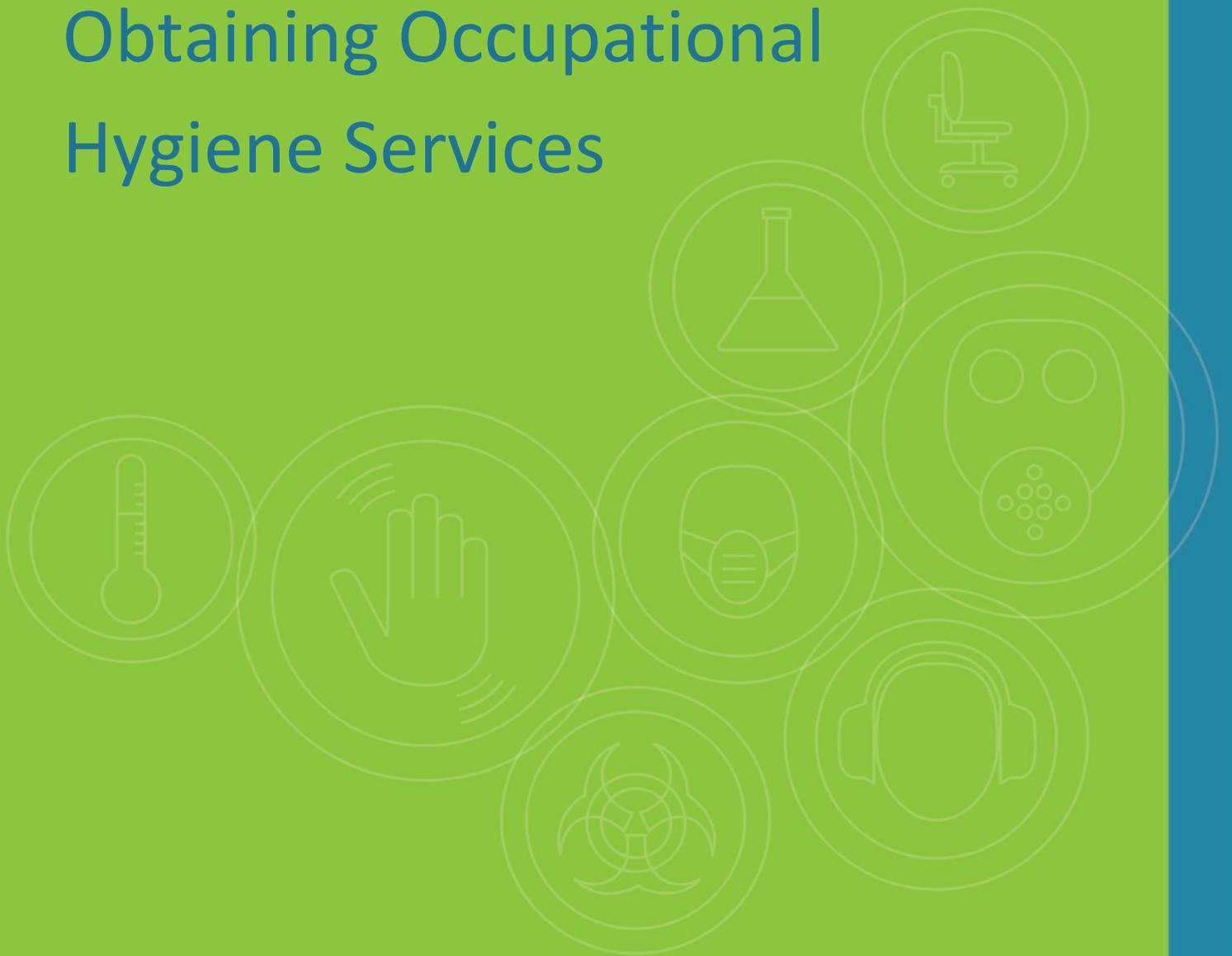




The Chartered Society for  
Worker Health Protection

The British Occupational Hygiene Society

# Buyer's Guide for Obtaining Occupational Hygiene Services



## Executive Summary

In a recent publication on '[Understanding the impact of business to business health and safety 'rules'](#)', the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) concluded that consultancy is an essential component of the health and safety system, '*particularly for the management of complex or significant risks and that it is often a way for businesses to meet their regulatory duty to appoint a 'competent person' for the management of health and safety.*

