

Occupational health

Our policies

Occupational health hazards such as chemical and dust inhalation or noise exposure are serious risks in gold mining. If left unchecked, such exposure can lead to serious health impairments for workers, including lung diseases such as chronic bronchitis or silicosis, strain injuries, noise induced hearing loss deafness or even cancers.

Our goal is to create workplaces free of occupational illness. One of the most challenging aspects of managing occupational health risks, is disease latency ie diseases that build up over time due to repeated exposure to risk, and where there can be a long time period between exposure and disease occurrence. However, we are focused on the prevention and reduction of occupational exposures at all sites.

Our control methods include:

- Site and job specific risk assessments, including similar exposure mapping.
- Engineering controls and technological developments such as dust collection systems and ventilation systems to reduce onsite particulate matter.
- Provision of task specific PPE, such as ear defenders, safety glasses, dust masks and breathing apparatus, to reduce or prevent exposure.
- Regular medical checks for all workers, including blood testing for heavy metals, hearing tests and respiratory monitoring for indications of silicosis and tuberculosis. Employees who are regularly exposed to hazardous chemicals also receive regular biological and radiation testing.

Our performance

All scheduled routine checks for occupational health hazards were completed during the year. There were no new cases of occupational health conditions in the group in 2017.

There were two new cases of tuberculosis with remedial measures undertaken including immediate isolation and treatment and medical surveillance of co-workers.

Our aim is to continually improve our co-workers occupational disease prevention efforts and as far as possible reduce occupational exposures to hazards that may cause disease. Improvements in 2017 include:

- Improved occupational hygiene monitoring and management practices.
- Improved health database systems to better support regular reporting and analysis of health data.
- Training for all health and safety managers and deputies to improve awareness and knowledge of occupational health issues.

We have also continued the programme introduced in 2016 for voluntary Hepatitis B testing, inoculation and treatment at our operations. In 2017, we carried out 2 144 tests at our Malian and Congolese operations, with an 11.85% positivity rate. All sufferers were offered access to treatment. During 2018, we plan to expand the Hepatitis B programme to our Tongon mine in Côte d'Ivoire.

