

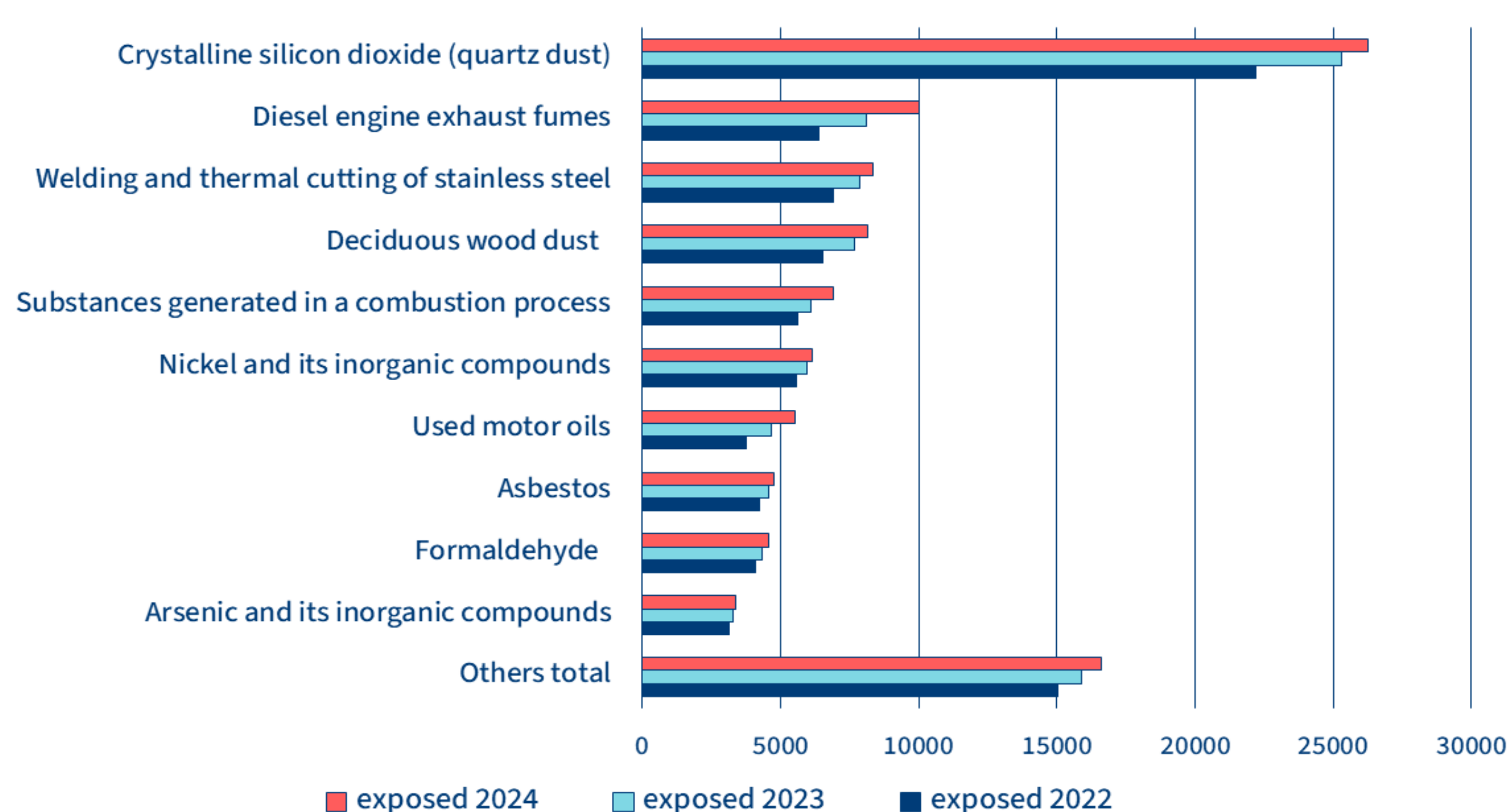
Changes in Legislation concerning Carcinogenic Agents - Implications for Workplaces

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In Finland, employees exposed to carcinogenic and genotoxic substances must be reported annually to the National Register of Employees Exposed to Carcinogenic substances and processes, known as the ASA register. ASA reporting has been required since 1979, and the legislation was significantly changed in 2020.

Background

- The 2020 legislative reform expanded reporting obligations to several common process-induced carcinogens, including quartz, hardwood dust, used motor oils and diesel engine exhaust.
- Total number of agents/ groups to be notified is now 226.
- The number of notified workers increased from 23,000 in 2019 to 67,500 in 2024.



Number of workers notified to the ASA Register by agent and year

Objectives and methods

- The aim was to assess the impact of the 2020 ASA reform on workplace safety practices, occupational health collaboration, regulatory oversight and the value of ASA registration.
- Mixed-methods study combining workplace survey responses (n=422), occupational health survey responses (n=315), labour inspector survey responses (n=32) and stakeholder interviews.



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Main results

- **Awareness increased:** 57% of workplace respondents and 66% of occupational safety inspectors reported increased awareness of carcinogenic factors after the reform.
- **Risk assessment improved, but unevenly:** 73% of workplaces reported conducting chemical risk assessments and 85% stated that carcinogenic factors are considered.
- **Exposure reduction measures were common:** several workplaces had taken actions to reduce exposure; 26% reported no changes.
- **Exposure assessment remains challenging:** 83% assessed exposure based on working time, while 17% had conducted occupational hygiene measurements.
- Occupational health professionals highlighted the need for **additional training**, especially in exposure assessment.
- The project produced a fact sheet guidance on taking ASA obligations into account in workplace chemical risk assessment. Available: [ASA-rekisteri | Työterveyslaitos](#) [ASA-registret | Arbetshälsoinstitutet](#).

Conclusions & future priorities

- The 2020 ASA reform increased awareness and brought common carcinogens into risk assessment. ASA reporting supports better risk assessments and exposure evaluation, but implementation varied, especially in smaller enterprises.
- Future priorities: Improve exposure assessment competence, support SMEs, use registry data more effectively and improve regulator-workplace-occupational health collaboration.