Protecting Workers' Health from Occupational Cancer

The Role of the Health and Safety Authority

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Senior Inspectors, HSA.

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Today's Focus

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Occupational cancer

Our regulatory approach

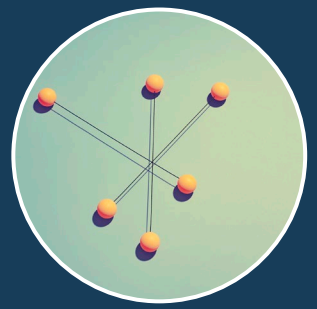
- Our Occupational Health team and priorities
- Building compliance through inspections and campaigns
- Supporting prevention through guidance and collaboration
- Next steps in our regulatory approach

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Protecting workers' health

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Chemical Risks



Chemicals

Asbestos

Confined spaces

Physical and biological risks



Physical

Biological

Ergonomic

Health Surveillance



Health surveillance

Sensitive risk groups

First aid

Psychosocial Risks



Psychosocial risks

Human factors

Education & supports



eLearning

BeSMART

Safety reps

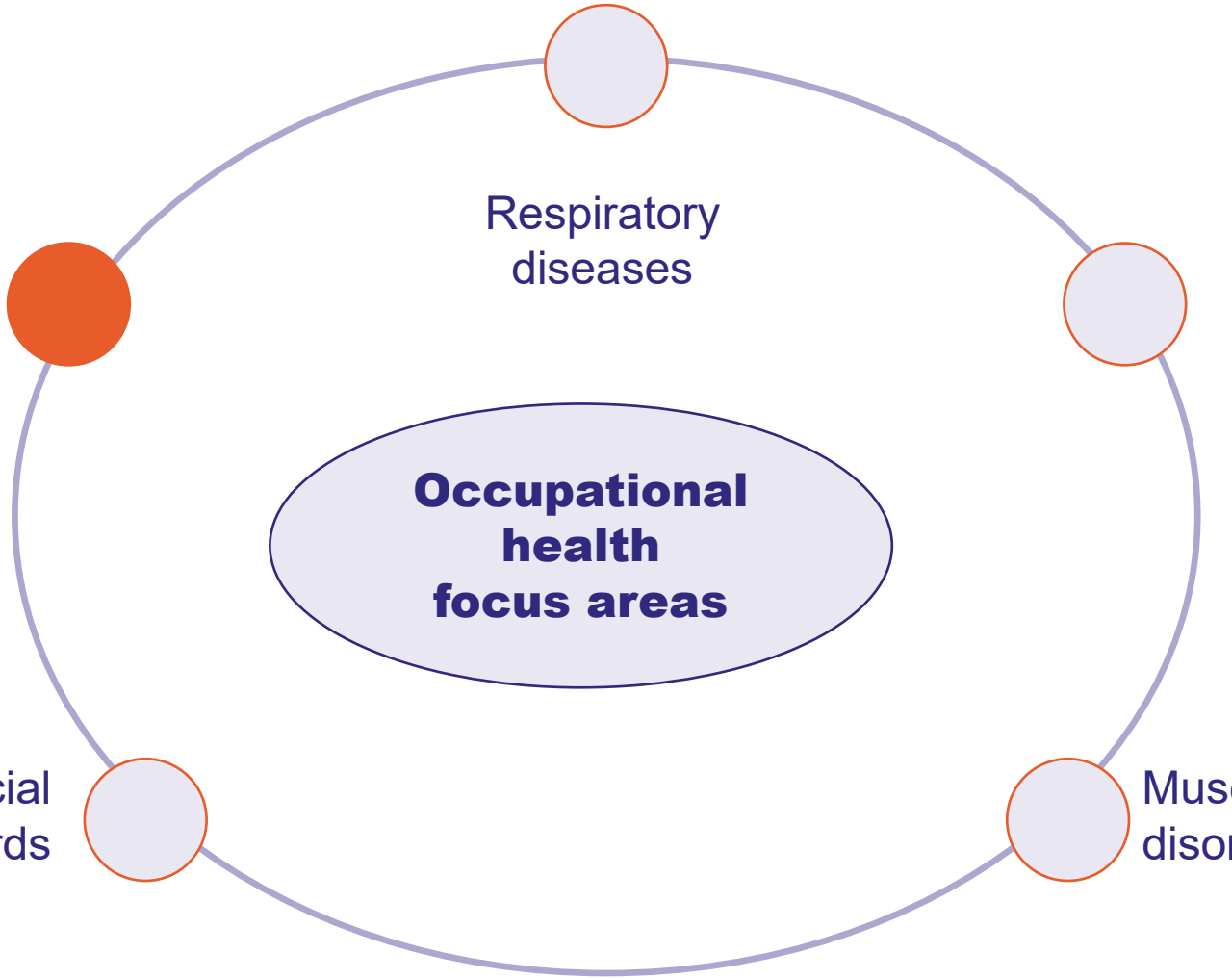
A multidisciplinary approach

Combined expertise to prevent work-related ill health

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Occupational cancer in focus

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Today's focus: preventing occupational cancer.

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Occupational Health Activity
2021–2025

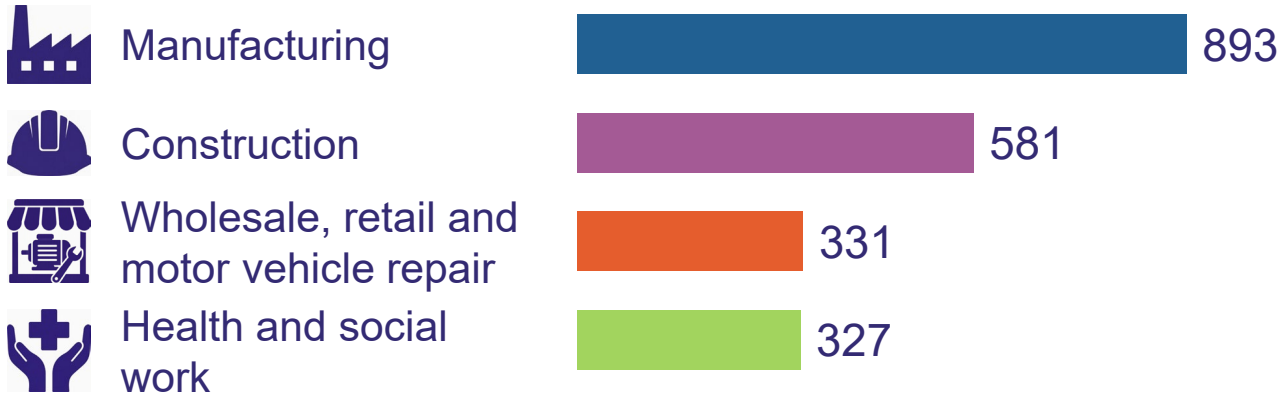
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2,971
Workplace inspections

580
Occupational health queries

1,656
Asbestos notifications

Workplace inspections by sectors



Inspection reports & notices

2,971 total

2,277	Inspection Reports
569	Advice issued
57	Prohibition Notices
62	Improvement Notices
6	Contravention Notices

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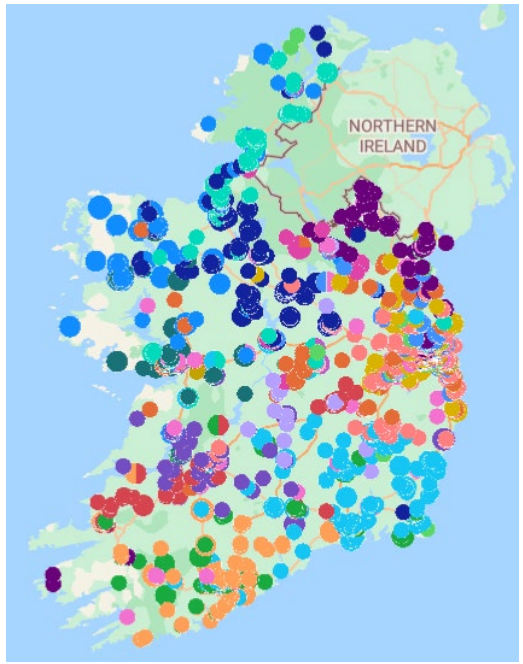
Strategic priority 1: Build and Support Compliance

