

Glossary

The following are a few terms that you might come across when reading scientific literature, epidemiological or research findings or policy documents on health and safety or other work security issues:

Analysis: Study of the elements of a whole and their relationships.

Anecdotal Evidence: Evidence from descriptions or personal testimonies rather than from systematic data collection.

Association: A demonstrated relationship between two or more variables.

Bias: Inaccuracies or irregularities in the collection, analysis, or interpretation of data which may cause distortion of the research results; can be caused by intended or unintended subjective choices or perceptions. For example, you might be accused of influencing the results, if you were to say, "Following numerous reports of nose bleeds and shortness of breath, this survey is being done by the union to try to convince the employer that we are suffering from sick building syndrome and need better ventilation."

Body Map: A tool for collectively gathering and displaying data whereby health problems are indicated visually (with, stickers, symbols, and/or words) on an outline of the human body.

Case-Control Study: A study of the effects of a variable (*such as a particular exposure*), which is done by comparing cases (*such as people with a disease*) with a comparison or control group (*such as people without the disease*).

Causality: The determination of cause of ill health or death or some other effect. There are standard criteria or requirements for deciding whether there is a scientific basis for claiming something may be a cause of a particular effect or effects.

Cohort: A group of people with one or more features in common, such as type of exposure or common employment, studied over a period of time.

Collaborator: A partner in a project, usually with some complementary skill(s) or interest(s) that may add value to a team or relationship.

Confidence Intervals: (*In an epidemiological study*) The degree to which an association between variables may be considered to have occurred by chance.

Confounding: A situation whereby a variable, such as age or smoking, for example, can influence and thus distort the measure of an association between variables.

Consensus: Agreement by all.

Consultant: A person who is contracted (with or without pay) to provide advice, knowledge or assistance.

Data: Items of information or facts collected.

Database: An organised collection of information or facts (data); usually stored on a computer.

Demographic: Characteristics of a population or group of people (such as age, gender, length of employment, occupation, etc).

Empirical: Based on experiment or research rather than through reasoning or supposition.

Epidemiology: The study of how often diseases occur in different populations and why they occur.

Ergonomics: The science of fitting the job to the person rather than making the person fit the job; designing of jobs to eliminate or minimise strain and other injury.

Exposure Profile: A record of the substances and circumstances to which a worker has been exposed during the course of employment.

Facilitator: An individual who leads a discussion or other activity and helps people communicate; usually does not participate but simply coordinates and organises the flow of discussion or activity.

Focus Groups: Group interviews, usually guided by a facilitator.

Healthy worker effect: People who are working are healthier than the non-working population. Workers, especially those in unions, generally have a higher standard of living, with better diets and access to medical care than the non-working population, which includes those who are differently abled, the elderly, and people too unhealthy to work. Many epidemiologists believe that when workers are compared to the non-working population certain diseases, like heart disease and cancer, are underestimated because of this so-called healthy worker effect.

Homogeneous: Having similar or like characteristics; belonging in some way to the same essential group; uniform.

Industrial Hygiene: The science of recognising, evaluating and controlling factors which may cause disease or injury in the workplace.

Informants: Research participants who provide information, facts, data.

MEL (Maximum Exposure Limit): is the maximum permitted concentration of a chemical to which a worker may be exposed over an extended period of time. Typically, MELs are quoted in ppm for an 8-hour reference period, though shorter periods may be quoted for some materials. MELs are, in many countries, enforceable by law.

Methods, Methodology: The framework which directs the research process; research design.

Monitoring: Studying over a period of time to observe any changes; taking measurements or samples over a period of time, either continuously or intermittently, to record concentrations or exposures and evaluate risks.

Morbidity Study: Examines the type(s) of illness suffered by a particular group of people over a period of time.

Mortality Study: Examines the number and causes of death for a particular group over a period of time.

Occupational Exposure Limit (OEL): a (generally legally-enforceable) limit on the amount or concentration of a chemical to which workers may be exposed.

Objective: Existing independent of the beliefs and desires of the researchers or subjects.

Odds Ratio (OR): The probability of an event occurring relative to the probability of it not occurring.

