

## OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH MONITORING PROCEDURE

Section	University Services
Contact	Director Occupational Health & Safety, Wellbeing
Last Review	December 2023
Next Review	December 2025
Approval	Director Occupational Health & Safety, Wellbeing

### Purpose:

To protect and ensure the work health status of individual employees through early detection of adverse work (and non-work if required) health effects which may arise from exposure to hazardous activities or substances in the workplace.

### Scope:

The Health and Safety at Work Act (2015) requires that when there is a significant hazard that cannot be eliminated, an employer must, in addition to minimizing the hazard, monitor the exposure of the employee to the hazard.

Occupational health monitoring is a part of the overall Massey University Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) obligation to identify, manage and reduce the impact of occupational health hazards in the workplace. Systematic assessment and early detection of certain hazards in the course of work is essential for the safety of workers.

Occupational Health monitoring means monitoring a person to identify any changes in their health status because of exposure to certain health hazards arising from the conduct of work. It involves direct monitoring of that person's health indicators such as blood, urine, lung function tests and hearing.

Occupational exposure monitoring means direct or indirect monitoring of the work environment to ensure that no worker is exposed to a hazardous substance such dust, vapour, gas, noise etc. at a level that does not exceed the Workplace Exposure Standard and/or may cause harm to a worker. Occupational exposure monitoring involves environmental measurements such as dust or air sampling and noise levels.

### Objectives:

The Health & Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016 require that no worker is exposed to a substance hazardous to their health in a concentration that exceeds the prescribed exposure standard for that substance.

To meet these regulations, the University must ensure that exposure monitoring is carried out where applicable and any worker exposed to a substance that is hazardous to their health is offered health monitoring. Objectives for this procedure include, but are not limited to:

- Identify and implement specific health monitoring requirements for workers liable to be exposed to certain substances or elements that present a risk to their health and/or are working in potentially hazardous processes.
- Evaluate existing control measures and identify areas where improvements may be required.
- Collect, maintain and use results and information to assist in determining and evaluating hazards to health.
- Demonstrate compliance against regulatory standards.
- Ensure there are robust processes for monitoring employee exposure levels in relation to any job-related health hazard.
- Establish if current hazard identification and controls are effective i.e. whether harm is, or is not, being caused to staff
- To check if the health of workers is being harmed from exposure to hazards while carrying out work.
- To check that job applicants can do the tasks required for specified roles in a safe manner. This includes consideration of potential aggravation to an existing health condition and previous exposure levels. It provides baseline measurements for ongoing occupational monitoring and is not intended to exclude or discriminate.

**Procedure:**

1. Occupational Health monitoring will be carried out in situations where:
  - a) a worker undertakes work using a substance or element hazardous to health where it has been identified that health monitoring is required (as specified in a safe work instrument, code of practice, workplace exposure standard) or
  - b) safe environmental levels have been exceeded and there is a risk to the worker's health because of exposure to that hazardous material.
2. Occupational health monitoring will be carried out by a qualified practitioner with knowledge, skills and experience in exposure monitoring. The test will be appropriate to test the exposure of the hazard being monitored and the data must be interpreted by a suitably qualified person who understands the hazards and risks as well as the occupational health & safety implications to the person's health.
3. The university will inform all relevant people about the exposure monitoring requirements of the work that involves the health hazard before the work commences.
4. Consent will be obtained by workers prior to monitoring.
5. Massey University will pay all necessary occupational health monitoring costs.
6. Workers will be provided with information, policy, procedures and evidence upon request regarding the occupational exposure monitoring in their area of work.

