



Maritime shipping industry conference

Asbestos on board - what to do?

Asbestos on board – still a long way to go

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1. What is an occupational disease?

According to the definition in § 9. (1) sentence 1 of the SGB VII (German Social Security Code Volume VII), occupational diseases are diseases designated by the Federal Government with the approval of the Federal Upper House (Bundesrat) as an occupational disease and from which those insured suffer as a result of an insured professional activity. Currently, there are 80 diseases listed as occupational diseases in the list of occupational diseases (Appendix 1 of the Ordinance on Occupational Diseases). In Germany, a disease caused by asbestos fibre dust was first included in the list of occupational diseases in 1936 and was called severe asbestosis. Scientific findings that handling asbestos has harmful health consequences existed as early as the mid-19th century.

2. Which occupational diseases caused by exposure to asbestos are there?

There are three occupational diseases in the current list of occupational diseases caused by monocausal exposure to asbestos.

Occupational disease (OD) no. 4103

Asbestosis or pleural disease caused by asbestos.
Information on diagnoses, distribution and pathology can be found under [DGUV BK Information BK 4103](#).

OD no. 4104

Lung cancer, laryngeal cancer or ovarian cancer

- associated with asbestosis
- associated with pleural disease caused by asbestos dust or
- where there is evidence of a cumulative dose of asbestos dust of at least 25 fibre years.

Information on diagnoses, distribution and pathology can be found under [DGUV BK Information BK 4104](#).

OD no. 4105

Pleural, peritoneal or pericardial mesothelioma caused by asbestos.

Information on diagnoses, distribution and pathology can be found under [DGUV BK Information BK 4105](#).

3. Figures on occupational diseases in maritime shipping

From 2015 to 2019 the number of occupational diseases reported to BG Verkehr with the single cause of asbestos amounts to 276.

During the same period, a total of 84 new pensions in the maritime shipping sector due to an occupational disease according to numbers 4103 – 4105 were determined. →



During the specified period, 36 people died as a result of one of these occupational diseases. More details can be found in the following table:

Number of cases OD no. 4103-4105 area Maritime

year		OD notifications	New pensions	OD deaths
2015	OD 4103	19	1	0
	OD 4104	16	2	2
	OD 4105	13	13	4
	in total	48	16	6
2016	OD 4103	30	6	1
	OD 4104	24	4	3
	OD 4105	11	11	5
	in total	65	21	9
2017	OD 4103	25	3	0
	OD 4104	16	2	1
	OD 4105	13	7	6
	in total	54	12	7
2018	OD 4103	30	10	2
	OD 4104	25	0	0
	OD 4105	15	11	3
	in total	70	21	5
2019	OD 4103	12	3	2
	OD 4104	22	4	2
	OD 4105	5	7	5
	in total	39	14	9

The figures for the new pensions and OD fatalities also include cases that were not reported in the corresponding calendar year. For example, a case reported in December 2016 is not recorded as a new pension until the following year 2017.

Benefit costs have been expended by the BG Verkehr in 2019 for occupational diseases notified for the first time in 2018 according to number 4103 €5,500.00 per case,

according to number 4104 €40,584.00 per case and according to number 4105 €45,488.00 per case. Because the benefit costs include only the costs for rehabilitation (e.g. curative treatment), the costs for injury benefits and pensions must be added. These depend on wages. The information on benefit costs refers to all the occupational diseases 4103 – 4105 recognized by BG Verkehr from the year 2018.

4. Long periods of latency

The period of latency is described as the time between the beginning of exposure and the occurrence of an illness as a result of the exposure. Exposure to respirable asbestos dust can lead to occupational diseases even several decades later. In a more recent study on mesothelioma and lung cancer mortality among employees of an asbestos cement factory in Italy, latency periods of more than 20 years were registered for lung cancer. Pleural and peritoneal mesothelioma became visible after 30 to 40 years, the highest risk for the development of mesothelioma was observed 50 to 60 years after the beginning of exposure. The study can be found in the [IPA journal 03/2019](#) on page 41.

Regarding the periods of latency, it has been established that diseases caused by asbestos can occur many years or several decades after the beginning and even after the end of exposure. Particularly in the case of OD 4105, diseases are possible after a brief and minor exposure after several decades.

5. Secure evidence

According to the figures published by the German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV) for the year 2019, a total of 1,671 deaths were recognized as a result of a OD 4103 – 4105. This fact alone combined with the long periods of latency, results in the requirement to secure possible exposure to respirable asbestos dust in a documented manner. Seafarer's books were an important source for occupational case history and findings on possible exposure for processing and preventive services. When the German Maritime Labour Act came into effect on 1st August 2013, the seafarer's books were abolished. →



and the shipping companies are obliged to issue certificates of service for their seafarers. Information on the content and form of the certificate of service is provided at www.deutsche-flagge.de On the website of the Ship Safety Division under [Einflaggung von Schiffen mit Asbest – Startseite \(deutsche-flagge.de\)](#) you can also find information on prohibition of use on maritime vessels and additional notes regarding these problems.

The DGUV has set up a central database to collect data on employees exposed to carcinogenic substances, (ZED). The ZED is an offer provided by the German Social Accident Insurance, to gather evidence for the exposure to carcinogenic substances without any additional costs. This offer is aimed at business operators as well as employees. The employees have the decisive advantage that their data remains reliably available at least 40 years after the end of their exposure. The employers do not have to ensure that the data is stored securely and legally compliant. Not all companies continue to operate for long periods of time and employees do not have to be responsible for keeping printouts they received from their employers over several decades. Data collected by the ZED can be requested at any time. Please make use of this offer.

Additional information about the ZED is available from the BG Verkehr Occupational Safety and Health Directorate or via email at zed@dguv.de

The ZED can be contacted at: [ZED: Datenbank zur zentralen Erfassung gegenüber krebserzeugenden Stoffen exponierter Beschäftigter \(ZED\) \(.de\)](#)

6. Follow-up preventative care

Follow-up preventative care, what is it and why is it important? You handled materials containing asbestos in the past in line with your work? Even though this contact dates back many years, it cannot be ruled out that health problems will arise. This particularly applies to occupational diseases OD 4103-4105 caused by asbestos and requires occupational medical care – preventative care. As long as employment continues with the company in which exposure took place, preventative care is offered by this company. If the employment ends because the employer changes or the occupation is terminated, the post-employment preventive care can be transferred to BG Verkehr with the consent of the insured person. To ensure preventive occupational medical care beyond the end of employment, the insurers of the German Social Accident Insurance cooperatively operate organizational services under the “DGUV Prevention” logo not only for the hazardous material asbestos.

The person concerned or the company can register at any time. If you require information or have any questions about this, please contact the Occupational Safety and Health Directorate at BG Verkehr.