Permissible exposure limit (PEL): an eight-hour time-weighted average (TWA) concentration of a contaminant that must not be exceeded; PELs are established so that “nearly all” workers are safe if the exposure is not greater than the PEL. This means that some workers might suffer health damage; many PELs are designed to prevent acute health effects but do not adequately take into account chronic effects.

Protocol: An agreed upon set of terms or conditions which determine an action or set of actions.

Psychosocial: Psychological, organisational and personal factors that may cause ill-health, such as stress-induced problems.

Qualitative Research: Research that collects and analyses non-numerical information (qualitative data); often used to gather opinions, personal experiences and other subjective data.

Quantitative Research: Research that collects information in numerical quantities; used when statistical results are desired.

Random Sample: Selecting a group of subjects for study from a larger group by choosing each subject entirely by chance.

Relative Risk (RR): The ratio of the risk of disease or death among exposed people as compared to the risk among unexposed people.

Reliability: A measure of the consistency of a measure to achieve the same results with each test or use; stability of a research tool or method.

Risk Map, also known as Hazard Map: A tool for collectively gathering and displaying data whereby hazards are indicated visually (with stickers, symbols, and/or words) on a drawing of a workplace, community or another area of interest.

Sample: A group of subjects selected for a study from a larger group for the purpose of revealing something about the larger group.

Sampling: The measuring, evaluation and testing of a substance through the collection of a “sample” or small quantity of the substance, such as air or dust sampling; *often used interchangeably with “testing.”*

Statistical Significance: A statistical method that allows researchers to decide whether a finding was likely to have occurred by chance.

Survey: An investigation in which information is systematically collected; usually through posing a question or series of questions.

Subjective: Dependent on a person's own perception and self-reporting.

Synergistic Effect: The combined effect of two or more agents whose total effect may be greater than the sum of the two and different from the effects of either.

Standard Incidence Ratio (SIR): The ratio of the number of cases *observed* (such as diseases or injuries) in a studied group compared to the number of cases *expected* in the general population.

Standard Mortality Ratio (SMR): The ratio of the number of deaths *observed* in a studied group compared to the number of deaths *expected* in the general population.

Testing: Evaluating or measuring through the use of medical, industrial hygiene or laboratory instruments; may measure a substance collected from a workplace or from such biomedical samples as blood or urine; *often used interchangeably with "sampling."*

Threshold Limit Value: Concentrations of chemicals at levels for which it is believed or claimed nearly all workers may be exposed without adverse effect, even with day-to-day use; often measured in parts per million (ppm) or milligrams per cubic metre (mg/m³). (*Threshold Limit Values are not necessarily fully protective.*)

Validity: The extent to which a research tool measures what it is intended to measure.

Variable: Any quantity, attribute, characteristic or situation that varies, or can have different values (*such as types of chemicals used or amount of income for example*).

Adapted from:

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Resources

Contacting any number of organisations, government agencies and various groups can be a challenging task. Patience and dedication to getting the information you need will pay off in the end. Here is a suggested order of how to proceed to get additional information:

- your union (if you have one)
- your employer
- the trade union confederation that your union is affiliated to
- the product manufacturer
- Ministry of Labour or Health
- local library
- local university
- International Trade Secretariat (see below for contact details)
- ILO CIS (see below for contact details)

The following organisations provide information, support and opportunities for networking:

The Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Network on Rural Development and Food Security
Via delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome, Italy
E-mail: rdfs-net@fao.org
Internet: www.accnetwork.net

The African Newsletter on Occupational Health and Safety

www.occuphealth.fi/e/info/anl/index.htm

Guest Editor in Chief: S. Lehtinen

E-mail: Suvi.Lehtinen@occuphealth.fi

Guest Editor: Marianne Joronen

E-mail: Marianne.Joronen@occuphealth.fi

The Asian-Pacific Regional Network on Occupational Safety and Health (ASIA-OSH)

ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

United Nations Building, 11th Floor

Rajdamnern Nok Avenue, P.O. Box 2-349

Bangkok 10200, Thailand

Tel: + 1 66 2 288 2485

Fax: + 1 66 2 288 3064

E-mail: asiaosh@ilo.org

Internet : <http://mirror/public/english/region/asro/bangkok/asiaosh>

The Baltic Sea Network on Occupational Health and Safety

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health

Topeliuksenkatu 41 a A

FIN-00250 Helsinki, Finland

Tel: + 1 358 (0) 9 47 471

Fax: + 1 358 (0) 9 4747

Internet: www.occuphealth.fi/e/project/baltic

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)

