CARE NET CONSULTANTS
Your Partner in Workplace Health

FREE GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS
2027 EDITION

HEALTH AWARENESS PACK · NOVEMBER

LUNG HEALTH AND COPD

Dust, fumes, smoke and checking lung function at work



World COPD Day falls in November (19 November on the 2026 calendar).[1]

World Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Day falls in November.[1] COPD is the third leading cause of death worldwide, and occupational exposure to dusts, fumes and chemicals is one of its causes, alongside tobacco smoke and air pollution.[2] It is not curable, but it can be prevented and managed, and spirometry confirms it. This pack gives you the facts, the legal footing, a checklist and a poster for the notice board.

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3 Workplace actions and the law
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General health information only, not medical advice. Speak to a healthcare professional about your own health.

COPD AND THE WORKPLACE

Global figures from the World Health Organization; we found no recent national COPD prevalence figure from a primary South African source.

3RD

leading cause of death worldwide: 3,4 million deaths in 2023, about 6% of all deaths.[2]

NEARLY 90%

of COPD deaths under 70 are in low- and middle-income countries.[2]

30 TO 40%

of COPD cases in low- and middle-income countries are caused by tobacco.[2]

1,2 MILLION

South African indoor workers were exposed to tobacco smoke at work in 2021.[3]

KNOW THE SIGNS OF COPD

A cough or breathlessness that does not go away needs a check.[2]

1. Difficulty breathing
2. A chronic cough, sometimes with phlegm
3. Wheezing
4. Tiredness
5. Dust, fumes and chemicals
6. Tobacco smoke

WHAT EVERY TEAM SHOULD KNOW

Smoke is the main cause

Tobacco smoke and air pollution are the most common causes.[2]

Spirometry confirms it

A lung function test measures how well the lungs work and confirms the diagnosis.[2]

Flare-ups happen

Symptoms can get worse quickly. Flare-ups usually last a few days and often need more medicine.[2]

It can be managed

Stopping smoking, avoiding polluted air and vaccines against infection all help, with medicines and rehabilitation.[2]

IN PRACTICE · A CEMENT PLANT IN LICHTENBURG

Pieter, a kiln operator, notices he is out of breath on the stairs. His periodic spirometry shows a drop from his baseline. The practitioner refers him, and the plant checks the extraction on the kiln line and the fit of everyone's respirators.[2,4]

Control the dust and fumes first. Ventilation, extraction and the right respirator protect lungs. Spirometry then shows whether controls are working.[4,5]

Small red numbers refer to the sources on the last page.

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WHAT THE LAW ASKS OF YOU

Lung health at work starts with controlling exposure. The law asks you to remove or reduce risks, then monitor the people exposed.

LAW	WHAT IT ASKS OF THE EMPLOYER
Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, section 8(1)	Provide and maintain, as far as is reasonably practicable, a working environment that is safe and without risk to employees' health.[5]
Occupational Health and Safety Act, section 8(2)	Identify hazards and take measures to eliminate or reduce them before turning to personal protective equipment.[5]
Tobacco Products Control Act 83 of 1993, section 2(5)	Workers who do not want to be exposed to tobacco smoke at work must not be exposed.[6]
Medical surveillance	Match the medical panel to the exposure on your risk assessment, for example dust or hazardous chemical agents.[7]
POPIA, sections 19, 26 and 27	Spirometry results are special personal information. Share fitness outcomes, not results, and keep records secure.[8]

PROTECT LUNGS: THREE STEPS

1 **MAP**
List the dusts, fumes and chemicals, task by task.[5]

2 **CONTROL**
Extraction, wet methods and ventilation before respirators.[5]

3 **TEST**
Baseline and periodic spirometry for exposed workers.[4,7]

FIVE WORKPLACE ACTIONS

Map the exposures
List the dusts, fumes and chemicals on your risk assessment, task by task.[5]

Test and compare
Book baseline and periodic spirometry for exposed workers, on one record.[4,7]

Talk about it in November
Use the poster and a five-minute toolbox talk on World COPD Day.[1]

Fix it at the source
Use extraction, wet methods and ventilation before relying on respirators.[5]

Go smoke-free
A smoke-free site protects every worker's lungs.[6]

IN PRACTICE · A STONE-CUTTING YARD IN BRITS

Dry cutting sent dust clouds across the yard. The owner switches to wet cutting, adds extraction at the polishing bench and has respirators fit-tested. Baseline spirometry is booked for every cutter, so later tests can be compared.[4,5]

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YOUR ONE-PAGE CHECKLIST

Work through it with HR and your health and safety representative. Tick what is in place; anything unticked becomes your plan for the year.

CONTROL THE EXPOSURE

- [ ] Dusts, fumes and chemicals are listed on our risk assessment by task.
- [ ] Extraction and ventilation are in place and maintained.
- [ ] Respirators are fit-tested and suited to the hazard.
- [ ] Our premises are smoke-free, or smoking is limited to a legal outdoor area.

LUNG FUNCTION TESTING

- [ ] Exposed workers have a baseline spirometry test on record.
- [ ] Periodic spirometry is booked as the practitioner advises.
- [ ] Results are compared with each worker's baseline.

SYMPTOMS AND PRIVACY

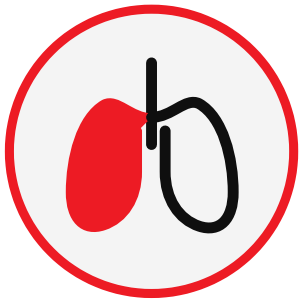
- [ ] Workers know the symptoms of COPD and report a lasting cough.
- [ ] Workers with lung conditions have a plan for flare-ups.
- [ ] We share fitness outcomes with managers, not test results.
- [ ] Health records are stored securely, with named access only.
- [ ] The poster is up and a toolbox talk is booked for November.

