



Incorporating the International
Waterproofing Association

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Occupational exposures to oxydized bitumens and their emissions during roofing

IARC has issued new statements regarding the classifications of occupational exposures to bitumens and their emissions for different applications (link to monograph results below):

http://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/iarcnews/pdf/IARC_Bitumen_Eng.pdf

BWA, the European Association of bitumen membranes producers, acknowledges the new IARC classification of occupational exposures to oxydized bitumens and their emissions during roofing.

Regarding straight run bitumens used in roofing and waterproofing (commonly known as polymer modified bitumen membranes representing approximately 85% of the market in Europe), IARC has not made any classification of occupational exposures.

Regarding oxydized bitumens used in roofing, IARC has concluded that “occupational exposures to oxidised bitumens and their emissions during roofing” are to be classified as “probably carcinogenic to humans, category 2A”.

BWA understands that this classification is derived from results of animals studies based on condensates produced from of BUR type III bitumen, which is fully oxydized, generated at very high temperature (up to 270°C). This is not representative of European use of oxydized bitumen. In Europe a maximum application temperature of 230°C is used for oxydized bitumen as recommended as the “safe handling temperature” by Eurobitume.

Over the last decades, bitumen membranes producers and roofers have proactively implemented measures for reducing bitumen fumes emissions by lowering the application temperatures. BWA takes the IARC classification seriously and will take further measures if and when they become necessary.

BWA members are committed to giving the utmost attention to the health and safety of their employees and all users.

BWA awaits the publication of the IARC monograph in order to further inform stake holders as required. For further information contact Paul Newman, CEO, at the address below.

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