



Taking action to tackle workplace,  
environmental and health hazards that  
harm people and nature

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Janet Newsham - [janet@gmhzards.org.uk](mailto:janet@gmhzards.org.uk) / 07734 317158

# Trade Union Clean Air Network Charter



Trade unions need a response to the public health emergency and also the occupational health emergency of air pollution. Over 40,000 people die each year in the UK where the outdoor air that they breathe is a major contributory factor. Thousands of people will also die because of occupational diseases caused by air pollution at work. Pollution arising from work and travel to work are health issues for which employers take little responsibility. There is hardly any recognition of this in national and local authority strategies. This is an issue for workers and their families at all stages from before birth to old age and particularly damaging the growth and development of babies and children. This charter provides a framework for unions to campaign for the health and environmental concerns of workers. We call on the Government to:

- 1. Introduce a New Clean Air Act that enshrines the right to breathe clean air.** It must set stringent legal limits for ambient air quality, which reflect WHO (World Health Organisation) guidelines. There should be recognition that air pollution is an occupational health issue. Employers must be required to make Environmental Impact Assessments on the pollution related to their work activities. They should have a duty to present strategies for minimising and eradicating pollutants within the workplace and in the wider community.
- 2. Update Health and Safety Law** - The COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Regulations and related guidance should be amended to reflect new research on indoor and outdoor air pollution. This includes amending Workplace Exposure Limits to place duties on employers to monitor and adopt control measures for diesel and other toxic vehicle emissions not currently covered by HSE (Health and Safety Executive) EH40.
- 3. Ensure effective enforcement** – Strict enforcement by relevant agencies of the occupational and environmental legislation with the power to hold public bodies and employers to account. Representatives of the trade union movement must have seats on the relevant agencies.
- 4. Involve the workforce** – Air quality measures for indoor and outdoor occupational air pollution must be subject to the consultation requirements of the SRSC (Safety Reps and Safety Committees) Regulations. Measures should cover both employees and others, and especially the needs of vulnerable occupants of buildings, including in particular children and young people. Employers should be required to raise awareness and support workforce training on risks and control measures. Workers may need access to independent advice on exposure levels and health effects.
- 5. Protect jobs** – Government and employer clean air strategies will have implications for jobs and employment. The application of Just Transition principles, including consultation and negotiation with appropriate and industry unions, must include full equality impact assessments, to ensure positive and fair outcomes for all workers.
- 6. Rapidly expand clean and inexpensive public transport systems alongside investment in active transport to increase levels of cycling and walking** – Cleaning up air in the UK will require significant public expenditure. Government should drive the policies to ensure that those least able to afford it are not expected to pick up the bill, and to subsidise measures for less polluting forms of energy and transport. Including affordable public transport. This will encourage more integrated and more active forms of transport.



## Action at work

Find out the current state of play by discussing workplace air pollution with members and other reps. You may want to use the checklist below to help you get an overall picture. Obtain access to current policies or procedures. You may need to contact a member of management to provide some of the information. To start with focus on those areas, workers or jobs that may be at particular risk.

You may find useful information by contacting local organisations. This could include the local authority who should have an air quality action plan that may provide information on monitoring stations near to work locations. Community and campaign groups may also have access to useful information and resources.

### Air pollution checklist for union reps

Topic	Yes / No	Comments
1. <b>Pollution hotspots</b> – Are there any specific areas where you feel there may be a risk from air pollution?		
2. <b>Groups of workers</b> – Are there particular types of jobs that are at risk from air pollution, or vulnerable workers who may have pre-existing conditions that put them at risk?		
3. <b>Policy</b> – Is work-related air pollution referenced in the health and safety policy and / or any other policy document?		
4. <b>Indoor exposure levels</b> – Have measurements been taken of pollution levels inside the building?		
5. <b>Outdoor exposure levels</b> – Have measurements been taken of pollution levels outside the building?		
6. <b>Changes to work activities / infrastructure</b> - Does your employer carry out environmental impact assessments on air pollution related to future plans? i.e. any changes to sites, buildings, work processes, anything that could impact the environment physically.		
7. <b>Hazard identification</b> – Have hazards associated with air pollutants been identified?		
8. <b>Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Risk assessment</b> – Has a risk assessment been undertaken for hazards where there is a risk to workers and / or others		
9. <b>Consultation</b> – Has there been a discussion about air pollution at the health and safety committee or any other joint management / union forum?		



