, and academic sources. With a large sample size, we can characterize specific tasks, tools, trades, engineering controls and other factors.

- Confidentiality protection – If you choose to keep your data anonymous, we guarantee the identity of the data source will be hidden
- Contributors get access to raw data - You can do your own data analysis for your own purposes
- Analyzed data will be accessible at this website:

<http://www.wvu.edu/~exten/depts/she/silica.htm>

How to contribute data ? There are two ways, namely:

- Complete an Access or Excel database form yourself, or,
- Submit your data in any format (either electronic or hardcopy) and it will be entered by ACGIH volunteers and returned to you for verification prior to insertion in the master database.

Database Contents

The database contains fields for:

- Sample identification – place, time, purpose
- Activity sampled – trade, task, tool, controls used
- Site conditions – ventilation, degree of enclosure, nearby dust generation
- Sampling method – personal/area, sampling device and flow rate, analysis method, sampling time
- Results – quartz concentration, cristobalite concentration, respirable dust concentration, % quartz, % cristobalite, calculated PEL

Please submit data even if you do not have information for all of these fields. Very few data sets will include all fields. Visit the website listed above to access the database template.

For more information call:

Paul Becker (304) 293-3039 E-mail: pbecker2@wvu.edu

or Mary Ellen Flanagan (206)543-9711 E-mail: mflanaga@u.washington.edu

Economic recession: an opportunity for the occupational hygiene professionals ?

“Although the profession of industrial hygiene isn’t changing, the practice of the profession of industrial hygiene is” said Mr. James Thornton, the former President of AIHA in one of his articles. Indeed, the principles of occupational hygiene have remained a constant: anticipation, recognition, evaluation and control. The goal, which is the protection of the workers and communities at large, has also been a constant over the time. Basically, the practice has remained unmodified and follows a pattern as simple as that: you have a standard or create one, assess the risk by identification and quantitation of the hazards, you compare with the standard and apply control measures, of which some are classic and follow a stereotype model. So, what makes it so special about the practice of occupational hygiene ? What is the reason for making such an effort to improve the practice by introducing costly programs and expensive techniques? The answer is simple and concise: the detail; the detail makes the difference between superficiality and efficiency and represent one of the driving forces in proving usefulness.

The evolution of occupational hygiene strongly depends upon economical and technological change. As technology advances, more and more hazards appear and more exposure circumstances occur or embrace new shapes. The more sophisticated is the technology, the more insidious is the risk imposed by its usage. Consequently, occupational hygienists must respond with more professionalism and dedication, be prepared to understand every detail and choose the particular strategies and tools for the particular situation. Although the measurement methods include now a wide range of techniques, such as those based on lasers or the usage of monoclonal antibodies, finally it is the person, and not the measuring instrument, who assesses the risk.

The Example of Romania : Nobody can predict the future. However, based on the evolution of occupational hygiene we may identify three generic categories of forces (factors) which will reshape the practice of Occupational Health, Environment and Safety in Romania: macroeconomic (global) factors, country-specific factors and factors inside the profession.

“It is important to recognize that the forces of change that will drive to the future of occupational hygiene are exogenous to the profession”, wrote M. Lawrence Birkner in his article regarding the role of anticipation in occupational hygiene. These powerful forces have affected different countries in different ways; a brief look into the European post-communist countries exemplified on Romania follows.

The end of the communism left the free market economy without a competition. The Cold War generated large governmental investments on both sides. Consequently, new industries and thousands of jobs appeared and the OH grew and thrived in this era. Many advances, such as aerosol technology and respiratory protection grew from military’s technological demands. With the end of communism, governmental investments slowed and stopped in many areas with consequences upon the labour force. If developed countries were able to absorb this shock more easily, in the former communist countries, such as Romania, many industries born in the 1960’s lost their traditional markets and were forced to dramatically diminish production or even shut down. Therefore, some OH lost their object of activity.

Brainpower industries, another shaping force, require more skilled occupational hygiene professionals in order to understand the technologies and to apply the proper strategies and techniques. It is a natural thing: the reaction to sophistication must be also sophisticated.

The ageing world is the third exogenous important force with enormous impact on the OEH&S profession. People will be working longer and the younger people are able to resist to adverse working conditions better than the older ones. Consequently, more attention will have to be drawn to quantitation and control of occupational hazards. In addition, the worker’s survey over the time, relatively easy to register in the past, will be more difficult to perform.

