

Health and Safety Executive inspections focus on occupational lung disease

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is inspecting fabricated metal businesses across Great Britain to check that they are managing the respiratory risks of welding fumes and metalworking fluids.

From today, World Asthma Day 2021, health and safety inspectors across GB will be targeting businesses whose workers undertake welding and use metalworking fluids to check that they are complying with the [welding fumes guidance](#) and [metalworking fluid guidance](#). During the visits, dutyholders will need to demonstrate they have measures in place to manage risks to protect their workers from [occupational lung disease](#) and 'WorkRight' to keep workers healthy and safe.

Last year in the UK, 12,000 people died from lung diseases estimated to be linked to past exposure, from work in a range of sectors. There is scientific evidence that exposure to welding fumes can cause lung cancer and exposure to metalworking fluids can cause a range of lung diseases, including occupational asthma and occupational hypersensitivity pneumonitis (OHP), which are debilitating diseases with life changing impact.

Inspectors will be looking for evidence of employers and workers knowing the risks, planning their work and using the right controls to protect workers' health. If necessary, they will use enforcement to make sure workers are protected.

While the primary focus will be on lung health during this programme of inspections, if an HSE inspector identifies any other areas of concern, they will take the necessary enforcement action to ensure these are dealt with. This will include making sure that businesses are COVID-secure and doing all they can to protect their workers from the risk of coronavirus.

HSE's Acting Head of Manufacturing and Utilities Unit, Clare Owen, said: "12,000 people died last year from lung diseases estimated to be linked to past exposure from work, with thousands more cases of ill-health and working days lost. We want businesses whose workers use metalworking fluids and undertake welding activities to take action now to protect their workers' respiratory health.

"Through visiting metal fabrication businesses, our inspectors are able to speak to a range of dutyholders and look at the measures they have in place to comply with the law and protect workers from lung diseases such as occupational asthma and lung cancer.

"Our inspection initiative aims to ensure employers and workers are aware of the risks associated with the activities they do. They must recognise these

dangers and manage these risks through reducing exposure. Dutyholders need to do the right thing, for example, through completing a risk assessment, ensuring workers are trained and reducing exposure using local exhaust ventilation (LEV) and using suitable respiratory protective equipment (RPE) to protect workers, where required.”

For more information on the programme of inspections follow the campaign on Twitter at @H_S_E or on Facebook @hsegovuk. You can also join the conversation at #WorkRight and sign up for HSE’s [e-bulletin here](#).

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We prevent work-related death, injury and ill health through regulatory actions that range from influencing behaviours across whole industry sectors through to targeted interventions on individual businesses. These activities are supported by globally recognised scientific expertise. hse.gov.uk
2. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>
3. The inspection programme will be supported by HSE’s ‘WorkRight’ campaign, aimed to influence employer behaviour by encouraging fabricated metal businesses to download free guidance and advice, increasing knowledge and capability to protect workers’ health.

The post [Health and Safety Executive inspections focus on occupational lung disease](#) appeared first on [HSE Media Centre](#).