

R147 - Occupational Cancer Recommendation, 1974 (No. 147)

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Preamble

The General Conference of the International Labour Organisation,

Having been convened at Geneva by the Governing Body of the International Labour Office, and having met in its Fifty-ninth Session on 5 June 1974, and

Noting the terms of the Radiation Protection Convention and Recommendation, 1960, and of the Benzene Convention and Recommendation, 1971, and

Considering that it is desirable to establish international standards concerning protection against carcinogenic substances or agents, and

Taking account of the relevant work of other international organisations, and in particular of the World Health Organisation and the International Agency for Research on Cancer, with which the International Labour Organisation collaborates, and

Having decided upon the adoption of certain proposals regarding control and prevention of occupational hazards caused by carcinogenic substances and agents, which is the fifth item on the agenda of the session, and

Having determined that these proposals shall take the form of a Recommendation,

adopts this twenty-fourth day of June of the year one thousand nine hundred and seventy-four, the following Recommendation, which may be cited as the Occupational Cancer Recommendation, 1974:

I. General Provisions

1. Every effort should be made to replace carcinogenic substances and agents to which workers may be exposed in the course of their work by non-carcinogenic substances or agents or by less harmful substances or agents; in the choice of substitute substances or agents account should be taken of their carcinogenic, toxic and other properties.
2. The number of workers exposed to carcinogenic substances or agents and the duration and degree of such exposure should be reduced to the minimum compatible with safety.
3.
 - (1) The competent authority should prescribe the measures to be taken to protect workers against the risks of exposure to carcinogenic substances or agents.
 - (2) The competent authority should keep the measures prescribed up to date, taking into account the codes of practices or guides which may be established by the International Labour Office and the conclusions of meetings of experts which may be convened by the International Labour Office, as well as information from other competent bodies.
4.
 - (1) Employers should make every effort to use work processes which do not cause the formation, and particularly the emission in the working environment, of carcinogenic substances or agents, as main products, intermediates, by-products, waste

products or otherwise.

(2) Where complete elimination of a carcinogenic substance or agent is not possible, employers should use all appropriate measures, in consultation with the workers and their organisations and in the light of advice from competent sources, including occupational health services, to eliminate exposure or reduce it to a minimum in terms of numbers exposed, duration of exposure and degree of exposure.

(3) In cases to be determined by the competent authority, the employer should make arrangements for the systematic surveillance of the duration and degree of exposure to carcinogenic substances or agents in the working environment.

(4) Where carcinogenic substances or agents are transported or stored, all appropriate measures should be taken to prevent leakage or contamination.

5. Workers and others involved in occupational situations in which the risk of exposure to carcinogenic substances or agents may occur should conform to the safety procedures laid down and make proper use of all equipment furnished for their protection or the protection of others.

II. Preventive Measures

6. The competent authority should periodically determine the carcinogenic substances and agents to which occupational exposure should be prohibited or made subject to authorisation or control, and those to which other provisions of this Recommendation apply.

7. In making such determinations the competent authority should give consideration to the latest information contained in the codes of practice or guides which may be established by the International Labour Office, and in the conclusions of meetings of experts which may be convened by the International Labour Office, as well as to information from other competent bodies.

8. The competent authority may permit exemptions from prohibition by issue of a certificate specifying in each case--

(a) the technical, hygiene and personal protection measures to be applied;

(b) the medical supervision or other tests or investigations to be carried out;

(c) the records to be maintained; and

(d) the professional qualifications required of those dealing with the supervision of exposure to the substance or agent in question.

9.

(1) For substances and agents subject to authorisation or control, the competent authority should--

(a) secure the necessary advice, particularly as regards the existence of substitute products or methods and the technical, hygiene and personal protection measures to be applied, as well as the medical supervision or other tests or investigations to be carried out before, during and after assignment to work involving exposure to the substances or agents in question;

(b) require the institution of such measures as are appropriate,

(2) The competent authority should further establish the criteria for determining the degree of exposure to the substances or agents in question, and where appropriate should specify levels as indicators for surveillance of the working environment in connection with the technical preventive measures required.