10. <b>Employer information</b> – Has the employer provided any information to staff about risks of air pollution in specific locations or travel routes, or jobs and groups of workers?		
11. <b>Trade Union information</b> – Has your union developed any policy or guidance on work-related air pollution?		
12. <b>Branch lead</b> - Is there anyone in the branch who is co-ordinating union work on air pollution?		
13. <b>Membership awareness</b> – Has any information been provided by the union on air pollution risks?		
14. <b>Links with external organisations</b> – Have any links been made with campaign groups to get support for information, monitoring, local authority measurements and related policies?		
15. <b>Obtaining data on pollution levels</b> – Are you interested in testing pollution levels in your workplace and / or receiving information on monitoring sites near your location?		
16. <b>TUCAN</b> - Are you interested in working towards the aims of the TUCAN charter by running or becoming involved in an event to promote it?		

### Air Pollution sources of information

**TUCAN** – Clean Air Charter <http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/GJA-TU-Clean-Air-CharterEMAIL.pdf>  
**Greener Jobs Alliance** - Air pollution online training modules. Free of charge and no registration required <http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/courses/>  
 Bi-monthly newsletter with regular air quality updates  
**Hazards** - Hazards Magazine Diesel special: [www.hazards.org/](http://www.hazards.org/)  
 Fuming: <http://www.hazards.org/chemicals/fuming.htm>  
 Diesel out Prevention Factsheet: <http://www.hazards.org/chemicals/diediesel.htm> and Die diesel die poster: <http://www.hazards.org/images/h144nedposterlarge.jpg>  
 Hazards 144, October-December 2018. Hazards Infographic Cancers and their work causes <http://www.hazards.org/images/h145targetcancerslarge.gif>  
**TUC** - Diesel Exhaust in the workplace Guide <https://www.tuc.org.uk/sites/default/files/DieselExhaustWorkplace1.pdf>  
**Individual union resources** – Check your union web site  
**Hazards Campaign** – [www.hazardscampaign.org.uk](http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk)  
**Friends of the Earth** <https://friendsoftheearth.uk/clean-air>  
**UN Air pollution and climate change resources** <https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/air-pollution-and-climate-change-two-sides-same-coin>  
**Client Earth** <https://www.clientearth.org/air-pollution/>  
**British Lung Foundation** <https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/air-pollution>  
**British Safety Council** <https://www.britsafe.org/campaigns-policy/time-to-breathe-air-pollution-campaign/>  
**Kings College London Air Quality Network** <https://www.londonair.org.uk/LondonAir/Default.aspx>  
**Global Action Plan** <https://www.globalactionplan.org.uk/clean-air/about-clean-air>