Asbestos: Inspections & permit controls
2021-2025

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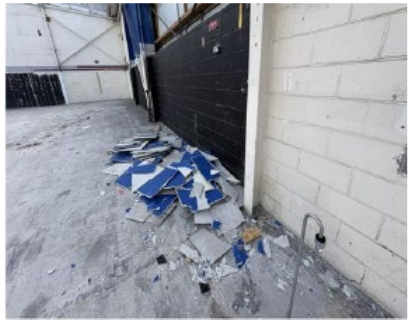
452	302	46	13	1,123
Asbestos inspections	Inspection reports	Prohibition Notices	Improvement Notices	Asbestos Notifications 2026

Inspection locations



Observations during inspections

POOR CONTROL



Damaged material



Uncontrolled debris

GOOD CONTROL



Enclosure work area



Enclosure and extraction equipment

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Strategic priority 1: Build and Support Compliance

Safer Alloy Wheel Refurbishment

Paint stripper containing > 0.1% Dichloromethane (DCM)

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BEFORE | NON-COMPLIANCE

Unsafe Processes Manual DCM decanting, wheel lowering and sludge removal.

Poor Ventilation Limited local exhaust or general ventilation.

Lack Of Awareness of REACH Restriction for DCM

Reliance on PPE poor respirator maintenance.



Open tanks and lack of LEV



Manual handling with limited controls



CONTROLS INTRODUCED

AFTER | COMPLIANCE

Safer processes Elimination of requirement to use paint stripper by engineering process

Substitution paint stripper containing >0.1% DCM replaced with less hazardous alternative.

Technical measures to ensure that the limit values for DCM are not exceeded.

Increase Awareness of conditions for use of paint stripper containing > 0.1% DCM set out in REACH Annex XVII, Entry No. 59.

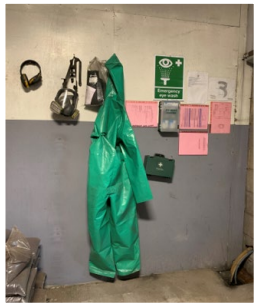
BESMART Risk assessment tool made available to employers



Eliminate DCM



Substitute DCM



Air-fed RPE

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Strategic priority 1: Build and Support Compliance

Respirable Crystalline Silica Campaigns

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All-Island Construction Silica Dust Campaign

HSA and HSENI joint initiative across both jurisdictions.

799 inspections. Only **35%** of sites had adequate RCS controls.

Engineered Stone Silica Dust Campaign

High percentage of wet cutting and engineering controls.

However, more than half used dry sweeping, a significant secondary exposure risk. No RPE fit testing or health surveillance programmes in place.

Quarry campaign with HSA and ICF

Quarry Dust Campaign (Ongoing)

HSA and ICF (Irish Concrete Federation) nationwide partnership.

Focus on dust hazards across quarry operations, including maintenance activities.

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Strategic priority 1: Build and Support Compliance

Prosecution cases

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Employer / year	Key failure	Outcome
Drummonds Ltd **2012**	Failure to provide safe system of work for accessing confined space resulting in a double fatality.	**€125,000 fine**
Leeside Cut & Core Contractors Ltd **2018**	Uncontrolled demolition in Mallow damaged asbestos ceiling tiles and exposed workers to fibres.	**€50,000 fine**
McAleer & Rushe Contracts UK Ltd **2020**	Exposure of construction workers to asbestos fibres during renovation of an office building having failed to identify presence of asbestos	**€100,000 fine**

Sources: HSA annual reports.

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EU collaboration and legislation

Technical input

Support the Department on occupational health regulations and update Code of Practices on occupational exposure limits and biological limit values.

Inspection experience informs legislation

Findings from workplaces can contribute to national legislation and EU discussions.

European cooperation

Contribute through EU committees and working groups such as CHEMEX.

Partnering with key stakeholder group such as the European wide voluntary action scheme S.T.O.P. Carcinogens at Work.