7. An occupational health monitoring report will be provided to the relevant parties as soon as practicable after the monitoring has occurred. Where possible, workers should be encouraged to give copies to their GP to maintain a central medical record.
8. The occupational health monitoring report will be escalated to a specialist medical practitioner for attention when the results indicate a worker may have suboptimal results or has contracted a disease or an illness as a result of undertaking work. In this case any remedial advice or recommendations will be acted upon.
9. Occupational Health monitoring reports will be stored as confidential records and access will be restricted to authorised personnel who need this information to make occupational health and safety decisions regarding workplace safety improvements or to provide medical support to the worker. The reports must be identified as records of that worker and kept for the regulated period of time.
10. Health monitoring reports will not be disclosed without the worker's written consent.
11. Upon request workers will be provided with a copy of their monitoring records when they leave the business.
12. Exposure monitoring protocols will be reviewed annually or as instructed and updated accordingly.
13. Both the worker and the employer have a role to play in maintaining required occupational health standards in the workplace and both are required to keep the other fully informed of changes in the worker's health condition or environment.
14. Both the worker and the employer must ensure that suitable prompt action is undertaken if occupational exposure monitoring results identify a problem.

### **Risk assessment process:**

The first stage of a health and exposure monitoring programme is to identify potential occupational health hazards in a hazard risk register. If the hazard cannot be completely controlled or eliminated, then minimisation controls must be introduced to protect the health of the worker and provide a safe workplace.

Once the occupational health hazards and the work activities requiring monitoring have been identified an exposure risk assessment can be undertaken.

- Identify the occupational health hazards and who has exposure to them.
- Assess the level of risk (low, moderate, high, or extreme) to the workers. This may involve a detailed risk assessment by a qualified practitioner with knowledge, skills, and experience in exposure monitoring.
- Take all reasonably practicable steps to reduce and control the threat of harm, for example:
  - Remove the hazard altogether.
  - Reduce the risk by changing the way work is done or use other controls (e.g. local

- exhaust ventilation)
- Provide personal protective equipment.
- Regularly check the occupational health hazard exposure levels.

Occupational exposure monitoring is required in many workplace settings. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Work involving exposure to respiratory (or skin) sensitisers.
- Significant exposure to particular substances or chemical agents
- Work with vibrating tools.
- Work in a noisy environment.
- Work with ionising radiation.
- Work in compressed gas atmospheres (e.g. divers)

### **Substances hazardous to Occupational Health:**

Massey has learning, teaching and research work that involves use of hazardous substances in controlled environments.

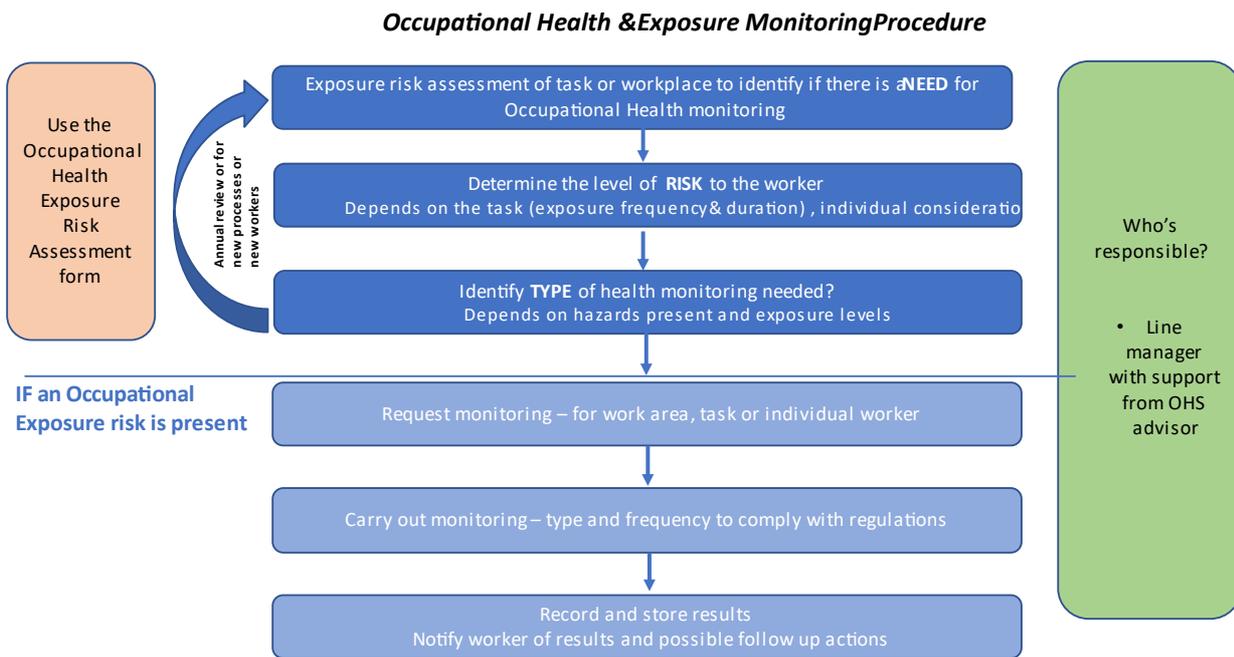
Colleges or University Services using hazardous substances must consider the risk of harm to staff and student health when conducting work via a workplace risk assessment. Whether there is risk or occupational health harm or not, the risk assessment must be recorded in the hazard risk register.

