



Hampshire Health Safety and Environmental Group

Health Surveillance

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Aim:

To define 'Health Surveillance'
& to identify the requirements of a
Health Surveillance Programme

Objective:

You will be equipped with sufficient resources to design a health surveillance programme that adequately addresses the risks and potential ill-health effects your employees may be exposed to.



Health surveillance allows for early identification of ill health and helps identify any corrective action needed.

What is health surveillance?

Health surveillance is a system of ongoing health checks.

These health checks may be required by law for employees who are exposed to:

noise or vibration

ionising radiation

solvents, fumes, dusts

biological agents

other substances
hazardous to health

or work in compressed air



The health surveillance cycle

The diagram below provides an overview of the health surveillance cycle. The employer has a central role in every aspect with involvement from employees to ensure effective implementation.



Health surveillance is important for:

detecting ill-health effects at an early stage, so employers can introduce better controls to prevent them getting worse

providing data to help employers evaluate health risks

enabling employees to raise concerns about how work affects their health

highlighting lapses in workplace control measures, therefore providing invaluable feedback to the risk assessment

providing an opportunity to reinforce training and education of employees (eg on the impact of health effects and the use of protective equipment)

Your risk assessment should be used to identify any need for health surveillance.

You should not use health surveillance as a substitute for undertaking a risk assessment or using effective controls.

Health surveillance can sometimes be used to help identify where more needs to be done to control risks and where early signs of work-related ill health are detected, employers should take action to prevent further harm and protect employees.

When putting in place a health surveillance programme, avoid blanket coverage for all employees as it can provide misleading results and waste money.

When reading this guidance remember that health surveillance is a particular legal requirement and should not be confused with:

activities to monitor health where the effects from work are strongly suspected but cannot be established

workplace wellbeing checks, such as promoting healthy living

fitness to work examinations eg fitness to dive, operate cranes, forklift trucks or health assessments requested by night employees

Do I need health surveillance?

If there is still a risk to health after the implementation of all reasonable precautions, you may need to put a health surveillance programme in place

Health surveillance is required if all the following criteria are met:

there is an identifiable disease/adverse health effect and evidence of a link with workplace exposure

it is likely the disease/health effect may occur

there are valid techniques for detecting early signs of the disease/health effect

these techniques do not pose a risk to employees

What sort of health surveillance do I need?

In its simplest form, health surveillance could involve employees checking themselves for signs or symptoms of ill health following a training session on what to look for and who to report symptoms to.

For examples employees noticing soreness, redness and itching on their hands and arms, where they work with substances that can irritate or damage the skin.

A responsible person can be trained to make routine basic checks, such as skin inspections or signs of rashes and could, eg, be a supervisor, employee representative or first aider.

For more complicated assessments, an occupational health nurse or an occupational health doctor can ask about symptoms or carry out periodic examinations.

HSE provides [a range of industry-specific guidance](#) and much of this includes advice on which jobs may require health surveillance and what you need to do in response.

There are also a number of high-hazard substances or agents where the law requires that the health surveillance programme includes **statutory medical surveillance**.

Statutory medical surveillance involves a medical examination and possibly tests by a doctor with appropriate training and experience.

The doctor must have been appointed by HSE.

Medical surveillance is a legal requirement for the following workplace exposures:

particular types of work with asbestos

work with lead

work with those substances hazardous to health that are subject to Schedule 6 of The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

work with ionising radiation

work in compressed air

When putting in place a health surveillance programme, avoid blanket coverage for all employees as it can provide misleading results and be a waste of money.

Set up and design health surveillance according to need

Where health surveillance is required, the employer has a central role in every stage of health surveillance - as demonstrated by the health surveillance cycle.

When setting up health surveillance arrangements, it is important to involve your employees and their representatives at an early stage as it is only effective with their co-operation.

Your employees should also understand their own duties, (in terms of attending appointments etc) and the purpose of the health surveillance and their involvement will ensure a 'reality check' from the shop floor is included in the process.

Identify who will do the health surveillance

As an employer you are responsible for putting in place the most appropriate health surveillance programme for your business.

To put an effective programme in place you will need to:

involve your employees

appoint a responsible person within your business

appoint a competent medical professional (where appropriate)

After designing your programme, you may need to appoint an occupational health provider to deliver it and help you meet your legal obligations.

By understanding a little more about what they do, you can be an 'intelligent customer' and purchase the right health surveillance services.

Keep your health surveillance process under review, to make sure that it is still appropriate and to maintain the quality.

Competent advisors

When looking to appoint a competent advisor to help with health surveillance in your workplace, you should try to find someone with experience of dealing with your particular industry and the hazards involved.

Responsible persons

A responsible person is someone in your organisation who is given the responsibility to help deliver a health surveillance system from within the workplace.

They will have received training or coaching on what they need to do to perform this role effectively

may involve training from a health professional, a health and safety professional, management or any other, as appropriate.

This person's role in the health surveillance system should be clearly defined and they should be someone who is trusted by the workforce, with good communication/interpersonal skills.

