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| 144-UnityLogoPMS | **Information Leaflet**  **What is Health Surveillance** |

Health surveillance is a system of ongoing health checks. These health checks are required by law for employees who are exposed to noise or vibration, ionising radiation, solvents, fumes, dusts and other substances hazardous to health. Your employer undertakes a risk assessment to identify the need for health surveillance in the workplace and this is carried out by an appropriately trained person.

Health surveillance is important for:

* detecting ill-health effects at an early stage, so employers can introduce further 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
* providing an opportunity to reinforce training and education of employees (eg on the impact of some work activities on your health and the importance of using of personal protective equipment - PPE)

**Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome Health Surveillance** **(if applicable to your job role)**

Health surveillance is provided for all employees who are regularly using power tools as the vibration can cause hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS). The aim of the health surveillance is to protect you from developing advanced symptoms of HAVS if you work regularly with hand-held or hand-guided power tools for more than a few hours each day and to identify anyone exposed or about to be exposed to hand-arm vibration who may be at particular risk.

**Respiratory Health Surveillance (if applicable to your job role)**

Work-related respiratory disease covers a range of illnesses that are caused or made worse by breathing in hazardous substances that can damage the lungs.

Employers have a duty under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002, to ensure that suitable health surveillance is undertaken for individuals working with certain substances that have the potential to cause Occupational Lung Disease such as Occupational Asthma, and which are covered under these Regulations.

The main cause of lung disease is cigarette smoking, but exposure to sensitisers such as harmful dust, fumes and gases, chemicals, wood dust, paints and irritant substances at work can also contribute to the development of the disease.

**Skin Health Surveillance (if applicable to your job role)**

Contact dermatitis is inflammation of the skin caused by contact with a range of materials. These include detergents, toiletries, chemical agents and hazardous substances that are capable of causing damage to the skin. Even natural products like food and water, if contact is prolonged or frequent, can cause dermatitis. It can affect all parts of the body, but it is most common to see the hands affected. Many people live with pain and discomfort due to damage to the skin, and some have had to give up work as a result of having work-related dermatitis.

Certain workers are at greater risk of developing dermatitis. They include healthcare workers, hairdressers, printers, bodyshop workers, those in cleaning, catering and construction and workers using metal working fluids, however, dermatitis can occur in most workplaces.

**Noise Induced Hearing Loss Surveillance (if applicable to your job role)**

Hearing can be damaged by excessive or prolonged exposure to noise in work and outside work. Health surveillance (hearing checks) is provided for employees who are likely to be regularly exposed above the upper exposure action values as stated in current legislation, or are at risk for any reason, for example those already suffering from hearing loss or are particularly sensitive to damage.

**Night Worker Health Surveillance (if applicable to your job role)**

Under this legislation, night time is between 11 pm to 6 am unless otherwise agreed upon by the employer and employee. While working at night does not necessarily pose any significant health risks, it may worsen some existing health conditions including epilepsy, gastrointestinal conditions, sleep problems, [depression](https://www.healthassured.org/blog/anxiety-vs-depression/), [anxiety](https://www.healthassured.org/blog/job-anxiety/) and diabetes. This health assessment helps employers to identify where night shifts are causing workers health risks. After completion, it also helps to decide [how best to make reasonable adjustments.](https://www.healthassured.org/blog/reasonable-adjustments/)

**Driver Health Surveillance (if applicable to your job role)**

Employers have a duty to ensure that staff are fit for work, and this includes those whose work involves driving. Employers are responsible for ensuring that those drivers are fit for their roles, and the best way to validate a driver’s health is by conducting health surveillance either by questionnaire, or by a full medical examination depending on the type of driving they are undertaking. Individuals also have a duty to be fit enough to drive.

**Musculoskeletal Health Surveillance (if applicable to your job role)**

Employers must protect workers from the risks of musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) being caused or made worse by work. MSDs include injuries and conditions that can affect the back, joints and limbs. Employers cannot prevent all MSDs, so early reporting of symptoms, proper treatment and suitable rehabilitation are essential.

**How is health surveillance arranged?**

Basic health surveillance consists of regularly seeking information about early symptoms of ill health by using a questionnaire relating to medical history, family history, social history and occupational history, which is reviewed by an occupational health nurse or doctor. The occupational health clinicians have training and experience in health surveillance.

Unity has developed a highly successfully screening service for employees exposed to HAVS, respiratory sensitisers, skin irritants and noise, and provides reliable and understandable results for both employees and employers.

* For Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome health surveillance, an in-depth health questionnaire is completed prior to the assessment, followed by a consultation and discussion regarding the responses on the questionnaire.
* For Respiratory health surveillance an in-depth health questionnaire is completed prior to the employee’s assessment, followed by a consultation together with a Lung Function Test, using specific diagnostic equipment.
* For Noise Induced Hearing Loss health surveillance an in-depth questionnaire is completed, including information on previous exposure to noise both at work and outside of work. An auriscopic examination of the ears may be undertaken first, followed by an Audiometric hearing test. The result of the test will be provided by the Nurse and advice will be given as appropriate, on protective equipment to be used.
* For Skin Surveillance an in-depth health questionnaire is completed and the clinician will discuss your responses and undertake an assessment of your hands and provide advice on protection from damage.
* For Night Worker Health Surveillance an in-depth health questionnaire is completed and the clinician will discuss your responses and provide advice on any health concerns raised.
* For Driving Health Surveillance an in-depth health questionnaire is completed and the clinician will discuss your responses and provide advice on any health concerns raised, and examination such as hearing, balance, co-ordination, eyesight and blood pressure can also be undertaken.
* For Musculoskeletal Health Surveillance an in-depth health questionnaire is completed and the clinician will discuss your responses and provide advice on any health concerns raised.

A report will be completed on each individual screening, detailing the results of the health surveillance and will be supplied to both the Management and to the Employee. The confidential medical records and personal health information are kept by Unity and will not be discussed with the Management without explicit consent from the individual. Included on the individuals report will be advice about the health surveillance undertaken. A review date will be set for the ongoing of future health surveillance to be undertaken.

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