

A Guide to Medical Examinations for Workers Engaged in Hazardous Occupations in Industrial Undertakings



Occupational Safety and Health Branch
Labour Department

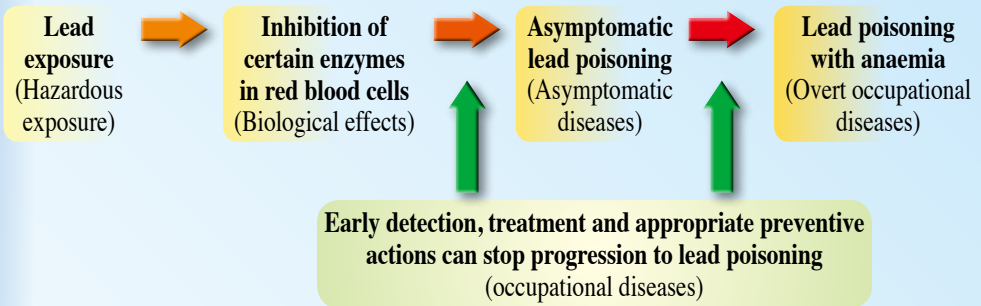


Health surveillance

Health surveillance is a process of monitoring the health status of persons to determine departures from normal health, so as to identify potential problem areas and the effectiveness of existing preventive strategies. Medical examination is a common means of conducting such surveillance.

Objectives of medical examinations

- To detect early abnormalities and prevent workers from developing occupational diseases, for example:



- To verify the effectiveness of existing preventive strategies
- To provide occupational health education and advice to workers



Pre-employment medical examinations

- To provide base-line health data against which subsequent changes after employment can be evaluated
- To ensure medical fitness for work



Periodic medical examinations

- Detect susceptible workers for whom corrective actions are required before they develop overt occupational diseases
- The frequency of periodic medical examinations depends on the nature of the occupational hazards. For most hazardous exposures, however, these examinations are conducted annually



Medical examination requirements



- A detailed occupational and medical history
- Physical examination
- Ancillary laboratory and / or radiological investigations



Medical examinations for workers

◆ Statutory medical examinations

The following workers in industrial undertakings are required by law* to undergo medical examinations:

- exposed to ionising radiation or asbestos
- exposed to controlled carcinogenic substances:
 - alpha-naphthylamine and its salts (other than alpha-naphthylamine containing, as a by-product of a chemical reaction, more than one per cent of beta-naphthylamine)
 - ortho-tolidine and its salts
 - dianisidine and its salts
 - dichlorobenzidine and its salts
 - auramine
 - magenta
- engaged in compressed air work
- engaged in mines, quarries and tunnelling work



* **Radiation Ordinance (Cap. 303)**

- ⊙ Radiation (Control of Irradiating Apparatus) Regulations
- ⊙ Radiation (Control of Radioactive Substances) Regulations

Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (Cap. 59)

- ⊙ Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Asbestos) Regulation
- ⊙ Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Carcinogenic Substances) Regulations
- ⊙ Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Work in Compressed Air) Regulations
- ⊙ Factories and Industrial Undertakings Regulations

Medical examinations for workers

◆ Recommended medical examinations

Apart from the statutory requirements, medical examinations are recommended as a good occupational health practice for workers exposed to certain hazards in industrial undertakings. The following are examples of these hazards:

- Silica
- Arsenic
- Cadmium
- Manganese
- Lead
- Mercury
- Organophosphates
- Tar, pitch, bitumen and creosote
- Raw cotton dust
- Benzene
- Methylendiphenyl diisocyanate (MDI) and Toluene diisocyanate (TDI)
- Lasers (Class 3B & 4)
- Excessive noise (daily personal noise exposure of 85 dB (A) and above)



Results of medical examinations

Depending on the medical examination findings, the doctor may advise the worker concerned that:

- he is medically fit for working in the particular occupation; or
- he is medically fit for working in the particular occupation but needs to take certain precautionary measures; or
- he should refrain from working in the particular occupation temporarily until he is confirmed to be medically fit to work again in that occupation; or
- he should refrain from working in the particular occupation permanently



Notification of occupational diseases

- Under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (Cap. 509), a doctor is required to notify the Commissioner for Labour of cases of occupational diseases that are specified in Schedule 2 of that Ordinance
- Under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (Cap. 282), an employer should notify cases of occupational diseases that are specified in the Second Schedule of the Ordinance to the Labour Department within 14 days of the employees' incapacity, or in the case of death, within 7 days of the death of the employee



Related publications of the Labour Department

- “Guidance Notes on Medical Examinations for Workers Engaged in Hazardous Occupations in Industrial Undertakings”
- “Guide to Occupational Diseases Prescribed for Compensation Purposes”
- “A Concise Guide to the Employees’ Compensation Ordinance”

Enquiries

For enquiries on this leaflet or advice on occupational health matters, please contact the Occupational Safety and Health Branch of the Labour Department through:

Tel: 2852 4041

Fax: 2581 2049

E-mail: enquiry@labour.gov.hk

Information on the services offered by the Labour Department and on major labour legislation can also be found on our website: www.labour.gov.hk.

Complaints

If you have any complaints about unsafe workplaces and practices, please call the Labour Department’s Occupational Safety and Health Complaint Hotline at 2542 2172. All complaints will be treated in the strictest confidence.