



# 2017–2022 HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS AND MATERIALS EXPOSURES BASELINE AND REDUCTION STRATEGY

OCTOBER 2017



**LET'S TALK SAFETY**

The SafeWork NSW Work Health and Safety Roadmap 2022 is a plan to improve work health and safety, workers compensation and return to work in NSW. The document is in three parts known as Action Areas:

- **Action Area 1:** Embed the health and safety landscape in NSW workplaces
- **Action Area 2:** Focus on Key priority areas and harms
- **Action Area 3:** Exemplar Regulator

*The Hazardous Chemicals and Materials Exposures Baseline Reduction Strategy* (the Strategy) directly aligns to Action Area 2 with exposure to hazardous chemicals identified as a key priority area/harm.

Through the implementation of the Strategy, the level and impact of workplace exposures to hazardous chemicals will be identified and reduced.

Exposure to hazardous chemicals can occur through:

- Skin absorption
- Inhalation
- Ingestion

Reducing high levels of exposure to hazardous chemicals at work through the safe use, storage and handling of chemicals is an essential part of creating a healthy, safe and productive workplace.

## 10 PRIORITY CHEMICALS

1. Formaldehyde	6. Methylene Chloride
2. Crystalline Silica	7. Isocyanates
3. Chromates VI	8. Methyl Bromide
4. Benzene	9. Xylene
5. Carbon Monoxide	10. Acrylamide

The initial focus of the project will be on the top two priority chemicals: Formaldehyde and Crystalline Silica.



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/health-and-safety/safety-topics-a-z/hazardous-chemical>

## KEY OBJECTIVES

1. Deliver Action Area II of the WHS RoadMap 2022 by eliminating or significantly reducing workplace exposures to hazardous chemicals by 30% through the improvement in WHS outcomes and effecting sustainable change in business practices and workplace behaviours.
2. Research and adopt International best practice test methods for early detection of silicosis and other occupational respiratory diseases to prevent serious illness occurring (health monitoring requirements under Schedule 14 WHS Regulation).
3. Initiate legislative change requiring mandatory reporting of all occupational respiratory diseases and/or working above Australian Workplace Exposure Standards, in conjunction with relevant industry; regulatory; or worker taskforce.
4. Influence changes to Australian Workplace Exposure Standards which adopt international best practice exposure limits for Crystalline Silica.
5. Disseminate and support international best practice controls to achieve reduction in workplace exposures.
6. Identify and reduce gaps to meet the needs of at risk workers, particularly young people and culturally and linguistically diverse workplaces to improve key messaging reach.

## These will be achieved through:

### Consultation and collaboration



- Gaining insight from key stakeholders to determine the priority list of hazardous chemicals.
- Producing initiatives, services and products in partnership with key stakeholders.
- Collaborating with Dust Diseases Care to introduce a NSW register for occupational lung diseases.
- Working with project partners to determine international best practice for health monitoring of occupational lung disease.
- Partnering with State Insurance Regulatory Authority (SIRA) to promote and secure the return to work of injured workers.
- Working with SafeWork Australia to adopt international best practice Workplace Exposure Standards for Crystalline Silica.

### Supporting businesses and workers



- Undertaking workplace assessments to identify exposure levels and verify control measures.
- Engaging with business to build their knowledge and skills to eliminate or reduce exposures to hazardous chemicals.
- Promoting and encouraging good work practices in the safe use of hazardous chemicals.
- Designing practical tools and guidance.
- Developing material to assist and inform workers and workplaces on the safe use, storage and handling of hazardous chemicals.