Contact us for support to use monitor for PM2.5 Working with Global Action Plan

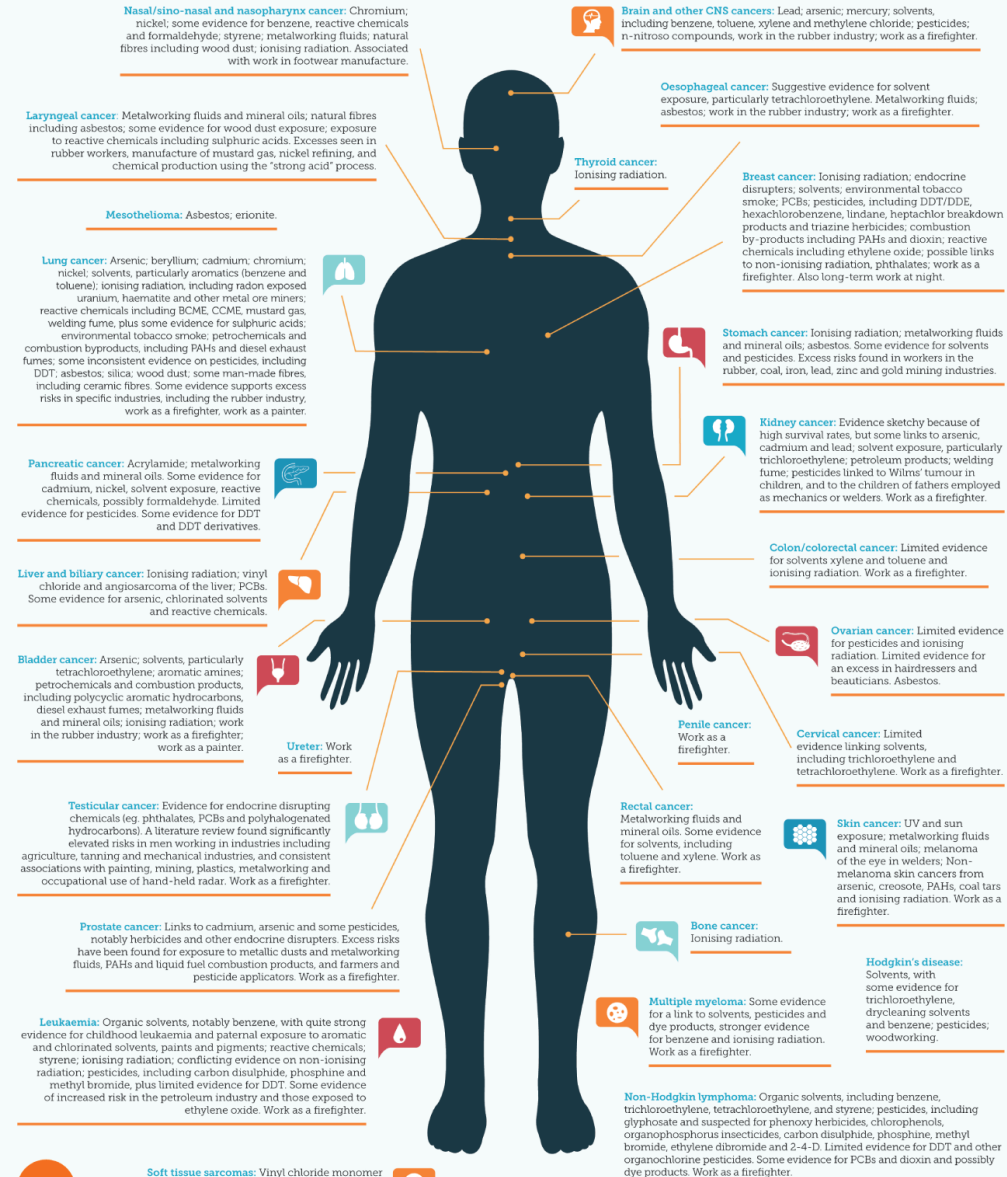
# Air quality, Covid-19 and RA

- ▶ Workers are exposed to a toxic cocktail of chemicals in their homes, environment and in their workplaces
- ▶ Those who live in the poorest areas, work in the lowest paid jobs are more exposed
- ▶ Air pollution is an equality issue
- ▶ 40,000 deaths annually
- ▶ ?workers made ill every year
  - ▶ <https://sway.office.com/0SEVenHS9yTFFJqs?ref=email>
- ▶ Ventilation - will better ventilation for Covid-19 make it better for workers working in polluted air?
- ▶ TUCAN Guidance and the charter - How can we raise the debate?



# Cancers and their work causes

## An ITUC/Hazards at-a-glance guide to cancer hazards at work



And what  
about  
REUL?

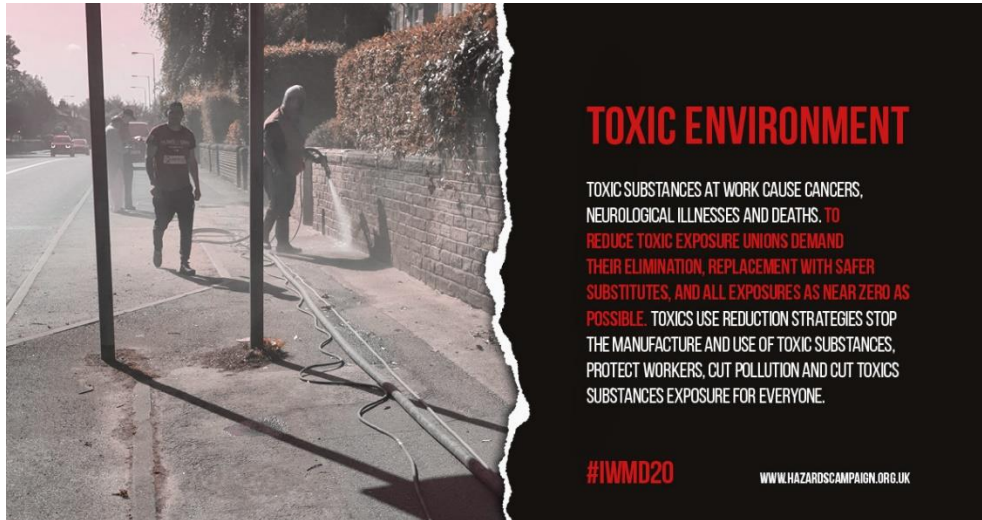
# The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations

And UK  
REACH

What about  
enforcement  
?

