



**SUBJECT:** Who's looking over your shoulder?



**RECIPIENTS:** All Council Directorates

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## Construction firms are the focus of new HSE health inspections

Throughout October, Construction firms across Great Britain are set to be targeted on their health standards by the HSE, it has been announced. It will be the first time the regulator has targeted the industry, with a specific targeted focus on respiratory risks and occupational lung disease. The inspections will look at what measures businesses have in place to protect their workers' lungs from the likes of asbestos, silica and wood dust.



Throughout October, HSE inspectors will be visiting construction businesses and sites across the country and will be on the lookout for evidence of construction workers knowing the risks, planning their work and using the right controls, and if necessary will use enforcement to ensure people are protected.

HSE's Peter Baker, Chief Inspector of Construction said: "Around 100 times as many workers die from diseases caused or made worse by their work than are killed in construction accidents.

"Annually, work-related cancers, mainly linked to asbestos and silica, are estimated to kill 3,500 people from the industry. Thousands of others suffer life-changing illnesses from their work. Not all lung diseases take years to develop. Some, like acute silicosis or occupational asthma, can occur more quickly. As a result, we've launched this inspection initiative to find out what exactly businesses in the construction industry are doing today to protect their workers' health, particularly when it comes to exposure to dust and damage to lungs. We want construction workers to be aware of the risks associated with the activities they carry out on a daily basis; be conscious of the fact their work may create hazardous dust; and consider how this could affect their health, in some cases irreversibly. We want businesses and their workers to think of the job from start to finish and avoid creating dust or disturbing asbestos by working in different ways. We want to see construction firms encouraging their workers to firstly keep the dust down and wear the right mask and clothing. Ultimately, we want construction workers' lungs to be protected from ill health, so they can go home healthy to their families and enjoy long careers in this important industry."

**If you require further assistance or clarification on the subject please contact:** Corporate Health & Safety Advisers (see George section: Corporate > Information for Working > Risk Management > H&S Advisers)