*HSE recognises that there are large numbers of well-qualified and experienced consultants, contributing effective and proportionate advice.'*

Professional societies and institutes such as the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) can support duty holders, '*via the provision of focused and proportionate advice by their members, which is tailored to the needs of individual businesses and delivers compliance.*

*It is also essential that consultants do not stray beyond their competence, particularly when dealing with high risk activities.'*

This Buyer's Guide aims to assist those seeking occupational hygiene specialist services to find the right competent advice for their needs.

BOHS recognise a difference in the likely breadth and depth of knowledge that a Chartered Member or Fellow may have, compared to a Licentiate, and between a Licentiate and a Technician.

The online BOHS [Directory of Occupational Hygiene Services](#) is the definitive list of organisations that are able to provide qualified and experienced occupational hygienists and specialist occupational hygiene support services.

### Directory eligibility is dependent on:

- the company employing at least one Licentiate (or Specialist Licentiate), Chartered Member (or Specialist Member) or Chartered Fellow of the BOHS Faculty of Occupational Hygiene;
- the Faculty members having up-to-date subscriptions; and
- the Faculty members participation in the continuing professional development (CPD) scheme.

Whilst appropriate professional qualifications alone do not guarantee a good consultancy service, they make it more likely. BOHS has published a [Good Practice Guide for Consultants](#) and those following this guide are likely to have appropriate management systems in place that should facilitate a better quality of service.

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## 1. Introduction

The job title of occupational hygienist is not a protected job title and therefore anyone can call themselves an occupational hygienist. The title of 'Chartered Occupational Hygienist' is however a protected job title and only those who are Chartered Members or Fellows of the BOHS Faculty of Occupational Hygiene can legally use this title.

The aim of this guide is to assist businesses wishing to engage the services of an occupational hygiene consultant to obtain the appropriate competent advice for their needs.

## 2. Responsibilities as an Employer

[Regulation 7](#) of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 requires employers to appoint one or more competent persons to assist with health and safety. Where employers have complex exposure scenarios and/or higher hazard agents and no relevant in-house expertise, they may need to take external advice from an Occupational Hygienist or other specialist.

The need for employers to assess the competence of those that advise them is highlighted in The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 (as amended) [Approved Code of Practice](#) (ACOP) is repeated several times, for example:

- *“Employers must ensure that whoever carries out the assessment and provides advice on prevention and control of exposure is competent to do so...”* ACOP Regulation 6 paragraph 51.
- *“Employers must also ensure that whoever provides advice on prevention and control of exposure is competent to do so...A competent person will have adequate knowledge, training and expertise eg in the design of processes, control measures, including ventilation and PPE, the human and technical reasons why these control measures can fail, and the importance of following the principles of good practice for the control of substances hazardous to health”.* ACOP Regulation 7 paragraph 95.
- *“Anyone who checks on the effectiveness of any element of a control measure should have the competence to do so. The degree of theoretical and practical knowledge required will increase with the likelihood of control failure”.* Guidance Regulation 9 paragraph 162.
- *“Employers must ensure that whoever carries out maintenance, examinations and tests is competent to do so...”.* ACOP Regulation 9, Paragraph 175.
- *“When an employer appoints a person to carry out exposure monitoring, they should ensure that they are competent to do so...”.* Guidance Regulation 10 paragraph 219.
- *“The employer must ensure that those employed to conduct health surveillance are competent to do so...”.* Guidance Regulation 11 paragraph 243.
- *“The employer must ensure that the person, or people, to whom any work is delegated is competent to do it and this may mean having to use the services of consultants and outside experts. If this becomes necessary, the employer will still need to ensure that the people involved receive sufficient information about the particular circumstances of the work, including the hazardous substances used or produced and their hazardous properties.”.* ACOP Regulation 12 paragraph 268.

