

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH HAZARD ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME – A METHOD TO DETERMINE TARGETED OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SCREENING & TESTING

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ABSTRACT

There are many hazards in the workplace of which some affect the health of people. For some hazards there are well documented profiles of the health affects and established protocols for the occupational health monitoring requirements e.g. lead Isocyanates. However there is a significant range of occupational health hazards where there is insufficient epidemiological data, history and length of exposure to determine testing that has any level of specificity and or sensitivity. In other words we are working blind.

Regardless of this as within any other health arena there is a need to apply a systematic, scientific process so that we can identify any health affects and determine appropriate screening methods and measurement testing. Screening should have the ability to detect and ultimately prevent occupational exposures occurring.

There is a need to operate robust systems for Occupational Health Monitoring that encompass best practice, are evidence based and have the ability to capture data to allow determination of trends, relevance of clinical data and symptoms, and causal relationship.

Occupational health hazard screening is about ensuring that there is:

- a safe and healthy match between a person and the job
- effective & targeted Monitoring to detect and determine any health changes that occur
- identify the work relatedness of any changes
- effective control measures to prevent workplace exposures occurring

The above will be discussed in reference to a specific case where an Occupational Health Monitoring process was implemented and will cover :

- Setting up an occupational health hazard identification process
- Implementing the process
- Operating the programme
- Results, reports, reviews and modifications that have resulted from the Health Hazard Assessment Programme (HHAP)

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH HAZARD ASSESSMENT PROGRAMME

Occupational health hazard screening is about ensuring that there is a safe and healthy match between a person and the job they will do and preventing any injury or harm being caused by the job, to the person.

Occupational health hazard assessment ensures that all hazards that affect health are identified and the appropriate control measures are put in place of which screening and assessment systems are part of this.

Occupational health hazard health assessment will:

- Ensure the safety and health of the person within the workplace
- Identify Occupational health hazards in the workplace & enable the appropriate monitoring to be established
- Assess for any workplace exposures i.e. airborne monitoring, noise levels
- Provide database of results for early detection & ‘comparison of results’ process for on going monitoring
- Provide basis for Identification of any trends or developments in health affects from hazards
- Establish baseline health status.
- Establish baseline health measurements i.e. lung function hearing tests
- Identify any past occupational exposures and any health effects from past exposures
- Establish pre existing conditions that maybe exacerbated/aggravated by the proposed work and the hazards in the workplace
- Establish that the person has the physical and health capabilities required to perform the job tasks and work safely within the job environment
- Establish ACC status e.g. non work /work health effects on conditions

IMPLEMENTING OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH HAZARD PROCESS

Step 1

Identify all work areas to complete an occupational Health Hazard questionnaire & Occupational Health Profile

Step 2

Each division is visited by the Occupational Health Nurse, who will with the Division and the designated person, complete the following:

- Occupational health Profile & Health hazard questions
- Review hazards for the work area – includes site tour/review of specific hazards/chemical management
- Identified occupational health monitoring required

Interview with staff/H&S Reps/Employee representative body should be included in the review for hazard interview

Step 3

Where it is identified that the work /work environment maybe, or is a potential risk to the person, the occupational health nurse will consult other occupational professionals as required e.g. Occupational Physician, occupational hygienist to establish monitoring required

Workplace exposure levels maybe required to establish the need and or type of monitoring required

Step 4

Data collected from Step 1-3 is used to determine what actual assessment monitoring is required

- What types of tests need to be done i.e. lung function for respiratory irritant hearing for noise exposure
- Establish screening questions required to establish if exposures have occurred
- Determine frequency of testing
- Establish occupational health policy procedures and protocol

Step 5

Establish Health hazard Register

Establish any Occupational health policy, procedures and protocol for management of Health Monitoring.