- **The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations** employers must prevent exposure of workers to substances that harm their health at work. There are also specific Regulations covering exposure to Asbestos and Lead.
- **Employers must use the COSHH Control Hierarchy:**
- **Identify** all substances used at, or arising in the course of, work— dust, fumes, gases, combustion & by-products
- **Assess** their risks, and if they are hazardous to health - in short or long term e.g. carcinogenic, irritant, corrosive, asthmagenic, mutagenic, reproductive toxins, then employers must:
- **Eliminate or substitute** with safer substances. Think creatively.
- See <http://www.subsport.eu/> - If this is not possible, then
- **Use engineering & other controls** to prevent exposure of all workers— isolate, enclose, local exhaust ventilation - and
- **Only as a last resort** use Personal Protective Equipment

# Toxics Use Reduction TUR



Professor Andy Watterson : Toxics Use Reduction: beyond analysis to action Linking public health, occupational health and safety, environmental sustainability and new or better employment: a position paper. January

2021 DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.12814.59204

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348564404\\_Toxics\\_Use\\_Reduction\\_beyond\\_analysis\\_to\\_action\\_Linking\\_public\\_health\\_occupational\\_health\\_and\\_safety\\_environmental\\_sustainability\\_and\\_new\\_or\\_better\\_employment\\_a\\_position\\_paper](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348564404_Toxics_Use_Reduction_beyond_analysis_to_action_Linking_public_health_occupational_health_and_safety_environmental_sustainability_and_new_or_better_employment_a_position_paper)

- UK doesn't have specific TUR legislation or support BUT
- Union policies on Zero carbon plastic and air pollution, recycling
- Green/Environmental Reps
- Safety Reps have legal rights + employers duties Safety Reps and Safety Committees (SRSC) Regs
- Can achieve Just Transition, greener jobs, social justice, reduce health and economic inequality by centring this on improving workers' health via health and safety reps and health and safety law

## ELIMINATING TOXIC SUBSTANCES AT WORK

This site has been set up to:

- Support trade union and workers action to eliminate/reduce exposure to all toxic substances at work
- Promote Toxic Use Reduction (TUR) which will help reduce climate change, air pollution, plastic and other pollution

**C** - CONTENT

**R** - WHAT REPS NEED TO KNOW

**G** - GENDER AND SEX SPECIFIC INFORMATION

**A** - ADDITIONAL USEFUL INFORMATION

**B** - BACKGROUND AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Click on the links on the page or the links and arrows at the top of the screen to navigate to the different pages  
Or go to [Contact Page](#) and click on the links from there



# Eliminating Toxic Substances at Work

- ▶ <https://sites.google.com/view/gmhctur/links-to-pages/>



## Eliminate or control the most hazardous substances first

- Carcinogens (cause cancer), mutagens (cause changes to genes) and reproductive toxins. [www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/)
- More we learn more we find that even small exposures of previously thought safe substances can be harmful, especially for children and the developing foetus.
- Synergistic, additive, cumulative, chronic effects
- So it makes sense to reduce our exposure to all substances as far as we can- **Precautionary Principle**
- For example, identify and eliminate all cleaning chemicals that have hazard warning signs and use safer substitutes.
- Work with your union and employer on a **Toxics Reduction** programme.
- The only completely safe level of a chemical is zero exposure
- No hazard: no harm