The global economy is another strong exogenous force; 51 of the largest economies in the world are corporations and not national. Some manufacturing processes are driven from developed countries to countries with a cheaper labor force or a weaker environmental legislation. As the global economy

continues to develop, national regulations will yield to international standards, such as those of ISO. Therefore, occupational hygiene professionals will have to adapt international standards to local situations, which is not an easy task. Although it is not mirrored yet in Romania, the influence of improving the standards will be strong and difficult to handle. The pressure exerted by the intention of adhering to EU requirements will lead to the introduction of internationally accepted OHE&S standards. But it must be remembered that these standards rely on a certain economical and technological evolution to which Romania was not part in the last 20 years. Sometimes it is more difficult to reconvert a system than to start a new one.

The specific situation in Romania pertains rather to relational and educational background than to technological advancements. The 1950's and 1960's brought into Romania a great number of big industries; these industries used technologies imported both from the East (Soviet Union) and West (Germany, France, UK, Netherlands, Japanese and the USA - sold by intermediate European companies). Many of these technologies brought the necessary machines to operate the factories, but also some organizational elements and their original standards of safety and exposure (such as TLVs). All these elements were harmonised to create a system of survey and inspection that was completed in the 1970's and was not essentially improved up to now. On the other hand, the 1990's brought a dramatic change in the economy; many extensive industries reduced their production and some factories were shut down or forced to reconvert to other ranges of products. Consequently, many workers lost their jobs and the exposure profile changed. In addition, small manufacturing and trading companies began to appear. These enlarged the range of merchandise imported to or produced in Romania. But small companies employ a wide range of technologies, from primitive manufacturing to up to date processes; therefore, the exposure profiles differ very much from the traditional ones.

A notable element of influence is the growth of environmental concern. Insufficiently developed before 1989, environmental protection took an ascendent trend: an Environmental Protection Agency was established; some educational programs were introduced in the universities, and some programmes were carried out financed by the EU. Many OH working in companies evolved to the broader OHE&S domain and now deal more with problems such as toxic emissions, waste disposal, waste water or environmental audit, rather than occupational exposure. This environmental trend is encouraged by EU and the high level conference on environmental problems held in Bucharest two weeks ago is the most recent example. All these influences are expected to strenghten in the near future.

The factors inside the profession include the updating of the measurement techniques. First there were the sampling and measurement devices; traded exclusively by private companies, the introduction of these devices did not follow a coherent programme or strategy. In addition, the information regarding the particular application in which every category of equipment operates is lacking. Consequently, these devices had to be used in conjunction with the old methodology; but it has to be remembered that the design and operation of the equipment imported from the West rely on certain regulations which differ from the Romanian ones. The same situation is encountered in the field of laboratory techniques.

A notable factor pertaining to the profession is the establishment of private companies that perform measurements or give consultancy. Even if there are not so many or well equipped (at least in the inception phase), they have more freedom in relationship with the clients and this "shy" phenomenon will grow in importance and represents a factor of progress.

The OHE&S profession is necessary in Romania more than ever. In addition to the humanitarian aspect, this domain is also an economical instrument. In a weakened economy it is very important to save money. If we look at the WHO statistics, we find that the economic loss due to occupational diseases and injuries equates to an average of 4% of the gross national product in many countries. And if this example is too general, we have to remember that 1/4 of the amount of money used as compensation for the death by carbon monoxide poisoning of the 4 workers in Iasi one month ago, would have been sufficient to acquire a gas detector and to pay the salary of an occupational hygienist for at least 1 year.

If we extend this observation to the environmental domain, the true amount of money lost in environmental accidents in the last 2 years will probably never be known.

As underscored before, the evolution of the OHE&S profession strongly depends on the economic situation. But it also has to be noticed that there is a small gap in timing: the OH reaction comes after the introduction of technology. Therefore, from the occupational hygiene point of view, the economic recession in Romania might be regarded as a moment of “respiro”. The Romanian occupational hygiene professionals have an opportunity to prepare for the future, to explore the global trends, to learn new things and to build scenarios regarding the application of contemporary knowledge to the Romanian context. But to do all these things, it is imperative to engage with an international OHE&S community. We must think in context, not forgetting the details and acting as a team.