### Evidence based interventions



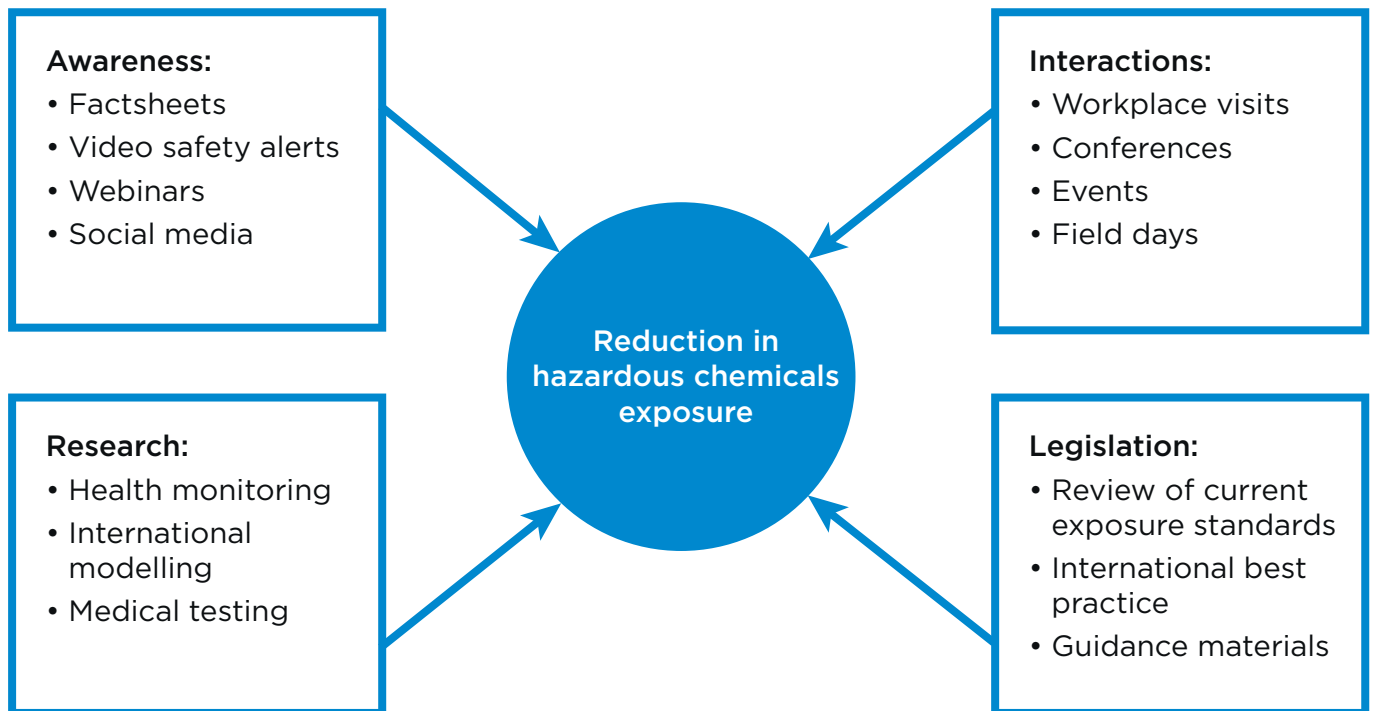
- Encouraging and promoting research that drives innovation and best practice in the design of jobs and work practices that create healthy and safe workplaces.
- Reviewing various sources of data to identify hazardous chemicals claims early, and respond to identified risk factors that led to the claim.

### Demonstrating what compliance looks like



- Promoting best practice compliance in the prevention and management of exposure to hazardous chemicals.

## FOUR KEY PROJECT COMPONENTS



## MEASURES OF SUCCESS

- ✓ Demonstrated stakeholder engagement and partnering
- ✓ Reduction in number of workplaces with non-compliant (unacceptable) exposures to Crystalline Silica and/or Formaldehyde
- ✓ Increased compliance with health monitoring requirements
- ✓ Increased use of effective control measures at the source of exposures
- ✓ Increased skills and knowledge amongst PCBU's and workers on chemical hazards, safe work practices and use of appropriate personal protective equipment
- ✓ Introduction of a NSW Register for reporting of silicosis and other occupational lung diseases
- ✓ Application of international best practice for health monitoring for silicosis and other occupational lung diseases.
- ✓ Adoption of international best practice exposure limits for Crystalline Silica.

The above measures will demonstrate to us we have accomplished our target to reduce exposure to hazardous chemicals and materials by 30% by 2022.

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