10. The competent authority should keep the determination of carcinogenic substances and agents made in pursuance of this Part of this Recommendation up to date.

III. Supervision of Health of Workers

11. Provision should be made, by laws or regulations or any other method consistent with national practice and conditions, for all workers assigned to work involving exposure to specified carcinogenic substances or agents to undergo as appropriate--

(a) a pre-assignment medical examination;

(b) periodic medical examinations at suitable intervals;

(c) biological or other tests and investigations which may be necessary to evaluate their exposure and supervise their state of health in relation to the occupational hazards.

12. The competent authority should ensure that provision is made for appropriate medical examinations or biological or other tests or investigations to continue to be available to the worker after cessation of the assignment referred to in Paragraph 11 of this Recommendation.

13. The examinations, tests and investigations provided for in Paragraphs 11 and 12 of this Recommendation should be carried out as far as possible in working hours and should be free of cost to the workers.

14. If as the result of any action taken in pursuance of this Recommendation it is inadvisable to subject a worker to further exposure to carcinogenic substances or agents in that worker's normal employment, every reasonable effort should be made to provide such a worker with suitable alternative employment.

15.

(1) The competent authority should establish and maintain, where practicable and as soon as possible, in association with individual employers and representatives of workers, a system for the prevention and control of occupational cancer including-

(a) the institution, maintenance, preservation and transfer of records; and

(b) exchange of information.

(2) In establishing such a system of records and exchange of information, account should be taken of the assistance which may be provided by international and national organisations, including organisations of employers and workers, and by individual employers.

(3) In the case of closure of an undertaking, records and information held in compliance with this Paragraph should be dealt with in accordance with the directions of the competent authority.

(4) In any country in which the competent authority does not establish such a system of records and information, the employer, in consultation with representatives of workers, should make every effort to attain the objectives of this Paragraph.

IV. Information and Education

16.

(1) The competent authority should promote epidemiological and other studies and collect and disseminate information relevant to occupational cancer risks, with the assistance as appropriate of international and national organisations, including organisations of employers and workers.

(2) It should endeavour to establish the criteria for determining the carcinogenicity of substances and agents.

17. The competent authority should draw up suitable educational guides for both employers and workers on substances and agents liable to give rise to occupational cancer.

18. Employers should seek information, especially from the competent authority, on carcinogenic hazards which may arise with regard to any substance or agent introduced or to be introduced into the undertaking; when a carcinogenic potential is suspected, they should decide in consultation with the competent authority on the additional studies to be carried out.

19. Employers should ensure that in the case of any substance or agent which is carcinogenic there is at the workplace an appropriate indication to any worker who may be liable to exposure of the danger which may arise.

20. Employers should instruct their workers before assignment and regularly thereafter, as well as on introduction of a new carcinogenic substance or agent, on the dangers of exposure to carcinogenic substances and agents and on the measures to be taken.

21. Employers' and workers' organisations should take positive action to carry out programmes of information and education with regard to the hazards of occupational cancer, and should encourage their members to participate fully in programmes of prevention and control.

V. Measures of Application

22. Each Member should--

- (a) by laws or regulations or any other method consistent with national practice and conditions, take such steps, including the provision of appropriate penalties, as may be necessary to give effect to the provisions of this Recommendation;
- (b) in accordance with national practice, specify the bodies or persons on whom the obligation of compliance with the provisions of this Recommendation rests;
- (c) provide appropriate inspection services for the purpose of supervising the application of the provisions of this Recommendation, or satisfy itself that appropriate inspection is carried out.

23. In applying the provisions of this Recommendation, the competent authority should consult with the most representative organisations of employers and workers concerned.

See related
Key Information
Recommendation concerning Prevention and Control of Occupational Hazards caused by Carcinogenic Substances and Agents
Adoption: Geneva, 59th ILC session (24 Jun 1974) Status: Up-to-date instrument.
See also
Submissions to competent authorities by country