

*OWLinks is brought to you by the Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Institute to enable leaders and professionals to keep abreast of the latest WSH developments and trends from around the world.*

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## SPOTLIGHT

### WSH Institute awards research funding to 4 Request-for-Proposal (RFP) projects:

A project that looks at improving WSH through human factors entitled "*Behaviour-centred, communications-reinforced approach to workplace safety*" was awarded to Prof Qu Xingda of Nanyang Technological University.

A study that correlates WSH performance to business and productivity entitled "*Intelligent system for determining productivity and safety index using building information modelling*" was awarded to Professor Evelyn Teo from National University of Singapore (NUS)

Two projects that focused on methodology and implementation of designing to ensure safety and health were also awarded. These are "*Intelligent review of design for safety using safety knowledge-based building information modelling*" to Prof David Chua of NUS, and "*Prototype FPSWizard: a design support system to improve the selection and design of personal fall protection systems*" to Prof Goh Yang Miang of NUS.

For more information, please visit [WSH Institute](#).

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### Articles Reviewed In This Issue:

1. [The prevention of occupational diseases](#)
  2. [Getting home safely](#)
  3. [Preventing slips, trips, and falls in wholesale and retail trade establishments](#)
  4. [Occupational asthma: Review of assessment, treatment, and compensation](#)
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### The prevention of occupational diseases

**Date of publication:** Mar 2013

**Source:** Report, International Labour Organization (ILO)

**Author:** SafeWork (ILO)

### Synopsis:

Occupational disease is the leading cause of work-related deaths in the world. According to the ILO, out of the global 2.34 million work-related fatalities annually, only 14% are due to fatal accidents. The remaining estimated 2.02 million deaths are caused by work-related diseases, which is more than 5,500 deaths each day. Inadequate prevention of work-related diseases has profound negative effects on the workers, their families and

the society at large due to the high costs involved, including loss of productivity and burdening of the economies.

This report outlines the current situation concerning work-related diseases and suggests ways to address it. It highlights the importance of governments, employers, workers and their organizations coming together to collaborate in the development and implementation of national policies and strategies aimed at preventing occupational and work-related diseases.

To read more, click [HERE](#).

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### **Getting home safely**

**Date of publication:** Nov 2012

**Source:** WSACT HB 0066, Work Safe Act, Australia

**Author:** Lynelle Briggs, Mark McCabe

#### **Synopsis:**

An Inquiry Panel was established to look into the compliance and application of work health and safety laws on the construction industry in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) due to its poor health and safety record. It reported a can-do culture of tough men priding themselves with getting tough jobs done on time and within budget, but with a nonchalance attitude on WSH dangers. This needs to be improved by focusing on organisational values that proactively enhances WSH management. Everyone from senior management to workers must recognise and value the benefits of a safe worksite.

The Government can give stronger emphasis on WSH through its procurement process. By doing so, Government sites can be the leader in workplace safety, setting the standards for the industry to aspire to. Greater resources are needed for more effective regulators in enforcement and weeding out cowboys. Industry partners should take ownership and play the key role to improve the WSH performance of their industry. They need to actively engage their workers in order to build trust and cooperation on sites. The Panel also identified potential collaboration opportunities between government agencies for stronger enforcement and involving unions to build positive working relationships with employers to ensure a safety mindset.

To read more, click [HERE](#).

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### **Preventing slips, trips, and falls in wholesale and retail trade establishments**

**Date of publication:** Oct 2012

**Source:** DHHS (NIOSH) Publication Number 2013-100

**Author:** Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, USA.

#### **Synopsis:**

This article highlights Slips, Trips and Falls (STFs) as the second and third most common causes of lost-workday injuries in general industry and wholesale & retail trade establishments in USA respectively. STFs can lead to back injuries, sprains, contusions, fractures, severe head injuries, paralysis, and even fatalities. In the wholesale and retail trade establishments, 70% of the STF injuries occurred at the same level.

Most of the STF incidents can be prevented with proper attention to the 3 categories of risk factors: viz. workplace, work organisation and individuals. NIOSH recommends employers to focus on planning and

workplace design to eliminate slipping and tripping hazards (e.g. development of STF prevention plan). It is also important to provide suitable training and proper footwear for employees. With the cooperation of employees to practise safe material handling and good housekeeping, low STF injury rates could be achieved.

To read more, click [HERE](#).

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### **Occupational asthma: Review of assessment, treatment, and compensation**

**Date of publication:** Mar 2011

**Source:** CHEST Journal, Vol 139, No. 3

**Author:** Clayton T. Cowl

#### **Synopsis:**

Occupational asthma refers to asthma induced by exposure to a diverse range of triggers in the workplace. It was estimated that 15% of new asthma diagnoses are workplace related. The article describes the approach to evaluating possible work-related asthma, including detailed work history, prior occupations, and similar complaints from co-workers. Thereafter, confirmatory testing would be carried out.

Treatment includes standard asthma therapies and preventive measures such as avoidance of trigger which could result in the sufferer not able to perform his/her previous work duties. When diagnosed and treated early, occupational asthma may be reversible.

To read more, click [HERE](#).

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#### **Other Useful Resources:**

- [Development of a Safety Culture Interaction \(SCI\) model for construction projects](#) (Safety Science)

[Access via publisher's website]

- [Working for a healthier tomorrow](#) (Department for Work & Pensions, UK)
- [Workplace safety and health guidelines: Diagnosis and management of occupational diseases](#) (Workplace Safety and Health Council)