Radu Branisteanu (President of the Romanian Industrial Hygiene Association)

Information on the Fight against Silicosis in Europe

During the last years, a set of projects in the field of dust exposure has been carried out in Europe. This is still a problem, even today and in industrialized countries, and costs money for the community. For example, in Germany, it is planned to reduce the TLV for respirable dust to 3 mg/m³ and introduce a new TLV for inhalable dust at 10 mg/m³.

An overview of these projects, entitled “Joining forces against dust” can be found at URL: <http://www.nomoredust.org.uk>

Readers are kindly asked to inform on similar sites in different countries, that is sites with a more focused approach (i.e., dust exposure) than that of websites dealing with general problems in occupational health. It would be helpful for people having problems with dust exposure to find addresses of colleagues, companies and institutions dealing with this matter, for exchanges of information and experiences.

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Occupational Health in Sweatshops

The American Industrial Hygiene Association is looking forward to collaborating with IOHA and member organizations around the world in a new campaign to improve working conditions in “sweatshops” in both developing and developed economies.

On March 24, 2001, the AIHA Board of Directors adopted two strong documents on health and safety in “sweatshop” workplaces in the global economy. These included a two-page position statement <http://www.aiha.org/papers/gov19.html> and a 12-page White Paper <http://www.aiha.org/papers/gov18.html>. These documents were prepared by an eight-member national AIHA Task Force, drawn from the International Affairs, Management and Social Concerns committees.

A key element of the AIHA anti-sweatshop plan is collaboration with occupational hygiene associations around the world in three areas:

- Issuance of similar position or policy statements by other IOHA members so that occupational hygienists around the globe speak with one voice and have a common approach to improving conditions in sweatshops;
- Development of criteria for the minimum qualifications of “health and safety monitors” currently auditing facilities of transnational corporations throughout the world to verify compliance with the companies’ “codes of conduct” as well as national and international regulations and guidelines, and,
- Development of criteria for a standard, universal set of benchmarks for workplace safety and health programs and activities which could be used to evaluate and compare conditions in different types of facilities and in different regions of the world.

The AIHA documents also call for occupational hygienists around the world to explore non-traditional approaches to improve workplace health and safety through partnerships with community-based organizations, which have direct contact with and enjoy the confidence of sweatshop workers.

A key activity of this partnership could be strengthening the capacity – through training, information and technical assistance – of local students, para-professionals and community members to evaluate, monitor and report on sweatshop conditions from the garment shops of New York and Los Angeles to the sports shoe and toy factories of Asia.

The AIHA’s “White Paper on Occupational Health, Safety and Environmental Conditions in Sweatshops” provides a comprehensive look at the process of economic globalization, working conditions around the world, corporate “codes of conduct” and “independent monitoring,” a non-discriminatory approach in developing countries, and the role of industrial hygienists and the AIHA. The White Paper also has a 19-page appendix with a bibliography of key documents, reports, articles and books on the issue.

The position statement summarizes the AIHA’s approach toward the reducing or eliminating sweatshops in both developing and developed economies by:

- calling on Federal and state governments in the United States to enforce existing laws against sweatshop conditions and to allocate the human and financial resources necessary to achieve this goal;
- calling on the U.S. Congress and Executive Branch to support trade and investment treaties that would produce an international “upward harmonization” of occupational and environmental health regulations and practices, and to oppose efforts to eliminate health-protective measures as “barriers to trade;”
- collaborating with governmental agencies and other occupational health and safety organizations in the U.S. and internationally to provide more assistance to help small businesses in the U.S. and elsewhere provide safe and healthy workplaces, and,
- collaborating with other professional and community-based organizations internationally to identify and seek funds for the creation of the necessary human, financial and technical resources to reduce or eliminate sweatshops in the developing world, including supporting university-based programs and nurturing national professional associations.

While the first to adopt a specific position statement on sweatshops, the AIHA recognizes the longstanding work done in this area by European occupational hygiene associations and by organizations such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) and International Commission on Occupational Health (ICOH). The goal of the AIHA initiative is to enhance collaboration and expand the reach of occupational hygiene organizations on this key issue in the global economy.

Garrett Brown (E-mail: gdbrown@igc.org) *Garrett Brown, chairman of the AIHA Sweatshop Task Force, is the interim coordinator for the follow-up outreach for this initiative. He is also a member of the AIHA International Affairs and Social Concerns committees, and is Coordinator of the Maquiladora Health & Safety Support Network.*

EU Information

New On-line Forum at the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work.