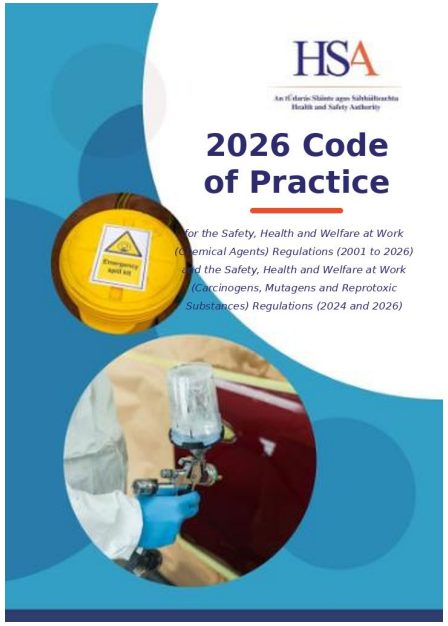
Stakeholder consultation

Bring employer and worker perspectives into proposed legislative changes through public consultation.

Promotion through guidance

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Practical resources available on our website from recognising carcinogens to controlling exposure and monitoring workers' health.









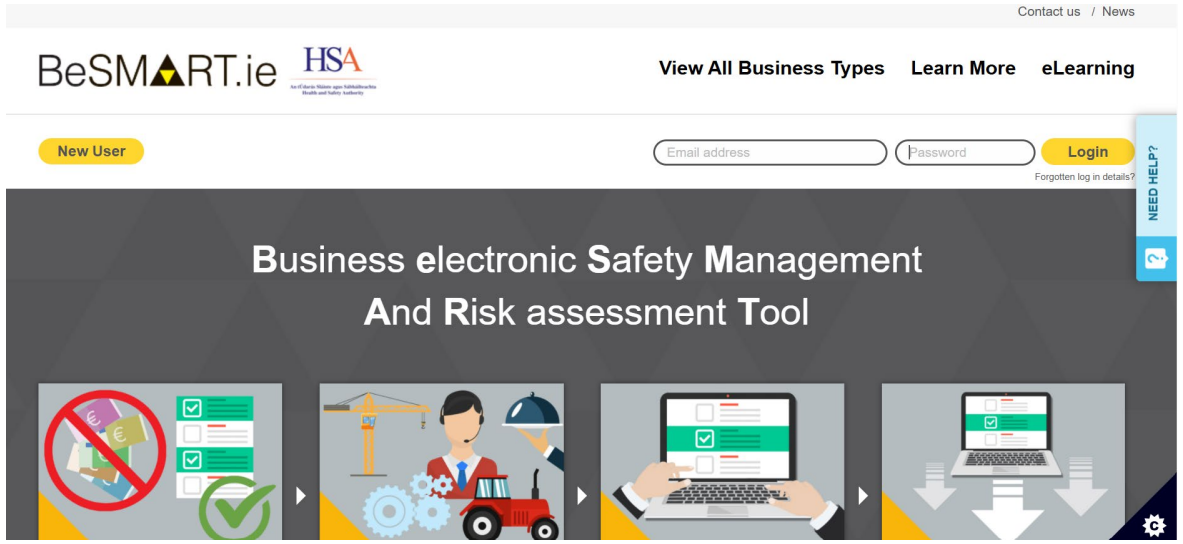
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Accessible guidance helps workplaces put prevention into practice.