250 Main Street East

Hamilton, Ontario L8N 1H6, Canada

Tel: + 1 800 668 4284 (inside Canada) or + 1 905 570 8094 (outside Canada)

Fax: + 1 905 572 2206

E-mail: custserv@ccohs.ca

Internet: <http://www.ccohs.ca>

Canadian Union of Public Employees

21 Florence Street

Ottawa, K2P 0W6, Canada

Tel: + 1 613 237 1590

Fax: + 1 613 237 5508

Email: fox@cupe.ca

Internet: <http://www.cupe.ca>

The Center to Protect Workers' Rights
8484 Georgia Avenue, Suite 1000
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, USA
Tel: + 1 301 578 8500
Fax: + 1 301 578 8572
E-mail: cpwr@cpwr.com
Internet: www.cpwr.com

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
1600 Clifton Road,
Atlanta, GA. 30333, USA
Tel: + 1 404 639 3311
Internet: <http://www.cdc.gov/epiinfo/>
(Epi Info and Epi Map software can be downloaded free from the CDC website)

Duke University
Occupational and Environmental Medicine
Durham, North Carolina 27708, USA
Tel: + 1 919 684 8111
Internet: <http://dmi-www.mc.duke.edu/oem/>

Environmental Health and Safety Division of the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, OECD
2 Rue André-Pascal
75 775 Paris, France
Tel: + 1 33 1 45 24 93 15
Fax: + 1 33 1 45 24 16 75
Mr. Rob Visser, Head
E-mail: rob.visser@oecd.org
Internet : www.oecd.org/ehs

European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
Gran Via 33
E-48009 Bilbao, Spain
Tel: + 34 94 479 43 60
Fax: + 34 94 479 43 83
E-mail: information@osha.eu.int
Internet: <http://agency.osha.eu.int>

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions
Wyattville Road
Co. Dublin, Ireland
Tel: + 1 353 1 2043100
Fax: + 1 353 1 2826456, + 353 1 2824209
E-mail: postmaster@eurofound.ie
Internet: www.eurofound.ie

European Trade Union Technical Bureau for Health and Safety
ITUH Building
Bd du Roi Albert II, 5 bte 5
B - 1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: + 1 32 2 224 0560
Fax: + 1 32 2 224 05 61
E-mail: tutb@etuc.org
Internet: www.etuc.org/tutb/index_en.html

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health
Topeliuksenkatu 41 a A
FIN-00250 Helsinki, Finland
Tel: + 1 358 (0) 9 47 471
Fax: + 1 358 (0) 9 47 47
Internet: www.occuphealth.fi

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
Via delle Terme di Caracalla
00100 Rome, Italy
Tel: + 1 39 06 57 051
Fax: + 1 39 0657 053 152
Internet: www.fao.org

Hazards and Workers Health International Newsletter (WHIN)
PO Box 199, Sheffield, S1 4YL, United Kingdom
Tel: + 1 44 114 267 8936
E-mail: editor@hazards.org
Internet: <http://www.hazards.org>
Workers "Do it Yourself" web page <http://www.hazards.org/diyresearch/index.htm>

International Agency for Research on Cancer
150 cours Albert Thomas
F-69372 Lyon cedex 08, France
Tel: + 1 33 (0) 4 72 73 84 85
Fax: + 1 33 (0) 4 72 73 85 75
Internet: <http://www.iarc.fr/>

International Association of Industrial Accident Boards and Commissions (IAIABC)
1201 Wakarusa Drive C-3 Lawrence
Kansas 66049, USA
Tel: + 1 785 840 9103
Fax: + 1 785 840 9107
E-mail: fhowe@iaiaabc.org
Internet: <http://www.iaiaabc.org>

International Labour Office
4, route des Morillons
CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland
Tel: + 1 41 22 799 6111
Fax: + 1 41 22 798 8685
E-mail: ilo@ilo.org
Internet: www.ilo.org

Listed below are relevant departments at the above Geneva, Switzerland address:

ILO InFocus Programme on Socio-Economic Security (IFP/SES)
Tel: + 1 41 22 799 8893
Fax: + 1 41 22 799 7123
E-mail: ses@ilo.org
Internet: www.ilo.org/ses

ILO International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS)
Tel: + 1 41 22 799 6740
Fax: + 1 41 22 799 8516
E-mail: cis@ilo.org
Internet: www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/cis/about/contact.htm

ILO InFocus Programme on Safework
Tel: + 1 41 22 799 6715
Fax: + 1 41 22 799 6878
E-mail: safework@ilo.org
Internet: www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/health/index.htm

ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities
Tel: + 1 41 22 799 7021
Fax: + 1 41 22 799 6570
E-mail: actrav@ilo.org
Internet: www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/actrav

Inter-Organisation Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC)
Internet: www.who.int/pcs/iomc.html

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)
5 Boulevard du Roi Albert II, Bte 1
1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: + 1 32 02 224 0211
Fax: + 1 32 02 201 5815
E-mail: internetpo@icftu.org
Internet: www.icftu.org

International Trade Secretariats affiliated to ICFTU

Education International
Boulevard du Roi Albert II, 5
B - 1210 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: + 1 32 2 224 0611
Fax: + 1 32 2 224 0606
E-mail: headoffice@ei-ie.org
Internet: www.ei-ie.org

International Federation of Building and Woodworkers
P.O. Box 1412
CH - 1227 Carouge GE
Switzerland
Tel: + 1 41 22 827 3777
Fax: + 1 41 22 827 3770
E-mail: info@ifbww.org
Internet: www.ifbww.org

International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine & General Workers' Unions
Avenue Emile de Beco 109
B - 1050 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: + 1 32 2 648 2020
Fax: + 1 32 2 626 4316
E-mail: info@icem.org
Internet: www.icem.org

International Federation of Journalists
International Press Centre, Rés. Palace
Rue de la Loi 155
B - 1040 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: + 1 32 2 235 2200
Fax: + 1 32 2 235 2219
E-mail: ifj@ifj.org
Internet: www.ifj.org

International Metalworkers' Federation
Route des Acacias 54 bis
Case Postale 1516
CH - 1227 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: + 1 41 22 308 5050
Fax: + 1 41 22 308 5055
E-mail: info@imfmetal.org
Internet: www.imfmetal.org

International Textile, Garment & Leather Workers' Federation
Address Rue Joseph Stevens 8 Bte 4
B - 1000 Brussels
Belgium
Tel: + 1 32 2 512 2606
Fax: + 1 32 2 511 0904
E-mail: office@itglwf.org
Internet: www.itglwf.org

International Transport Workers' Federation
Address 49 - 60 Borough Road
GB - London SE1 1DS
United Kingdom
Tel: + 1 44 20 7403 2733
Fax: + 1 44 20 7357 7871
E-mail: mail@itf.org.uk
Internet: www.itf.org.uk

International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco &
Allied Workers' Association
Address Rampe du Pont-Rouge 8
CH - 1201 Petit-Lancy, Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: + 1 41 22 793 2233
Fax: + 1 41 22 793 2238
E-mail: iuf@iuf.org
Internet: www.iuf.org

Public Service International
Centre d'Aumard, BP 9
45 Avenue Voltaire
F - 01211 Ferney-Voltaire Cedex
France
Tel: + 1 33 450 406 464
Fax: + 1 33 450 407 320
E-mail: psi@world-psi.org
Internet: www.world-psi.org

Union Network International
Avenue Reverdil 8-10
Case postale
CH - 1260 Nyon 2
Switzerland
Tel: + 1 41 22 365 2100
Fax: + 1 41 22 365 2121
E-mail: contact@union-network.org
Internet: www.union-network.org

International Programme for Chemical Safety
World Health Organisation
CH-1211, Geneva 27, Switzerland
Tel: + 1 41 22 791 3588
Fax: + 1 41 22 791 4848
E-mail: ipcsmail@who.ch
Internet: <http://www.who.int/pcs/index.htm>