The European Agency has launched this Forum in February 2001. It offers the opportunity to exchange information on occupational safety and health topics. It is structured as Web-based board where one can leave messages with questions, answers, announcements, and comments. The languages of the Forum are English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

Three subjects are being covered:

- Good practice, related to occupational safety and health
- Health care sector
- Stress at work

This service is offered on the Web at: http://europe.osha.eu.int/good_practice/forums/

EMAS

Regulation (EC) No 761/2001 of the European parliament and of the council of 19 March 2001 allowing voluntary participation by organizations in a Community eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS). Published in: Official Journal of the European Communities L 114, Volume 44, 24 April 2001.

The objective of EMAS shall be to promote continual improvements in the environmental performance of organizations by:

- (a) the establishment and implementation of environmental management systems;
- (b) the systematic, objective and periodic evaluation of the performance of such systems;
- (c) the provision of information on environmental performance and an open dialogue with the public and other interested parties;
- (d) the active involvement of employees in the organization and appropriate initial and advanced training that makes active participation in the tasks possible.

EMAS shall be open to the participation of any organization dedicated to improving its overall environmental performance. In order for an organization to maintain registration to EMAS it shall have the environmental management system verified. Member States shall establish a system for the accreditation of independent environmental verifiers and for the supervision of their activities.

Biological Agents: Directive 2000/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 September 2000 on the protection of workers from risks related to exposure to biological agents at work, Official Journal L 262, 17/10/2000 p. 0021 – 0045

This Directive aims at the protection of workers against risks to their health and safety, arising or likely to arise from exposure to biological agents at work and also includes the prevention of such risks. It lays down particular minimum provisions in this area.

“Biological Agents” shall be classified into four risk groups, according to their level of risk of infection:

- Group 1 Biological Agent means one that is unlikely to cause human disease;
- Group 2 Biological Agent means one that can cause human disease and might be a hazard to workers; it is unlikely to spread to the community; there is usually effective prophylaxis or treatment available;
- Group 3 Biological Agent means one that can cause severe human disease and present a serious hazard to workers; it may present a risk of spreading to the community, but there is usually effective prophylaxis or treatment available;

- Group 4 Biological Agents means one that causes severe human disease and is a serious hazard to workers; it may present a high risk of spreading to the community; there is usually no effective prophylaxis or treatment available.

Scope - Determination and assessment of risks

1. This Directive shall apply to activities in which workers are or are potentially exposed to biological agents as a result of their work.
2. In the case of any activity likely to involve a risk of exposure to biological agents, the nature, degree and duration of workers' exposure must be determined in order to make it possible to assess any risk to the workers' health or safety and to lay down the measures to be taken.

In the case of activities involving exposure to several groups of biological agents, the risk shall be assessed on the basis of the danger presented by all hazardous biological agents present. The assessment must be renewed regularly and in any event when any change occurs in the conditions, which may affect workers' exposure to biological agents. The employer must supply the competent authorities, at their request, with the information used for making the assessment.

Kurt Lechnitz (E-mail: Kurt.Lechnitz@t-online.de)

News from the ILO

Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems

As mentioned on the last IOHA Newsletter, the ILO Draft Guidelines on OSH-MS were discussed (and adopted) at a Meeting of Experts held in Geneva from 19 to 27 April 2001. The Governing Body of the ILO approved the text of the Guidelines for publication at its 281st Session (June 2001), therefore the final version of the ILO Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health Management Systems is now available online at the SafeWork Homepage: <http://www.ilo.org/safework> .. The direct link is:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/managmnt/guide.htm>

Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Chapter 19 of AGENDA 21 recommended: *A globally harmonized hazard classification and compatible labelling system, including material safety data sheets and easily understandable symbols, should be available, if feasible, by the year 2000.*

The final proposal of the ILO Working Group on Harmonization of Chemical Hazard Communication - "Harmonized Hazard Communication Tools", for the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS), May 2001 is already available online. The direct link is:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/ghs/index.htm>

This document represents the final results of the ILO Working Group's consideration of harmonization of chemical hazard communication elements. The contents of the document were agreed at the 7th and last meeting of the Working Group which was held at ILO Headquarters in May 2001 in Geneva and were forwarded to the IOMC CG/HCCS at its May 2001 18th Consultation for incorporation into the final integrated GHS Document. This document will include the classification criteria, labeling elements, decision logic for classification and selection of labeling elements, as well as guidance on safety data sheets and on various aspects of the system as it applies to transport, work place or consumers. Upon its completion by the end of 2001, the Integrated GHS Document will be transmitted to the UN Sub-committee of Experts on the GHS within the United Nations Committee of Experts for the Transport of Dangerous Goods and Globally

Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, established in October 1999 by the UN Economic and Social Council to maintain and update the GHS.