An employer needs to take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of consultants. Not only must the people who advise on assessments and control measures be competent, but also those who check and test those control measures.

### 3. Obtaining Occupational Hygiene Specialist Health

In many cases, businesses have in-house resources with adequate knowledge and competency to manage occupational hygiene themselves. However, there are times when businesses may need to obtain external specialist skills or knowledge, particularly on more detailed or technical issues or when specialist equipment is required.

Deciding exactly what help you need is very important. Unless you are clear at this initial stage, you probably won't get the help and assistance that you really need.

When looking for occupational hygiene specialist help, you should ask yourself the following questions:

#### **What is the challenge that I am seeking to address?**

For example, do I need:

- help to identify the most suitable control solution for a particular scenario;
- exposure monitoring to determine potential exposures or whether current control measures are effective; or
- a general review of existing arrangements for the management of health hazards?

If you are clear about why you need specialist help, this will help you identify what type of specialist is best placed to assist you.

#### **If I engage specialist help, what do I need it to do for me?**

You will need to clearly explain your needs/requirements to the occupational hygiene consultancy, so they can properly understand the issue and provide you with the service you need.

Ask them to confirm that they understand the work to be undertaken, what the final deliverables and timescales are and to provide a breakdown of charges.

#### **Will the specialist help be good enough to solve my problem?**

There are some key things to consider:

- Do they have evidence of relevant competency, such as formal qualifications and training (e.g. the BOHS Certificate of Operational Competence or the Diploma of Professional Competence)?
- Do they have practical experience related to your industry, or processes?
- Can they explain to you why they are competent to advise you on this problem?
- Do they have the resource to complete the work within the required timescale?

- Will they need to sub-contract the work or any part of the work?
- Can they provide references for completed work that is like my project?
- Are they a member of a relevant professional body e.g. BOHS, FAAM (Faculty of Asbestos Assessment and Management), IOA (Institute of Acoustics), ILEVE (Institute of Local Exhaust Ventilation Engineers), IOSH (Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) or similar? BOHS Faculty of Occupational Hygiene is the UK professional body for Occupational Hygienists.

A competent consultant should know what competence looks like and should be able to demonstrate it to you. If you are in any doubt, you can check with the relevant professional body for guidance on the relevant training/knowledge and qualifications, and the specialist's membership grade and status.

A good indication is if the company is included in the BOHS Directory of Occupational Hygiene Consultants.

## 4. BOHS Directory of Occupational Hygiene Consultants

The BOHS Directory of Occupational Hygiene Services is the definitive list of companies that can provide qualified and experienced occupational hygienists and specialist occupational hygiene support services.

### Directory eligibility is dependent on:

- the company employing at least one Licentiate (or Specialist Licentiate), Chartered Member (or Specialist Member) or Chartered Fellow of the BOHS Faculty of Occupational Hygiene;
- the Faculty members having up-to-date subscriptions; and
- the Faculty members participation in the [continuing professional development](#) scheme.

Those on the register are also bound by the BOHS Faculty [Code of Ethics](#).

You can search the register by location. The live register is available here: <https://login.bohs.org/BOHS/Membership/2/BOHS/Directory-of-Occupational-Hygiene-Services/DOHSsearch.aspx>. The functionality of the Directory is currently being enhanced to introduce features to simplify finding the right assistance for your needs.

Whilst all entrants in the BOHS Directory of Occupational Hygiene Consultants employ at least one competent person, not all consultants will offer the same services, or have the same breadth and depth of qualifications, experience or knowledge.