Do I always need a competent medical professional when implementing health surveillance?

No. In some cases, where there is no requirement for statutory medical surveillance, there are things you can do to keep costs down (eg putting a trained responsible person in charge of surveying the workforce for early signs of ill health).

However, you will still need to call on an appropriately qualified doctor or nurse to deal with any ill health found.

If you have a large workforce, you may wish to consider having a competent occupational health professional employed to be in charge of your programme, to advise and help you to manage health risks.

Occupational health technicians

Occupational health technicians are trained and qualified in specific areas, such as spirometry or audiology and if they are engaged in health surveillance they should provide competent advice to the employer.

Occupational health doctors and nurses

Occupational health doctors and nurses provide health surveillance services for employers whose employees are exposed to certain hazards at work (eg, noise and hand-arm vibration).

They should not be confused with appointed doctors who undertake statutory medical examinations - see previous (slide 11)

When appointing an occupational health doctor or nurse, it is important to find someone with experience in your industry, or a related industry.

You should also:

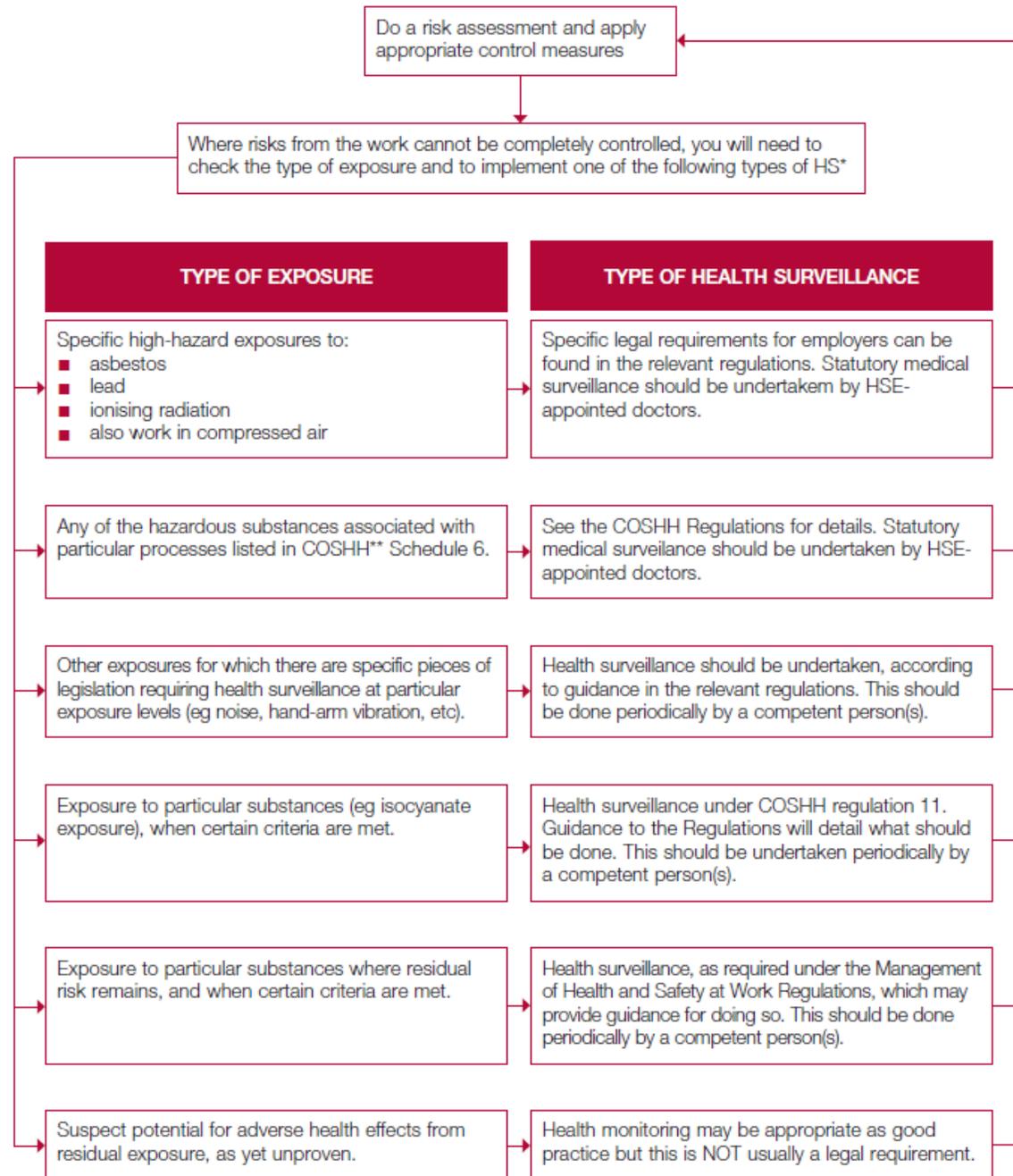
- ask to see their registration/personal identification number (PIN)

- ask to see their certificates/diplomas relevant to the duties you need them to undertake

Relevant qualifications can be confirmed with the appropriate governing body:

the [General Medical Council](#) and the [Faculty of Occupational Medicine](#) (for Doctors)
or the [Nursing and Midwifery Council](#)

Decision-making Map



<http://www.hse.gov.uk/health-surveillance/index.htm>



* Health surveillance
 ** Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002

From: “An employer’s Guide to engaging an occupational health physician”

(<http://www.fom.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/empopguid.pdf>)

Many doctors who offer their services as experts or advisers will not have had any specialist training in occupational medicine.