Staff, students, and others using hazardous substances must be informed of any relevant occupational health risks in the risk register and trained in safe operating procedures/safe methods of use.

For further information on the management of hazardous substances, refer to the following protocols:

- Management and Use of Hazardous Substances
- Radiation Management
- Hazardous Waste Disposal
- The site Hazard Risk Register
- Staff Health Monitoring Guideline
- Policy on Pre-employment Checks for Prospective Appointees

The process for assessing the need for health surveillance, identifying those at risk and arranging for surveillance to take place is summarised in the diagram below.



### Information Storage and Privacy:

- Managers must ensure that results of Occupational exposure monitoring tests are presented to affected staff.
- The results are to be held with the OHS department for 40 years after the date on which the record is made, if the monitoring is undertaken in order to detect asbestos-related disease, or 30 years after the date on which the record is made, in any other case.
- The University must provide an exposure monitoring report when requested by WorkSafe New Zealand under Regulation 41 of the Health & Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016.
- Personal information collected during the health monitoring process is managed according to the following:
  - Privacy Act 1993
  - Official Information Act 1982
  - Health Information Privacy Code 1994
  - Health & Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016
  - Massey University Privacy Policy

### Funding of monitoring costs:

Funding arrangements are as follows:

- The cost of routine environmental and medical health monitoring is to be factored into departmental/unit budgets as a part of their operations. Initial determinations of the need for environmental monitoring may be funded from the Health and Safety office or from regional budgets.
- Monitoring of workstation ergonomics for discomfort, pain and injury as well as vision with visual display use is common to all University activity and is funded centrally by the University.

**Glossary of terms:**

- Audiometry - measurement of the range and sensitivity of a person's sense of hearing.
- Radiation - the emission of energy as electromagnetic waves or as moving subatomic particles, especially high-energy particles which cause ionisation.
- Substances hazardous to health - a substance, or product containing a substance, that is known or suspected to cause harm to health. It includes:
  - a substance classified as having toxic or corrosive properties under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (HSNO)
  - a substance for which a prescribed exposure standard exists.
  - a substance specified in a safe work instrument as requiring health monitoring.
- Workplace exposure standard (WES) - For a substance, refers to the airborne concentration of a substance at which it is believed nearly all workers can be repeatedly exposed to, day after day, without coming to harm. Employers should aim to have airborne concentrations well below the WES value. WES values can be found [worksafe.govt.nz](http://worksafe.govt.nz).

**References:**

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015  
GRWM Regulations 2016

**Relevant Legislation:**

Health and Safety at Work Act (2015)  
Education and Training Act 2020  
Radiation Safety Act 2016

**Informative references:**

Relevant ORS codes of practice for radiation safety  
Workplace exposure standards

**Related Procedures:**

None