Determine implementation plan and schedule of monitoring

Establish benchmarks and measurement of outcomes

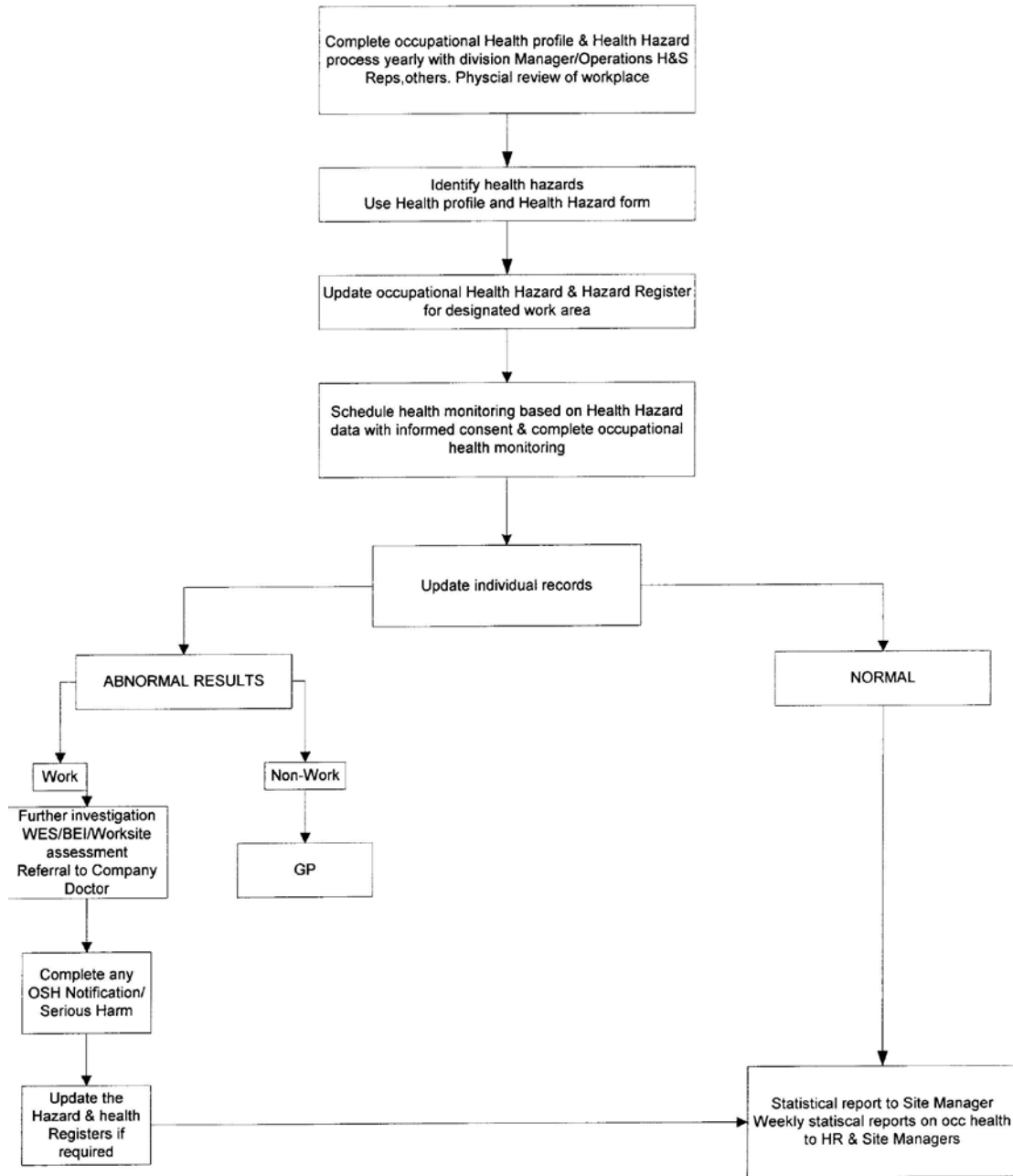
Step 6

Provide Work area with Health Hazard Profile and Hazard Register. Discuss with site & input any modifications

Step 7

Review Health Hazard Profile and Hazard Register yearly or where process workplace or other changes occur that change hazards/create potential hazards

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH HAZARD PROCESS
FOR HEALTH MONITORING IN THE
WORKPLACE**



References

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