A Licentiate (LFOH) will have passed the BOHS [Certificate of Operational Competence](#), whilst a Chartered Member (CMFOH) or Fellow (CFFOH) will have passed the BOHS [Diploma of Professional Competence](#) and is likely to have at least 5 years' comprehensive professional experience. See Appendix 1 for more information on the differences between the BOHS Membership grades.

The Diploma is the highest professional occupational hygiene qualification awarded in the UK. Award of the Diploma qualifies the holder to become a Chartered Member of the Faculty, and demonstrates knowledge of, and competence in, assessment of health hazards and the extent of risk in various workplace circumstances, and an ability to advise on suitable control procedures.

A Fellow or Member (or Specialist Member working within their specialism) is likely be more equipped than a Licentiate to deal with more complex or more unusual exposure scenarios and be able to provide more bespoke control solutions. They should be able to provide a more strategic approach to health risk management. A Licentiate is more suited for routine transactional work, such as testing and monitoring.

### **What is the difference between a consultant registered as a Licentiate, compared to one registered as a Chartered Member or Fellow?**

**A Licentiate** will have been able to demonstrate to BOHS the following skills and knowledge:

- a) Analysis of problems and recognition of the hazards that may exist;
- b) Practical assessment of risks, including appropriate equipment selection;
- c) Conduct of necessary occupational hygiene measurements and selection and correct operation of sampling or measurement equipment;
- d) Calculation and interpretation of measurement results as appropriate; and
- e) Understanding the basics of control (hierarchy) and be able to assess existing controls (LEV systems/RPE/PPE).

A Licentiate should also be able to appreciate when a high level of competency is required.

**A Chartered Member or Fellow** should have the skills and knowledge of a Licentiate and in addition will have had to demonstrate to BOHS the following professional traits:

- f) An ability to identify and critically analyse relevant sources of information;
- g) A systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of occupational hygiene;
- h) Originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of practice, research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- i) An ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- j) Originality in tackling and solving problems; and
- k) An understanding of any relevant ethical issues relating to the subject matter.

Specialist membership of the BOHS Faculty is available to those individuals who have specialised in one area of occupational hygiene, such as local exhaust ventilation, legionella or asbestos. Specialist Members may be deep subject matter experts in their area but may not be able to demonstrate competence across the broader discipline of occupational hygiene.

## 5. Consultant Competence and Supervision

The consultancy company should be able to demonstrate that it has identified the competencies required to perform the range of occupational hygiene activities it undertakes and that it has processes in place to train, assess and monitor staff against those competencies.

Individual staff should only undertake work according to their competence, experience and training.

Effective supervision within the consultancy shall include the witnessing of occupational hygiene work.

The following should be used as a guide for determining suitable levels of supervision for staff within the organisation undertaking occupational hygiene work.

### **Category 1**

**Chartered Fellow or Chartered Member e.g. a holder of the BOHS Diploma of Professional Competence, or Specialist Member** (working within the scope of their specialism).

Staff in this category have the broadest and deepest experience and should be able to work to high professional standards. They should be able to assess risks, devise sampling strategies and recommend fit-for-purpose control measures to reduce worker health exposure.

Staff in this category are likely to be technical leads within the organisation and be capable of operating at a senior managerial level and would set the professional standards accordingly and mentor others in the organisation.

### **Category 2**

**Licentiate e.g. a holder of the BOHS Certificate of Operational Competence or a Specialist Licentiate** (working within the scope of their specialism).

Staff in this category should be able to assess risks, devise sampling strategies and recommend fit-for-purpose control measures to reduce worker health exposure.

Staff in this category would normally only require occasional supervision or technical support.

### **Category 3**

**Associate with the appropriate BOHS Occupational Hygiene W Module or a BOHS approved Occupational Hygiene degree.**

Staff in this category should be technically competent to undertake surveys, inspection and testing in accordance with their experience and training but should be under the supervision of a competent person who signs off the report.

Staff in this category will require infrequent supervision (i.e. at least quarterly) for less complex work (e.g. routine testing and monitoring work) and frequent (i.e. at least weekly) supervision for more complex work (e.g. determining compliance with a Workplace Exposure Limit) when within their competencies.

