

## **Investigating the long term health of workers in the semiconductor industry**

The Health Safety Executive (HSE) has published the results of research that it agreed to undertake in 2002. The research was to find out whether there was information available across the whole of the UK semiconductor industry to allow an informative study to take place into the possible risks of cancer to former and current workers. The work, though commissioned by HSE and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) jointly, was independently carried out by researchers from the Institute of Occupational Medicine in Edinburgh and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

The researchers concluded that the records held by the industry are sufficient to allow a study to be undertaken. However, the researchers did note that certain data protection issues would need to be clarified in respect of personnel records held by industry for both current and former workers in the industry.

The study was commissioned following the investigation carried out by HSE at the Greenock plant of National Semiconductor (UK) Ltd in response to the local concerns that were expressed about cancer. One of the recommendations at that time was that there was a need for a wider industry investigation. This feasibility study is HSE and DTI's contribution to that suggestion. The study shows that it should be possible to investigate the long term health of workers in the industry if the data protection issues are resolved.

HSE has already carried out a special inspection exercise in the industry to review health and safety controls and took action where this was found necessary. HSE will expect everyone in the industry to continue to comply with health and safety law and work to currently agreed standards.

We wish to stress that there is little current evidence for or against there being an increased risk of cancer associated with working in the semiconductor industry. However, if you have concerns about the information contained in this leaflet, then you should contact your manager or former manager.

Copies of the summary and the full report of the research are available from your management. Alternatively, for those with access to the internet, copies are freely available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/research/rrhtm/rr384.htm>.