This new system will provide a strong foundation for countries to use in developing, establishing and implementing comprehensive chemical hazard management strategies and will contribute considerably to raising standards of worker and consumer protection throughout the world.

Occupational Safety and Health in Agriculture

The ILO has very recent Convention and Recommendation on this important subject. The direct link is:

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/ilc/ilc89/comreps.htm>

Other recent ILO work

A brand new training package on stress, violence, alcohol and drugs, tobacco and HIV/AIDS has been produced (ILO Contact: Dr. David Gold, E-mail: gold@ilo.org)

InFocus Programme SafeWork
International Labour Office (ILO)
CH-1211, Geneva 22, Switzerland
E-mail: safework@ilo.org
Director: Dr Jukka Takala, E-mail : takala@ilo.org
Homepage: <http://www.ilo.org/safework/>

Conferences

International

XVIth World Congress on Safety and Health at Work - Innovation and Prevention 26 to 31 May 2002, Vienna, Austria

Organized by: Allgemeine Unfallversicherungsanstalt, ILO and International Social Security Association

Economic globalization and the rapid development of technology and communication have changed the nature of safety and health at work. New technologies and work patterns require a high degree of flexibility and adaptability to rapidly changing conditions. Innovation and prevention has therefore been selected as the motto for the XVIth World Congress on Safety and Health at Work. The World Congress is designed to form a unique platform for the discussion, with a worldwide perspective, of current inter-disciplinary issues relating to all aspects of prevention. More than 4,000 experts will meet at the World Congress. An innovative, attractive programme is on offer, with high-level experts from all over the world.

The deadline for abstracts/proposals for oral presentations was 15 December 2000, but poster-contributions as well as contributions for the film/multimedia festival are still being accepted.

E-mail enquiries: safety2002@auva.sozvers.at

Website: <http://www.safety2002.at>

Do not forget to visit <http://www.nyf.no/bergen2002>
for all the latest information about the
5th IOHA Scientific Conference
Bergen, Norway, 10-14 June, 2002



National

Brazilian Association of Occupational Hygienists (ABHO)

The Brazilian Association of Occupational Hygienists (ABHO) will be holding the VIII Brazilian Meeting of Occupational Hygienists ("VIII Encontro Brasileiro de Higienistas Ocupacionais"), from 16-20 September 2001 in São Paulo, Brazil

This meeting contributes to the development of our discipline in Brazil as it comprises lectures, technical panels (e.g., on chemical, biological and physical agents), special sessions (such as the very useful "Bring your Doubts"), courses, poster sessions, and exhibits. This year the important subject of Certification will be discussed and the proposal by ABHO will be presented. Other issues to be discussed include the use and control of chlorinated solvents, new Brazilian Standards on respectively Heat Stress and Indoor Air, hearing protection, among many others.

ABHO - Alameda dos Araés, 857. Planalto Paulista, São Paulo, SP, CEP 04066-002

Phone/Fax: +55-11-5052-3426

E-mail: abho@abho.com.br

E-mail for the meeting: encontro@abho.com.br

Web Site: <http://www.abho.com.br>

Mexican Industrial Hygiene Association (AMHI)

The Mexican Industrial Hygiene Association (AMHI) is preparing its 6th National Industrial Hygiene Conference - "Industrial Hygiene Compromise with Excellence", which is going to be held on September 26, 27 and 28 in Puebla city, Mexico, with 4 workshops on September 25. This national event is jointly organized with the Mexican Hygiene and Safety Association (AMHSAC).

This year, topics to be covered include Industrial Hygiene Management, Ergonomics, Toxicology, Hazardous Materials Management and Law and Regulations in Mexico. There will be participation from the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), Colombian Occupational Hygiene Association (ACHO) and American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA).

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