Strategic priority 2: Influence, Educate and Collaborate

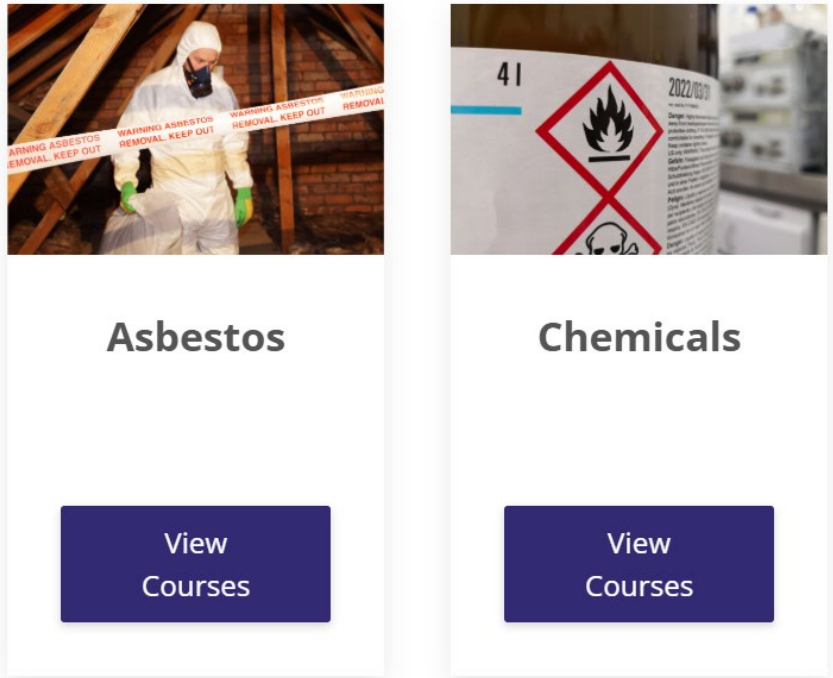
Promotion through Learning and etools

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Free online tools for workplace risk assessments and safety statements.

HSA hsalearning.ie HSA Online Courses



HSA online courses

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Guidance for prevention

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Helping employers and workers put prevention into practice

Silica health risks

Fine silica dust can enter the lungs and cause silicosis and lung cancer.

Dust control measures

Control dust using water suppression or extraction. Respiratory protection is the last line of defence.

Worker awareness

Use HSA information sheets and posters to discuss silica risks and protective measures with workers.

- General Information - Dust Including Silica Dust
- Crystalline Silica Dust - Information Sheet
- Silica Dust - What Is it? Information Sheet for Employees
- Silica Dust - What Is It? Poster
- Chemical Agents Code of Practice 2026
- HSENI Silica Dust Information & Resources
- Silica Dust - An Unseen Killer
- Press Release

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Partnership Media Campaign

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PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

Mind your lungs on the job

Irish Cancer Society × HSA × CIF × CWHT

← Post

Irish Cancer Society
@IrishCancerSoc

🦺 Staying safe on #construction sites means keeping your lungs safe too. 🚧 If you're exposed to diesel fumes, dusts, chemicals, paints or asbestos, you may be more at risk of #LungCancer

👉Learn more cancer.ie/cancer-informa... #ConstructionLife #MensHealth @TheHSA @CIF_Ireland

Collaboration connected cancer prevention with the everyday exposures faced by construction workers.

Official Irish Cancer Society campaign post • 19 November 2025

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Strategic priority 2: Influence, Educate and Collaborate

Key Stakeholders

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Working together to prevent occupational cancer

Stakeholders

Employers and sector partners
Practical knowledge of workplaces
Workers and their representatives
Experience of exposure and controls
Professional and technical bodies
Specialist health and safety expertise
Cancer prevention organisations
Awareness and prevention messages

Proposed collaboration priorities

- Share expertise and inspection evidence
- Coordinate guidance on carcinogens and exposure controls
- Support prevention in workplaces

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S.T.O.P. CARCINOGENS AT WORK
Irish Cancer Society
50 YEARS FACULTY OF OCCUPATIONAL MEDICINE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF IRELAND
iosh
OHSI OCCUPATIONAL HYGIENE SOCIETY OF IRELAND
BREATHE FREELY IRELAND
CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FEDERATION
IRISH CONCRETE FEDERATION Set for life

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Contributing to stakeholder events

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Effective learning in our regulatory approach

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Supporting compliance	Combine targeted inspections with practical guidance on workplace controls.
Informing workplaces	Link awareness campaigns to clear advice on recognising carcinogens and controlling exposure.Producing guidance on outcomes
Working with partners	Bring regulators and sector partners together around a specific prevention message.

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Shared aim: preventing exposure and protecting workers' health

Next steps in our regulatory approach

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Learning from inspections	Use findings from our inspections to inform HSA priorities and guidance.
Prevention in practice	Support employers in Ireland to put effective workplace exposure controls into practice.
Evidence of progress	Strengthen how we assess whether workplace exposure controls are improving.
Updating the framework	Support Irish transposition of CMRD 6 and update HSA COP & guidance's for employers.

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Go raibh maith agaibh
Thank you

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