



Media Release

Enhancing Services for the Reporting of Occupational Diseases

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The Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) is in the process of enhancing its services for the reporting and recognition of occupational diseases, through the setting up of a centre to serve as a focal point where employees who suspect an occupational disease can self-refer or be referred by employers or medical doctors. It would also make it easier to coordinate and communicate with employers and health and safety personnel on controlling exposure to the hazards causing the occupational diseases.

“When a worker is exposed to hazards at work which are not controlled, they can lead to the development of occupational diseases. Occupational diseases can develop within a short period of time (such as dermatitis and musculoskeletal conditions) or can take several years to develop (such as cancers). Recognition of occupational diseases is thus a very important tool for OHSA in targeting those industries/occupations where there is inadequate control of hazards,” said Dr Mark Gauci, the Chief Executive Officer of OHSA.

Several initiatives have taken place over the years to encourage medical practitioners to report occupational diseases such as the setting up of an online reporting system but there has been very little participation in these initiatives. These stem mainly from the possible fear on the part of employees that they might lose their jobs.

“This should not be the case. We would like to encourage patients, doctors as well as employers to report occupational diseases to OHSA. It should be emphasized that occupational diseases are indicators of lack of control of hazards and therefore reporting of such occupational diseases should lead to improvement of health and safety standards and benefit all. Our appeal goes also to medical professionals to take an ethical approach to the subject and thus inform us, not only of confirmed cases of occupational diseases, but also when there is only the suspicion that a medical condition is related to work.,” Dr Gauci said.

Persons interested in receiving further information about the setting up of this centre can contact OHSA on ohsa@gov.mt

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