



PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMME

RISK ASSESSMENT AND
RISK MANAGEMENT FOR
HTIW PRODUCTS

ECFIA'S PRODUCT STEWARDSHIP PROGRAMME

As an early example of applying the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility, in the 1990s ECFIA, the European association of the manufacturers of High Temperature Insulation Wools (HTIW), proactively developed a comprehensive Product Stewardship Programme (PSP) in close co-operation with its American partner organisation, HTIW Coalition.

The programme, which continues to be implemented today, follows well-established principles of risk assessment and risk management. Its components are science-based, with human health effects research as a priority. The PSP was initiated by industry; it preceded, and is independent of, regulatory drivers.

The programme is designed to assist HTIW manufacturers and end-users in the evaluation, control and reduction of workplace exposures. Recommendations stemming from the PSP help ensure the proper manufacture, storage, handling, use and disposal of HTIW products.



"An additional characteristic of the RCF industry is the responsible collaborative approach that has been taken towards 'product stewardship'. The industry has committed and will continue to commit significant resources to the health and safety management of its products.

ERM REPORT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, OCTOBER 1995



HEALTH EFFECTS RESEARCH

One of the most important activities of the PSP is the design and sponsorship of health effects research programmes. ECFIA's members are major sponsors of several studies designed to determine the potential long-term health effects of inhalation exposure to HTIW fibrous dust. Past studies sponsored by the industry include inhalation bioassays in rodents, short-term inhalation studies to measure biopersistence of fibres in vivo, durability measurements of new fibres in vitro, and risk analysis of occupational exposure. The industry has also sponsored epidemiology studies on HTIW workers to determine if long term occupational exposure leads to lung disease. All these studies constitute part of an ongoing risk assessment process, initiated by industry.

“On behalf of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), I am pleased to express our continued support for the voluntary product stewardship program (PSP) for refractory ceramic fiber (RCF) products ...”

DR DAVID MICHAELS,
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
LABOR FOR OSHA, JULY 2012



CARE

An important and integral part of the PSP is 'CARE' - standing for **Controlled And Reduced Exposure**. The CARE Programme combines the PSP elements dealing with developing improved engineering controls and handling practices to minimise the release of fibrous dust at the workplace.



EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT

A key element of the PSP is the evaluation of workplace exposure levels. This includes the measurement of trends in worker exposures, the identification of jobs or tasks with elevated exposure to prioritise exposure control efforts, and studies to identify best practices. ECFIA's industrial hygienists can advise user industries on engineering controls and respiratory protection programmes.



STUDY OF WORKPLACE CONTROLS

Over the past several years, ECFIA has invested considerable effort in the evaluation of effective engineering controls and handling practices in its members' own production facilities to control the levels of airborne fibers. Many of these techniques can also be used economically and effectively in the user industries' workplaces. The drive for effective exposure control follows the industrial hygiene hierarchy of engineering controls, improved worker practices, and use of respiratory protection.



WORKPLACE MONITORING

Workplace exposure potentials can vary widely, even for similar applications. It is important that users periodically monitor their workers and workplace areas to determine actual fibrous dust exposure levels. Such measurements are conducted in HTIW plants operated by ECFIA members and their customers. Included in the exposure monitoring element of the PSP are research efforts to estimate the number of workers exposed and the circumstances of their exposure (frequency, duration, and concentrations levels).

**COMMUNICATION**

ECFIA has a comprehensive communication programme to provide employees and users with up-to-date information on proper handling practices for HTIW products, health research and exposure guidelines. We share data and information with many different stakeholders including company employees, government agencies, and the broader scientific community. This material includes documents in various languages on best practices for handling HTIW products, training materials, reports to advisory or regulatory agencies, and scientific presentations and publications in the peer-reviewed literature.

“When HTIW products are used in industrial processes, ECFIA’s PSP and integrated CARE Programme are fundamental for user safety and are exemplary for other industry sectors.”

DR ROLF PACKROFF, FEDERAL INSTITUTE FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH (BAUA), JULY 2015

**PRODUCT RESEARCH**

ECFIA’s members remain dedicated to programmes that develop products and systems for the effective reduction of the risk of disease. To date, these development programmes have resulted in several new products which have less potential to generate airborne fibrous dusts or which have low biopersistence.

**SPECIAL STUDIES**

Other studies are underway to help ensure the continued proper use of HTIW. These studies include measurement of stack emissions as well as fibre concentrations at plant boundaries and disposal sites, opportunities for recycling and reuse, energy efficiency of HTIWs, and other studies related to environmental responsibility.

SUMMARY

ECFIA’s PSP follows well-established principles of risk assessment and risk management. It includes monitoring and exposure assessment components, as well as health effects research and studies of workplace controls. It also has a very important communication element.

Using the knowledge and results of the elements of the PSP, ECFIA has identified techniques to reduce exposure to HTIW fibrous dusts. Many of these techniques can be used effectively and economically at customer and end-user workplaces. ECFIA’s members have effectively managed exposure in their facilities, and share their knowledge with customers and end-users, for example in the form of detailed guidance documents.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT

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