OUR ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Completed by _____ Date _____ Next review _____

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PROTECT YOUR LUNGS. BREATHE EASY.



1

CONTROL DUST

Use the extraction and wet methods.

2

WEAR IT

Wear your respirator and use the extraction.

3

TEST

A lung function test shows how well your lungs work.

GET CHECKED IF YOU HAVE

- A cough that will not go away
- Breathlessness
- Wheezing
- Tiredness
- Dust or fumes at work

Ambulance from a landline **10177**

Emergency from a cellphone **112**

Care Net clinics are not emergency services. In an emergency, call these first.

For a lung function test, speak to: _____

WORLD COPD DAY: NOVEMBER.

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Sources: WHO COPD and tobacco fact sheets; Global Adult Tobacco Survey South Africa 2021; Occupational Health and Safety Act; Western Cape Government emergency numbers.

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HOW CARE NET CAN HELP

Care Net runs occupational health programmes for employers: medicals and certificates of fitness at our fixed clinics, or with a mobile clinic at your site. Lung function testing can sit inside the surveillance programme you already run.[9,10]



Our nurses and mobile units come to your site, from 10 employees.[10]

4 FIXED CLINICS

Walk-ins welcome. Busiest 8am to 2pm; afternoons are quieter. Saturdays for booked groups of more than 10.[9]

16 MOBILE CLINICS NATIONWIDE

A mobile clinic at your gate from 10 employees, six days a week, Monday to Saturday.[10]

ON SITE AND AT OUR CLINICS

- **Spirometry and chest X-rays**
  Spirometry when the practitioner says so, and a chest X-ray added when the job risk calls for it.[4,10]
- **Medical surveillance**
  A panel matched to the exposure on your risk assessment: noise, chemicals, dust, heat or height.[7]
- **On-site HIV counselling and testing**
  At workplace wellness days, Care Net offers on-site HIV counselling and testing: voluntary and confidential, with counselling before and after the test.[11]

OUR FIXED CLINICS[9,13]

Midrand
875 16th Road Midrand, Unit 2 Alphen Square North, Randjespark, Midrand, 1684
+27 60 070 2723

Elandsfontein
Cnr North Reef & Atlas Road, Shop 1 Delmond Centre, Elandsfontein, 1601
+27 60 070 2723

Brackenfell, Cape Town
Cnr Kruis & Capricorn Way, Unit 15 Reserve 1, Western Cape, 7560
+27 60 070 2723

Gqeberha
40 6th Road, Newton Park, Gqeberha, 6045
+27 60 070 2723

GET IN TOUCH

Request a quote	carenetconsultants.co.za/forms/quote-request.html
Book medicals	carenetconsultants.co.za/forms/booking-request.html
Call or WhatsApp	+27 60 070 2723 | api.whatsapp.com/send/?phone=27600702723
Email	salesdesk@carenetconsultants.co.za[12]

Ambulance from a landline **10177**

Emergency from a cellphone **112**

In a medical emergency, call these first. Care Net clinics are not emergency services.[14]

General health information only, not medical advice. Speak to a healthcare professional about your own health.

SOURCES

Accessed 26/11/2026. Health figures come from the named organisations; legal points are summarised from the Acts and Codes themselves; Care Net details come from carenetconsultants.co.za. Photographs show the Care Net team at work. Illustrations are drawn for Care Net.

1. National Department of Health: 2026 Health Awareness Calendar. https://www.health.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/Health-Awareness-Calendar-for-2026-Final.pdf
2. World Health Organization: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) fact sheet. https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease-(copd)
3. World Health Organization and partners: Global Adult Tobacco Survey, South Africa 2021, fact sheet. https://cdn.who.int/media/docs/default-source/ncds/ncd-surveillance/data-reporting/south-africa/gats2021_south_africa.pdf
4. Care Net Consultants: Spirometry lung function test. https://carenetconsultants.co.za/spirometry-lung-function-test.html
5. Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993, section 8. https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/act85of1993.pdf
6. Tobacco Products Control Act 83 of 1993, section 2: Control over smoking of tobacco products (Acts Online). https://www.acts.co.za/Tobacco/2_control_over_smoking_of_tobacco_products
7. Care Net Consultants: Medical surveillance. https://carenetconsultants.co.za/medical-surveillance.html
8. Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013, sections 19, 26 and 27 (gov.za). https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/gcis_document/201409/3706726-11act4of2013protectionofpersonalinforcorrect.pdf
9. Care Net Consultants: Fixed clinics and clinic addresses. https://carenetconsultants.co.za/fixed-clinics.html
10. Care Net Consultants: Mobile clinics. https://carenetconsultants.co.za/mobile-clinics.html
11. Care Net Consultants: service confirmed by Care Net management on 24/11/2026 (on-site HIV counselling and testing at workplace wellness days); not yet listed on carenetconsultants.co.za.
12. Care Net Consultants: Contact us. https://carenetconsultants.co.za/contact.html
13. Care Net Consultants: Occupational health clinic Gqeberha (40 6th Road, Newton Park). https://carenetconsultants.co.za/occupational-health-clinic-gqeberha.html
14. Western Cape Government: Know who you can call in an emergency (ambulance 10177, cellphone emergency 112). https://www.westerncape.gov.za/know-who-you-can-call-emergency

This pack is general information for employers. It is not legal or medical advice. Read the Acts, Codes and regulations for the full requirements, and speak to a qualified practitioner about individual health concerns. Worker health information is special personal information under POPIA: keep it confidential and share fitness outcomes, not diagnoses.

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