



Health surveillance – Legislative requirements for medical practitioners

Appointed Medical Practitioners (AMPs) are expected to have a good understanding of the duties of an AMP as outlined in regulation 5.24 of the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 ('the Regulations'). Medical practitioners who wish to become an AMP are required to be adequately trained to conduct health surveillance in relation to the hazardous substance in question, and are appointed by the employer, a main contractor or a self-employed person ('the employer').

Health surveillance requirements are described in detail in the Regulations (Part 5 – Hazardous Substances).

The employer is required to provide health surveillance at no cost if the health of the person is at risk as a result of the person's exposure at the workplace to a hazardous substance.

The employer is required to ensure that health surveillance is supervised by an AMP.

Health surveillance is the monitoring of a person's health for the purpose of identifying changes in the person's health status resulting from exposure to a hazardous substance.

Health surveillance includes:

- work history (nature of exposure, duration, work activity, work environment and controls, personal hygiene) and health screening questionnaire
- physical examination, where necessary
- biological monitoring where there are recognised tests for substances or metabolites e.g. blood or urine test
- other relevant medical investigations (e.g. lung function tests (spirometry), chest x-ray, etc. may be arranged).

The AMP has an important role in providing education on potential health effects and the importance of personal hygiene and correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the protection of the safety and health of the workers.

Health surveillance enables the AMP to identify any potential adverse effect on health from exposure to a hazardous substance in the workplace. Early identification and early intervention (e.g. hygiene and safe work practices, removal from further exposure, remedial action by the workplace) to prevent serious harm to the worker.

Duties of the AMP

The AMP should be familiar with Part 5 of the Regulations; in particular, regulation 5.24 (Duties of appointed medical practitioners) and Schedule 5.3 which lists the 16 main hazardous substances for which health surveillance is required. It should be noted that health surveillance should also be conducted for other substances where there is a risk of contracting an identifiable health effect or disease from exposure, and suitable health surveillance techniques are available.

Contravention of regulation 5.24 (1), (2), (4), (5) and (6) may result in a penalty of \$10,000 for a first offence and \$12,500 for a second offence.

The AMP has a duty to:

- treat the results of health surveillance as confidential (results can be released with the consent of the individual)
- notify the employee of the health surveillance results and provide an explanation
- provide the outcome of health surveillance to the employer and any need for remedial action (e.g. review work environment and safety controls) for the safety and health of employees/workers
- notify health surveillance to WorkSafe using the relevant WorkSafe WA Health Surveillance Notification Forms (asbestos, chromium, isocyanates, lead, MOCA, organophosphate pesticides, silica and “Other Hazardous Substances”)
- retain the records for 30 years. If the medical practitioner ceases to practise in WA, the medical practitioner must give the records to WorkSafe.

Prompt notification to WorkSafe enables early intervention from WorkSafe to protect the safety and health of workers.

In the event the AMP recommends medical removal from further exposure, WorkSafe is to be informed promptly by phone 1300 307 877 and/or email safety@dmirs.wa.gov.au. The AMP may also request to speak to the WorkSafe Occupational Health Nurse or the Occupational Physician to clarify relevant issues.

References

Refer to the WorkSafe WA guidelines for health surveillance when planning and implementing health surveillance.

See [Health surveillance - Information, guides and forms](#) for guidelines for medical practitioners and information for employers, along with notification forms and additional resources.

[Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996](#)

Other references

Safe Work Australia guides are useful as an adjunct resource.

[Health monitoring for exposure to hazardous chemicals. Guide for medical practitioners](#). February 2020. Safe Work Australia.

[Hazardous chemicals requiring health monitoring](#). March 2013. Safe Work Australia.

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