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
Training and Educational Systems
4676 Colombia Parkway
MS-C10 Cincinnati
OHIO 45226, USA
Tel: + 1 800 365 4674 (inside USA) or + 1 513 533 8328 (outside USA)
Fax: + 1 513 533 8573
E-mail: pubstaft@cdc.gov
Internet: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html>

New Jersey Department of Health
Hazardous Substance Fact Sheets
Internet: <http://www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/rtkweb/rtkhsfs.htm>

Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW)
15 Gervais Drive
Suite 603
Don Mills, Ontario, M3C 1Y8, Canada
Tel: + 1 416 443 7669
Fax: + 1 416 443 6323
E-mail: mcook@ohcow.on.ca
Internet: <http://www.ohcow.on.ca>

PARnet (Participatory Action Research)
Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, USA
Internet: <http://www.parnet.org>

PubMed/MEDLINE
Internet: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi>

TOXNet
Internet: <http://toxnet.nlm.nih.gov/>

Trade Union Congress (TUC)
Congress House
Great Russell St.
London, United Kingdom
WC1B 3LS
Tel: + 1 44 20 7636 4030
Fax: + 1 44 20 7636 0632
E-mail: info@tuc.org.uk
Internet: <http://www.tuc.org.uk/>

World Health Organization (WHO)
Avenue Appia 20
1211 Geneva 27, Switzerland
Tel: + 1 41 22 791 2111
Fax: + 1 41 22 791 3111
Telex: 415 416
Telegraph: UNISANTE GENEVA
Internet: <http://www.who.int/home-page/>

Further Reading

There are a number of useful resources of information listed in the REFERENCES and RESOURCES sections. The following is a list of additional reading materials:

- Barnsley, J and Ellis, D. 1992. *Research for Change: Participatory Action Research for Community Groups*. (Vancouver, Canada: Women's Research Centre)
- Chambers, R. 1997. *Whose Reality Counts? Putting the first last*. (London, UK: Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd.)
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- Dollard, MF, Heffernan, PT, Winefield, AH, Winefield, HR. 1997. "Conducive Production: How to Produce a PAR Worksite Proposal," in *New Solutions* 7(2): 58-69
- Ferreira, EC and Ferreira, JC. 1997. *Making Sense of the Media; A handbook of popular education techniques*. (New York, USA: Monthly Review Press)
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- Gibbs, W and Mutunga, P. 1991. *Health Into Mathematics*. (Longman Group UK Limited)
- Holland, J. and Blackburn, J. 1998. *Whose Voice? Participatory research and policy change*. (London, UK: Intermediate Technology Publications Ltd.)
- Greenwood, DJ and Levin, M. 1998. *Introduction to Action Research*. (Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage Publications)
- Hazards at Work*. TUC Guide to Health and Safety. Details from TUC, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS. <http://www.tuc.org.uk>
- Nadeau, D. 1996. *Counting Our Victories: Popular Education and Organizing*. (New Westminster, BC, Canada: Repeal the Deal Publications)
- O'Neill, R. 1999. *Europe under strain: A report on trade union initiatives to combat workplace musculoskeletal disorders*. TUTB. ISBN 2-930003-29-4. <http://www.etuc.org/tutb/>
- Participatory ergonomic interventions in meatpacking plants*. 1994. NIOSH Publication No.94-124, 1994. USA
- Pretty, JN, Guijt, I. Thompson, J. Scoones, I. 1995. *A Trainer's Guide for Participatory Learning and Action*. (London: International Institute for Environment and Development)
- Putting breast cancer on the map*. 1999. Women's Environmental Network. London, UK <http://www.wen.org.uk>
- Shields, K. 1994. *In the Tiger's Mouth: An Empowerment Guide for Social Action*. (Philadelphia, PA, USA and Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers)
- Wallerstein, N and Rubenstein, HL. 1993. *Teaching Job Hazards: a Guide for Workers and Their Health Providers*. (Washington, DC, USA: American Public Health Association)
- "When it comes to their health, workers always know best," in *Workers' Health International Newsletter*, no.42, Winter 1994/95
- Wegman, D. 1994. "Investigations into the use of symptom reports for studying toxic epidemics," in *new epidemics in occupational health (Proceedings of the International Symposium on New Epidemics in Occupational Health), People and Work Research Reports no.1*, Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, Helsinki

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