## Mapping out work hazards:

- **Identify** all the hazardous substances coming into the workplace and in each different department.
- **Record** the substances, labels, and check data sheets for information about them.
- **Find out** where workers are exposed and how they could be affected. Are different groups of workers exposed to different substances or to different levels?
- **Ask management** for COSHH assessments. and all other relevant information such as air monitoring of substances in the air including measurements for inhalable and respirable dust in amounts and type, maintenance of ventilation and other safety systems logs
- **Talk to workers** and survey them on any health effects. Ensure you cover all areas of the workplace and all groups of workers and shifts
- **Work your way through** the list of substances and agree elimination of most toxic substances and if necessary replace with less harmful ones.
- **Check substances and products** manufactured to determine additional toxic substances workers are exposed to.
- **Carry out an environmental** workplace/work activity inspection
- **After talking** to members other issues and ways to reduce exposures may arise such as:
  - Stop idling of vehicles in workplace and around it?
  - Check LEV and general ventilation systems
  - Ban air fresheners from all areas of work?
  - Substitute non-volatile vegetable oil cleaners for organic solvents; Would water work as solvent?
  - Substitute solids for powders; enclosures; LEV?
  - Meetings by zoom/skype to avoid travel?
  - Work from Home? Flexible working ? 4 Day week?
  - Carry out monitoring for chemicals + particles and plan outdoor work to avoid pollution?
  - Contact GMHC for support to use monitor for PM2.5 Working with Global Action Plan

## Greater Manchester Hazards Centre

- Janet Newsham
- Coordinator of Greater Manchester Hazards Centre
- Windrush Millennium Centre
- 70 Alexandra Road
- Manchester
- M16 7WD
- 0161 636 7558
- **Twitter:**@jnewsham
  
- Facebook:
- Greater Manchester Hazards Centre
- We Didn't Vote to Die at Work
- Families Against Corporate Killers
- **Hazards Campaign:** <http://www.hazardscampaign.org.uk>
- **@hazardscampaign** and **@HildaPalmer**

## Resources

- Asbestos in Schools AiS:  
<http://www.asbestosexposureschools.co.uk/>
- International Ban Asbestos Secretariat IBAS:  
<http://www.ibasecretariat.org/>
- Join Union Asbestos Committee : JUAC  
<http://www.juac.org.uk/>
- Green jobs Alliance  
[http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/?page\\_id=31](http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/?page_id=31)
- Module on Air pollution as TU issue:  
[http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/?page\\_id=714](http://www.greenerjobsalliance.co.uk/?page_id=714)

## Resources

- Hazards Mapping: DIT Research  
<http://www.hazards.org/diyresearch/>
- Risk Mapping:  
<http://www.hazards.org/diyresearch/riskmapping.pdf>
- 'Body of Evidence' Hazards Factsheet 61 1997
- 'Mapping out Work Hazards' Hazards Factsheet 60 1997
- Body Mapping:  
<http://www.hazards.org/diyresearch/bodymapping.pdf>;
- <http://www.hazards.org/diyresearch/observer.htm>;
- <http://www.hazards.org/diyresearch/hesperianfoundation.htm>;
- Worked Over <http://www.hazards.org/workedover/index.htm>
- Surveying the damage;  
<http://www.hazards.org/diyresearch/workersknowbest.htm>
- Get Mapping 2017 :  
<http://www.hazards.org/images/h134centre1000.jpg>

## Resources

- Hazards Magazine on all types of chemicals and dust:  
<http://www.hazards.org/chemicals/>
- Hazards Magazine on cancer: <http://www.hazards.org/cancer/>
- Continually updated bibliography on occupational cancer:  
<http://cancerhazards.org/#sthash.YRizU4Kz.dpbssign> up for updates
- Put cancer out of work: <http://www.hazards.org/cancer/hsecriticism.htm>
- Silica <http://www.hazards.org/dust/silica.htm>
- Toxics Reduction: <http://www.turi.org/>
- ITUC: Toxic Work:  
[file:///C:/Users/Win%207%20user/Downloads/ituc\\_factsheet28april\\_en%20\(8\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Win%207%20user/Downloads/ituc_factsheet28april_en%20(8).pdf)
- ITUC/HAZAR DS Magazine: <http://cancerhazards.org/>
- ETUC <http://www.etuc.org/international-workers-memorial-day-28-april-2015>
- [https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/other/files/suggested\\_50\\_b\\_oel\\_candidates\\_-\\_april\\_2015.pdf](https://www.etuc.org/sites/www.etuc.org/files/other/files/suggested_50_b_oel_candidates_-_april_2015.pdf)
- Alliance for cancer prevention: <http://allianceforcancerprevention.org.uk/>
- From Pink to Prevention: <https://frompinktoprevention.org/>
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