#### **Category 4**

##### **Technician with no formal Occupational Hygiene qualifications.**

Staff in this category are likely to undertake less complex work and need to operate under a high degree of supervision from a Category 3 person or above i.e. frequent (at least weekly) or daily.

Persons operating in this category who are not under the supervision of an occupational hygienist from Categories 1-3 above are not deemed by BOHS to be competent to undertake occupational hygiene consultancy work.

## **6. Obtaining a Quotation**

You should shop around to find the right help at the right price. If you were buying equipment or another service for your business, you wouldn't always accept the first offer, so apply the same logic with occupational hygiene advice. It is good practice to obtain more than one tender.

Invite potential consultants to visit your site to see your processes. You need to be able to describe the process, the hazardous substances (and/or physical agents e.g. noise, vibration, etc.) in use, and the sources of exposure. It would be useful to make available the safety data sheets for the hazardous substances.

### **You need to be clear on the scope of work for which you need to engage the services of an occupational hygiene consultant:**

- Is this to estimate or quantify exposure as part of a risk assessment process for a new product or process,
- is it to check on the effectiveness of existing controls,
- is it for routine regulatory requirements e.g. thorough examination and testing of Local Exhaust Ventilation systems, or
- for another purpose?

This information will need to be communicated to the person preparing the quotation, so that they can prepare a specification to meet your needs.

If there are unusual or new risks or processes, or multiple sources of exposure or multiple hazards, for which more complex controls may be needed e.g. for asthmagens or carcinogens, then a consultant with broader or deeper experience may be needed (e.g. a Chartered Member or Fellow).

You also need to check that the consultant is adequately insured for both professional indemnity and public liability.

Whilst the BOHS Directory requires at least one competent person be employed within the company, the person attending site may not be that named competent person. The consultancy should make it clear who will be undertaking the work and who is reviewing and then signing off the work.

Is a competent occupational hygienist preparing the quotation? If not, is the quotation checked by one, in order to ensure that it meets your needs?

**When you receive the quotation, check that:**

- it includes everything you have asked for,
- it will meet your needs, and
- the lead time and completion timescales are satisfactory.

Does the quotation include caveats which may adversely affect the outcome which you were hoping for?

What category of staff (see the Consultants Good Practice Guide) is the consultant planning to use to undertake the work at your site? If this is staff from Categories 3 & 4 (see Previous Section), then how will this employee be supervised, by whom and how often?

Is their report going to follow the principles in the BOHS [Clear and Concise Report Writing](#) Guidance? Who is going to write the report and quality control check it? Does the review have an appropriate level of BOHS membership, as outlined previously?

## 7. Co-operation and Co-ordination

You need to make sure that the consultant has all the relevant information they will need to recognise, evaluate and control the risk to health in your workplace.

You may need to ensure that specific processes are running, and that relevant operators and/or maintenance/engineering staff are available.

If the consultant will have to undertake work at height, or access/inspect equipment, suitable co-ordination will be needed to ensure that this can be undertaken safely.

Once the work has started, make sure you keep a check on how the work is going against what you have agreed.

## 8. How do I Make Sure That I Have Received the Help I Needed?

Does the report provide you with a practical, sensible solution to your problem? Or, do you think you have ended up with something completely 'over the top', or a mountain of generic paperwork? If necessary, ask the consultant to explain, and to consider whether there may be a simpler alternative.

Read the report when you receive it and if there is something that is incorrect or you do not understand or agree with, you should take this up with the consultant accordingly.

HSE COSHH Essentials Direct Guidance Sheet [G409](#) recommends that the following information should all be included in a consultant's exposure measurement air sampling report:

**Facts:**

- background to, and the purpose of the survey;
- the process measured, the work patterns, and the hazards involved;
- the control measures in place, and their performance;
- photographs and diagrams;
- what measurements were taken (long and short-term), and how;
- how and where samples were analysed;
- exposure limits or exposure benchmarks, and whether these are protective of health;
- any industry standards of good control practice; and
- results, related to a plan of the process. This includes how 8-hour time-weighted average concentrations were calculated.