More often than not, they will have only very limited knowledge of the workplace and of health issues, associated with the workplace.

Doctors purporting to practise occupational medicine should have had further training in occupational medicine.

But, you need to be aware of the differences in degrees of expertise.

Some doctors, for example general practitioners, will have had some very basic training. They may have done the Diploma in Occupational Medicine (DOccMed); this should enable them to give basic day to day advice and they should have some understanding of the main issues that affect work and health.

But occupational medicine is not their main speciality and they would have to consult specialists on more complex issues, as they have the competence appropriate to a generalist.

Specialists in occupational medicine will have had in depth training and experience in occupational medicine and will be judged to be ‘fully knowledgeable in occupational medicine theory, practice and delivery’.

They will be Members or Fellows of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine and will have the letters MFOM or FFOM after their name. •

There are some practitioners who hold the qualification of AFOM (Associate of the Faculty of Occupational Medicine); this qualification is being phased out.

Those who have the qualification have core knowledge in occupational health but are not ‘specialists’.

Occupational Health Service Standards have recently been published - Occupational Health Service Standards for Accreditation (ISBN 978-1-86016-374-6), (available at: <http://www.facocmed.ac.uk/library/docs/standardsjan2010.pdf> or in hard copy from the Faculty of Occupational Medicine).

<http://www.fom.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/empopguid.pdf>

Health Surveillance Summary

Health surveillance is a system of ongoing health checks which may be required by law for employees who are exposed to specific hazards.

The employer has a central role in every aspect with involvement from employees to ensure effective implementation.

Risk assessment and controls

Do I need health surveillance?

What sort of health surveillance do I need ?

Set up and design health surveillance according to need. Seek help in doing so, if required

Identify who will do the health surveillance

Implement health surveillance for those who need it

Manage performance, interpret the results and act on the results

(The health surveillance cycle

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/health-surveillance/assets/documents/health-surveillance-cycle.pdf>)



References

fom



SEQOHS
Safe Effective Quality Occupational Health Service



Occupational health management in the workplace A guide to the key issues of occupational health provision



Exploring health and safety practitioners' training needs in workplace health issues by Nottingham University (2008)

Dr Stavroula Leka, Prof Sayeed Khan and Prof Amanda Griffiths



Health Surveillance - Resources

Case studies

- [Cambridge firm and consultant fined over chemical exposure](#)
- [Health screening company failed its duty to employees](#)

Useful links

Detailed, industry-specific guidance on health surveillance associated with hazardous substances can be found at the following links:

Hazardous industry

Agriculture

- [Grain dust](#)
- [COSHH essentials in agriculture: Advice for farmers](#)
 - [Sheep dipping](#)
 - [Controlling exposure to poultry dust](#)
- [Veterinary medicines: Safe use by farmers and other animal handlers](#)

Motor vehicle repair

- [Safety in motor vehicle repair: Working with isocyanate paints](#)
- [Urine sampling for isocyanate exposure measurement](#)



Timber treatment / wood working

- [Occupational hygiene and health surveillance at industrial treatment plants](#)
- [COSHH and the woodworking industries](#)

Food industry

- [A recipe for safety: Occupational health and safety in food and drink manufacture](#)

Beauty industry

- [Health surveillance for occupational asthma](#)
- [Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis](#)

Printing industry

- [COSHH essentials for printers: Health surveillance for occupational asthma](#)
- [COSHH essentials for printers: Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis](#)
- [COSHH essentials for printers: Biological monitoring for isocyanates](#)

Welding, hot work and allied processes

- [COSHH essentials for welding, hot work and allied processes: Expert advice](#)

General dust exposure

- [COSHH essentials: Health monitoring for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease](#)

Borehole sites and operation

- [Boreholes Sites and Operations Regulations 1995 regulation 10.](#)
- [As is necessary for their protection](#)

Construction industry

- [Managing occupational health risks in construction](#)
- [COSHH essentials: Health monitoring for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease](#)
- [COSHH essentials: Health surveillance for occupational asthma](#)
- [COSHH essentials: Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis](#)
- [COSHH essentials: Health surveillance for those exposed to respirable crystalline silica \(RCS\)](#)
- [HSE Construction information sheet: Cement](#)



Particular hazards

- COSHH health surveillance
- Occupational asthma and rhinitis
- Health surveillance for noise at work
- Health surveillance for hand-arm vibration
- Health surveillance in construction





Any Questions