Working together to eliminate occupational cancer

Austrian focus campaign on carcinogens

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Working Together

The Austrian Campaign wasn't a stand alone campaign of the labour inspection but an focused effort of mainly two big public players in workplace safety: AUVA (the Austrian Workers' Compensation Board) and the Austrian Labour Inspection.

Others institutions took part while e.g., holding conferences, publishing articles and informing safety representatives.
The European context

Austrian Campaign on Carcinogens

Carcinogens - a focus of the Austrian Labour Inspection
Two short years – and going on

• Due to the long-term effects other results than the reduced number of workplace related cancer have to be taken into account

• Main task: awareness and knowledge

• Over 600 enterprises monitored by the labour inspection

• Over 100.000 enterprises consulted by AUVA

• The AUVA campaign is extended until 2020

• Silica dust will be in the focus of the labour inspection 2020
Interwoven actions – 1st wave of Labour inspection’s campaign

• AUVA and the Labour Inspection matched the design of their campaigns

• Mid 2017 the labour inspection started with the 1st wave of the campaign

  - 1st wave: 300 preselected enterprises of a stratified sample out of a database of ~ 1000 enterprises – mostly welders and metal workers, other carcinogens like arsenic, benzene etc.

  - All of those enterprises had employees who were subject to health surveillance

- the knowledge that a carcinogen is used was available
Interwoven actions – start of AUVA campaign

• 2018 AUVA started their campaign - new material for employers and employees in certain “big” sectors where carcinogens are widely used

• Official kick off in May 2018 at the biggest Austrian OSH-event
2nd wave of labour inspection's campaign

- Same number of monitored enterprises and same geographical distribution than during 1st wave

- Approach: the 1st wave helped to establish a pattern and routine, now “new” tasks could be tackled

- The used questionnaire was nearly the same - only 1 short page, based on specific §§

- Same experts of the labour inspection including some “new” faces, depending on local management's decision deepening and broadening of the expert base

Roadmap on Carcinogens Conference 28.11.2019
2nd wave – who was monitored?

Based on information material by AUVA and earlier campaigns:

- Hospitals and veterinars: cytostatics, formaldehyde and chirurgical fumes
- Diesel motor exhausts while loading
- Laundries for work wear
- Swimming pool welders (confined spaces outdoor, small enterprises)
- Chimney refurbishers
2019 – already the end?

- As the official end of the 2nd wave and AUVAs campaign was fast approaching it was clear: long term targets need long term action

- Raising of awareness is the necessary first step, but only one of many

- “new” carcinogens like silica dust need extra attention

- Design of a silica campaign by the labour inspection for 2020 and the prolongation of the carcinogens campaign by AUVA

Roadmap on Carcinogens Conference 28.11.2019
This was good to know, but what about the results?
Multimedial approach

AUVA clip on occupational hygiene, while using carcinogens
Other newly developed material and media

• Labour inspection website:
  – Collection of good practice
  – Checklists for enterprises
  – Register of dangerous substances

• AUVA website: database on dangerous substances users replenish with more and more information

• National kick off with good practice example was in the prime-time news
Knowledge – without it nothing works

Are OELs kept (1st and 2 wave)?

- OELS kept 51%
- OELS exceeded 10%
- Unknown 39%

(un)known exposition 2nd wave

- OELS kept 48%
- OELS not kept 3%
- Unknown exposition 38%
- Unknown use and exposition 11%
- Unknown 39%
Number of exposed employees
Other eye openers

• Influence of single persons (in management) is huge – the same enterprise can act different in different departments -Top-Down!

• Over ¾ of the deficiencies could be solved in few weeks

• Many measures can be tackled swiftly and with limited investment – but only if people/management is aware of the problem

• Good practice examples are a huge support for enterprises