



**BOHS Activity Report for
POOSH Meeting, 7/9/2009
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1. Strategic Review Consultation

BOHS has just begun the process of reviewing its strategic direction as a precursor to the development of a new Business Strategy from 2011-2015.

A Discussion Document has been prepared as a basis for obtaining initial input on future direction. It describes the key factors that are likely to influence the strategic direction of occupational hygiene and the Society, and it poses questions to stimulate engagement. It is intended that the document will be used:

- as the basis for an online survey
- to inform key external stakeholders, either for written response or before interviews

Feedback on the Discussion Document and the online survey will inform the development of the strategic proposals for the next stage of the project.

Some POOSH member organisations/individuals have been identified as key external stakeholders and therefore we hope to engage your members and/or senior figures over the Autumn. This may involve some direct discussions, or possibly a request for a link to our online survey within ebulletins to your members.

2. Council of Occupational Health

Following our discussions over the last few POOSH meetings, BOHS made a direct representation to be considered for inclusion on the Council of Occupational Health. We have just this week received informal notification that our application has been accepted, and we are awaiting formal confirmation. We currently have no further details than those which were previously circulated to POOSH members regarding the aims, constitution and future direction of the Council.

3. BOHS Annual Conference 2010

27 – 29 April 2010

The Majestic Hotel, Harrogate

Call for papers is now open, as are exhibition and sponsorship opportunities via <http://www.bohs.org/standardTemplate.aspx/Home/Events/AnnualConference2010>

Please publicise this to your members via any forthcoming ebulletins, if relevant.

4. International Occupational Hygiene Training

A series of training modules in occupational hygiene has been developed over the last three or four years with the aim of improving worker health protection in developing countries and reducing the toll of occupational ill health.

Background

The initiative started in 2005, from a meeting of like-minded senior occupational hygiene professionals working in multinational businesses. They were looking at ways to meet requirements for worker health protection as industrialising economies develop their resource extraction and manufacturing processes. Their central belief was that the same standard of control of health and safety risks should be employed wherever the operation might be in the world. This would avoid repeating some of the errors and tragic cases of ill health that arose from the industrial revolution of the 19th and 20th Centuries.

In developing countries there is often a low expectation of occupational health and safety; and limited local expertise. In addressing this concern, it was recognised that a major factor in addressing these needs would be to work together to raise the general level of awareness and expertise. The aim was to create sustainable, local provision of sound occupational hygiene practice.

The principle adopted was to share expertise and develop materials that could raise the standards of occupational hygiene practice. The material developed would be free of charge and 'open access' to stimulate local development of the people, skills and practices necessary to protect worker health. The need was to start from a low level – developing skills at technician level – on the expectation that this would stimulate higher level study and development - ultimately training to the level required for qualification to International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) recognised standard.

By working in harmony, the goal was to achieve something that would benefit all. At an early stage, the occupational hygiene community was engaged – this included prominent individuals, IOHA, its member organisations and examining boards. The training model evolved from a series of pilot studies and is loosely based on a scheme operated for many years by BOHS – a series of one week modules aimed at specific areas of occupational hygiene.

Current situation

The investment in development, including pilot courses, is around US\$500,000. As a consequence, there is now a proven and workable scheme of technician training modules that has been tried and tested over the last two years. The modules have been run in a variety of locations and have included dual language versions. Course materials have been peer reviewed, piloted and checked for copyright approval and there is agreement to offer their use to the occupational hygiene community. A not-for-profit organisation to

administer the scheme is now being created. The original intent had been to set up an organisation jointly with the Australian Institute of Occupational Hygiene (IOHA) and based in Australia to manage the programme. This has the working title - Occupational Hygiene Training Association (OHTA).

More recent thinking and discussions with AIOH have led us to a different business model using a 'Wiki' style website. This will greatly simplify the administration and ongoing costs.

There are now three levels of courses available or under development:

- a "Principles" level course for people who need a basic understanding of occupational hygiene that also serves as an introduction for those who want to undertake further study.
- Seven "Intermediate" level modules for technicians, covering practical skills in core aspects of occupational hygiene.
- "Advanced" modules to enable transition from technician level to Masters level study required in preparation for professional level accreditation.

The two lower levels use a formative approach to learning which makes assessment an integral part of the learning process. At the Advanced level, assessment may be part of the academic process for a postgraduate degree or diploma. The scheme can thus serve the needs of students from early technician training through to professional development, by a process of spiral learning, where materials are studied to progressively higher levels.

The intermediate level modules that have been developed so far are listed below.

Module
W501 – Measurement of Hazardous Substances
W502 – Thermal Environment
W503 – Noise
W504 – Asbestos
W505 – Control
W506 – Ergonomics
W507 – Health Hazards of Substances

These are five-day taught courses based on good practice in occupational hygiene; the international syllabuses do not involve national legislation; 15 pilot courses have already been completed in Australia, Azerbaijan, China, Indonesia and the UK.

The modules are now being used in countries around the world as 'free standing' courses or as part of Masters Degree programmes. The BOHS Faculty is leading on student assessment for individual modules.

5. Issues from the POOSH meeting agenda

i. RoSPA

BOHS would support any formal application from RoSPA to join POOSH.

ii. Workers Memorial Day

Should POOSH choose to submit a response to the consultation in favour of a Workers Memorial Day, BOHS would support such a response.