**Opinion:**

- identified exposure sources, discussion of results, compliance with standards, the adequacy of controls and an assessment of risk;
- identification of tasks not measured that are likely to be an exposure source;
- any work groups that could be exposed but were not measured;
- other matters of concern, and how to address them;
- recommendations for improvement (eg action plan for controls, training, health surveillance); or
- recommendations for further surveys to measure the effectiveness of the changes.

## 9. Have I Received Good Follow-Up Support?

Section 3 of the BOHS Code of Ethics states that Faculty members shall practise their profession with integrity, *'providing sensible and proportionate advice by:*

- making clear what health and safety law requires;
- exercising professional judgement to decide what action must be taken in a particular situation; and
- distinguishing clearly between legal requirements and best practise (i.e. the 'must do' and the 'could do').'

Make sure you understand their recommendations and the difference between what you must do and what you could do. Ensure that they have dealt with any questions you had about implementing them.

## 10. Complaints Procedure

BOHS Faculty Committee is responsible for the maintenance and improvement of occupational hygiene professional standards and can take sanctions against Faculty members if they breach the Code of Ethics.

There is an established [complaints procedure](#) and complaints can be initiated by [contacting BOHS](#). The objective of this Procedure is to handle complaints and disciplinary matters in a fair and reasonable manner. This Procedure lays out the actions that will be implemented by BOHS if there are allegations against an individual member of the Faculty in relation to compliance with the Code of Ethics,

### **BOHS acknowledges that:**

- compliance with the Code of Ethics is mandatory for all non-retired members of the Faculty; and
- compliance with the Consultants Good Practice Guide is currently a voluntary commitment for those organisations in the Directory of Occupational Hygiene Consultants.

## APPENDIX 1

### Guide to BOHS Faculty Membership Grades

Information taken from the [BOHS Byelaws](#) and the Membership section of the [BOHS website](#)

Membership Grade and post-nominal letters (if applicable)	BOHS members at this grade will have....
<b>Chartered Fellow - CFFOH</b>	been Members of the Faculty for at least 5 consecutive years and who can offer additional evidence of mature experience and senior responsibility.
<b>Chartered Member - CMFOH</b>	attained experience at an advanced level and can demonstrate appropriate academic attainment and competence. A Chartered Member will have passed the BOHS <a href="#">Diploma of Professional Competence</a> (DipOH).
<b>Specialist Member – MFOH(S)</b>	attained experience at an advanced level in a relevant specialist field and can demonstrate appropriate academic attainment and competence. A Specialist Member must hold an honours or postgraduate degree or equivalent qualification in a scientific or technological subject relevant to occupational hygiene and have at least five years' experience in the specialist subject offered.
<b>Licentiate Member – LFOH</b>	attained broad technical experience and can demonstrate academic attainment and competence. A Licentiate will have passed the BOHS <a href="#">Certificate of Operational Competence</a> (CertOH) <u>OR</u> the <a href="#">International Certificate of Operational Competence in Occupational Hygiene</a> (ICertOH).
<b>Specialist Licentiate – LFOH(S)</b>	attained broad technical experience in the relevant specialist field and can demonstrate appropriate academic attainment and competence. A Specialist Licentiate will hold the <a href="#">Certificate of Competence</a> (CoC) in an individual subject and also hold the <a href="#">W201 Basic Principles in Occupational Hygiene</a> foundation level course.
<b>Associate - AFOH</b>	demonstrated appropriate understanding of the principles of occupational hygiene. An Associate must hold one of the Occupational Hygiene modules ( <a href="#">W module</a> ) <u>OR</u> a BOHS approved degree in occupational hygiene*.
<b>Technician</b>	demonstrated a basic level of understanding of occupational hygiene practices.