

# WORKPLACES



People at work are exposed to many occupational risks – including high levels of dust, noise, vibration, heat, toxic chemicals, pathogens, ergonomic risks and unsafe equipment – leading to occupational diseases and injuries. Psychosocial factors, such as harassment, shift work, long working hours, and precarious employment, affect physical and mental health and well-being and lead to health inequalities. Improving health at work requires regulations and measures for occupational health and safety, enabling healthy behaviours and provision of occupational health services.

People in unofficial employment often face particular health hazards.

# PRIORITY SETTINGS FOR ACTION



## 1.2 M

At least 1.2 million deaths were due to occupational risks in 2015.

## 3%

About 3% of the global disease burden is due to occupational risks.

## 70%

Noncommunicable diseases contribute 70% to the total occupational disease burden.

## OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE BURDEN BY SELECTED OCCUPATIONAL RISKS:

(IN DISABILITY-ADJUSTED LIFE-YEARS)



## 28%

Occupational carcinogens  
(20 682 726 DALYs)



## 29%

Occupational injuries  
(22 028 767 DALYs)



## 21%

Occupational ergonomic factors  
(15 479 932 DALYs)



## 13%

Occupational particulate matter, gases, and fumes  
(9 377 104 DALYs)



## 10%

Occupational noise  
(7 108 277 DALYs)



Construction workers carrying wood.

# WHAT ARE KEY ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT?

Key actions on workplaces and occupational health include the following:

## 1.

### **Cooperation**

Strengthen the cooperation of the health and labour sectors to achieve healthier and safer work environments and improve the health and well-being of working people.

## 2.

### **Regulations**

Implement occupational safety and health regulations to protect workers from work-related health problems.

## 3.

### **Monitoring**

Monitor the status of workers' health and its determinants at the national, local and workplace levels.

## 4.

### **Primary prevention**

Foster the primary prevention of occupational health risks based on the hierarchy of controls: replace and substitute harmful products and processes, use engineering and administrative controls and personal protective equipment.

## 5.

### **Essential interventions and basic health services**

Ensure access of all workers to essential interventions and basic health services for prevention and control of occupational and work-related diseases and injuries, including workplace risk assessment, case management of occupational diseases and health surveillance of workers.

# MAIN WHO ACTIONS

WHO actions on workplaces and occupational health include the following:

## National policies

Provide technical support for the development of national policies on workers' health.

## Early detection

Develop methods for early detection of the most common occupational diseases.

## Global observatory

Establish a global observatory for workers' health, covering the state of workers' health and its determinants.

## Primary care

Provide technical support to countries for integrating work-related health aspects into people-centred primary care.

## Country capacity

Strengthen country capacity for protecting the health and safety of health workers.

## Emergencies

Develop tools for management of occupational health and safety in public health emergencies.

## Vulnerable situations

Synthesize and disseminate evidence and good practices for protecting the health of workers in vulnerable situations, such as those in the informal sector and small-scale farming, and migrant workers.

# SECTORAL POLICIES INTERACTING WITH WORKERS' HEALTH

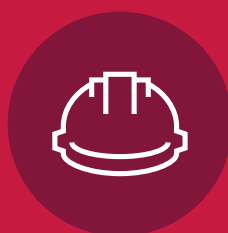
Cooperation with the following sectors may be required to sustainably reduce risks to health:



Industry



Agriculture



Labour



Health



Energy



Transport

Further information: [http://www.who.int/occupational\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/occupational_health/en/).

Source: <http://www.who.int/phe/publications/healthy-environments/en/index.html>, WHO, 2019



World Health  
Organization