

This checklist will help persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) in the construction industry to identify the hazards that can cause occupational lung diseases in their workers.

Prior to construction commencing, and during the different stages of a construction build or demolition, you should observe your work environment to assess the potential hazards as these may change during the different phases of construction. This includes checking the construction site, administration areas and lunchrooms for any hazards.

Regularly looking at your workplace and how your workers conduct their work will help you to identify when things change, such as there being more dusts than usual, or if gases, fumes or vapours are present.

Identification is the first step in managing work, health and safety (WHS) risks. If you identify a hazard by using the checklist below, you should do a **workplace risk assessment.**

 Look at your workplace	Yes	No
Do your workers use machinery or equipment such as power tools that generate dusts or fumes? <i>In the construction industry a lot of the tools and equipment used can create dusts or fumes when workers cut, shape, grind, or weld material.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your workers using materials that release dusts or vapours when machined, applied, handled or spread? <i>Some materials like stone, wood and concrete release fine dust particles or vapours into the air that are not always visible.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use hazardous chemicals? <i>Inhaling vapours from solvents, adhesives, paints, stains and varnishes can damage your lungs.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you undertake any activities that may disturb asbestos? <i>Disturbing asbestos can release fine dust particles that can become airborne and if inhaled, they may lead to lung diseases.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is work done inside or in an enclosed space? <i>Working inside or in an enclosed space may mean there is less ventilation and dusts, gases, fumes and vapours are more likely to be breathed in.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you see anything in the air, such as dust plumes or vapours when workers are cutting concrete or wood, or when welding? <i>If you can see substances in the air, such as dusts, they have the potential to be breathed in if unprotected.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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 **Look at your workplace (continued)** Yes No

Can you smell anything when walking around your workplace? For example, when resins or paint are being used.

Not all hazards can be seen or smelled. Hazards like vapours and fumes can be invisible. If you can smell it though, you're also breathing it in.

Can you see coatings of dusts, gases, fumes or vapour residue on surfaces? For example, on machinery, equipment, windows or work surfaces.

Looking at how clean machinery or surfaces are can help indicate the presence of dusts, gases, fumes or vapours in the air – even if you can't see it in the air.

Is the filter warning light on any of your workers' tools?

Are your workers covered in dusts while working?

Exposure to dusts can cause irritation, allergies and even lung diseases. If workers are covered in dusts it could indicate that your work practices are not controlled, and their risk of exposure is higher. If so, it's important your workers stop work, identify the hazards and re-assess the task applying appropriate control measures.

Do certain work tasks like drilling concrete or working with chemicals make your workers cough?

If workers cough during specific tasks, it may mean that they are breathing in hazardous substances. If so, it's important you stop work, identify the hazards and re-assess the task applying appropriate control measures.

 **Talk and consult with your workers** Yes No

When you consult with your workers, are they telling you that they see, smell, or feel the effects of dusts, gases, fumes, or vapours? Do they know the risks of breathing it in?

Your workers will be able to tell you if their work produces dusts, gases, fumes and vapours. You must then manage work processes to eliminate or reduce the risk of exposure.

Do you consult with your workers and listen to their concerns about their work processes to help you change how they conduct work to eliminate or minimise their exposure?

As person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU), you have a duty of care to ensure workers are not exposed to health and safety risks. Listening to your workers can provide valuable information about hazards and risks in the workplace which you can then manage appropriately.

Have you completed a **risk assessment** in consultation with workers or your Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) to help identify the risks and controls required to reduce workplace exposure.

Consultation with workers and HSRs is required at each step of the risk management process. By drawing on their knowledge and experience, you can identify hazards and choose effective control measures.



Not all workplace hazards are visible.

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Check labels and safety data sheets Yes No

Have you checked any relevant safety data sheets, labels and/or product information and understood the health and safety information in it?

Find out more at:

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/suppliers-and-users-workplace-hazardous-chemicals-transition-ghs-7>

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/topic/labelling-chemicals>

A safety data sheet provides detailed information on a hazardous chemical. It is important to read and understand this information before working with a hazardous chemical so that it can be safely stored, handled or used in the workplace.

Read our [Using safety data sheets: identify the hazards that can cause occupational lung diseases information sheet](#) at swa.gov.au/clearlungs.

Are there workplace exposure standards for materials that you use?

Exposure to substances or mixtures in the workplace can occur through inhalation, absorption through the skin, or ingestion. Regulatory agencies set the limits to which workers can be exposed to particular hazards. These are known as "*Workplace Exposure Standards*". PCBUs must aim to limit exposure to as low as reasonably practicable, even if they meet the workplace exposure standards.

Specialist equipment or training by an occupational hygienist may be needed to determine the difference between safe levels of dusts, gases, fumes or vapours and levels that are harmful to workers.

WHS regulator Yes No

Have you looked for guidance on your [WHS regulator's](#) website?

Your WHS regulator is responsible for regulating and enforcing WHS laws in their jurisdiction. Contact them if you have any questions specific to your workplace.

For more information, read our 'How to identify the hazards that can cause occupational lung diseases in construction workers – information sheet' at swa.gov.au/clearlungs.