



Occupational Health & Safety Authority

Media Release

Fume Emissions at Ħal Far

15.12.06

With reference to reports featured in the local media pertaining to the effects of emissions from a factory in Ħal Far on workers of another factory, the Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) felt it opportune to clarify the role and action that it has and is still playing in the case.

The OHSA was informed by Trelleborg Ltd that some of its workers were displaying certain non-specific medical symptoms which they deemed were caused by emissions from IMC Ltd. Immediately following this complaint, the OHSA started its investigations with on-site inspections of both factories and the surrounding locality.

Various steps were indeed immediately taken by the OHSA, operating within its legal remit, including recommendations and actions with regards to both companies involved i.e. Trelleborg Ltd and IMC Ltd. while information is still being awaited from both entities.

Rather than 'passing the buck around', the OHSA got in contact and liaised with MEPA, the Ministry of Health and the Malta Industrial Parks Ltd to ensure that where it had no legal powers of investigation and action, a concerted approach would be nevertheless taken.

It has to be stressed that particularly in view of the fact that not all information requested has been forthcoming, investigations are still undergoing and it would be naturally inopportune for the OHSA to give any details regarding these to persons requesting such information, be it workers, shop stewards or members of the media.

It is regrettable that in spite of having elected workers health and safety representatives at Trelleborg Ltd, these have at no point in time been involved in the case. These persons have the right by law to represent their workers with regards to health and safety issues, including viewing of certificates, risk assessments and results of studies undertaken. Moreover, they have the legal right to be consulted and informed about any decision pertaining to health and safety while the employer is legally bound to take notice of the recommendations made by them. After due notice, the employer must also allow the monitoring of the work environment and processes with regards to health and safety.

Had the workers health and safety representatives at Trelleborg Ltd been involved in the case, their case would have been probably expedited without undue sensationalism. Moreover, in view of the health and safety legislation in force, information from the OHSA's end would have been forthcoming to them since they have the legal right to it.

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