

Policy Applies to:

All Mercy Hospital Staff and Credentialed Specialists.

Related Standards:

- Health and Safety at Work Act, 2015
- Health and Safety at Work (Asbestos) Regulation 2016
- Health and Safety at Work (General Risk and Workplace Management) Regulations 2016
- Privacy Act 2020
- Accident Compensation Act 2001
- Workplace Exposure Standards and Biological Indices 2022
- Nga Parewa Standards

Cultural Considerations:

Any approaches to health monitoring will consider the individuals cultural needs and requests. Health monitoring is an opportunity to discuss any cultural requirements. Tikanga will be incorporated in any health monitoring provided to staff through the health provider conducting the monitoring.

Rationale:

- To ensure there are procedures for monitoring baseline and new or ongoing environmental and personal health concerns in relation to exposure to any job-related health hazard.
- The monitoring will be appropriate for assessing if an exposure is a significant hazard to health
- To help in detecting changes in an individual's health that are known to be associated with exposure to a particular hazard.
- The Health and Safety at Work Act 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; and
 - with the employee's consent, their health in relation to exposure to the hazard.

Initial Health assessments can identify staff are in appropriate physical condition for the job.

Objectives

- To identify significant health hazards in the workplace that cannot be fully eliminated
- To understand if controls in place are sufficient to protect staff from the detrimental effects of the hazards identified
- Educate staff on the detrimental health effects of the hazards in their area, why we continually monitor their health and exposure
- To establish a baseline in relation to workplace exposure

- To detect changes in an individual's health associated with a specific hazard exposure

Definitions

Monitoring may involve environmental measurements (e.g. air or dust sampling, sound levels, radiation levels etc.) or direct health monitoring of individuals (e.g. blood, urine, lung function, audiometry tests).

Workplace Exposure Standard (WES) means any exposure listed in the Workplace Exposure Standard publication currently available in New Zealand. Workplace Exposure Standards are defined for both short-term effects and long-term effects.

Exposure Monitoring involves measuring and evaluating what your workers are being exposed to while they are at work, and if this is at a level that can cause harm.

Health Monitoring assesses whether an employee's exposures at work is harming their health and if the controls in place are effective.

Implementation:

Health and Safety Specialist Responsibility

- Review of newly identified hazards through incident reporting, workplace discussions, risk assessments and changes in practice.
- Management and monitoring of existing hazards
- Consent must be obtained before any health monitoring is carried out. Records must be stored with individual's confidential personnel file
- The Health and Safety Specialist will liaise with Infection Prevention and Control Nurse appropriate Unit Managers once a requirement to monitoring has been identified.

Infection Prevention and Control Nurse Responsibility

- Identify any infection risks for staff and the need to record immunity status and any necessary exposure testing as a result of infectious material.
- Oversee and support immunity testing conducted for all new staff.

Department Manager Responsibility

- Introduction of new equipment or products submitted to the Product Evaluation process for review of hazard exposure.

- Collaborate with the Health and Safety Specialist and workers to identify any hazards associated change in work process and procedures implemented through departments or hospital's wide.
- Establish any monitoring requirements with new staff in departments where Health monitoring is implemented.
- Aid in completion of onboarding immunity testing for all new staff.

The Health and Safety Specialist is responsible for identifying the appropriate Occupational Health referral pathway and to work with Managers who are responsible for ensuring health and exposure monitoring is undertaken as agreed and budgeted for.

Health and exposure monitoring must be discussed with those being checked and include information such as:

- what it involves
- how regularly it will occur
- how it can benefit them
- where and when it will occur
- cultural considerations

Written, informed consent is required for health monitoring to proceed. If an employee does not consent to health monitoring, a meeting will be arranged with the Health and Safety Specialist, the Occupational Health Nurse, and the employee's manager to discuss alternative arrangements or processes.

Health monitoring will be conducted by a qualified health practitioner (e.g., Occupational Health Nurse). All personal information collected during the monitoring process will be securely stored and used solely for the purposes for which it was collected.

Health monitoring will be organised to occur on site during working hours of the staff. If this is unable to be arranged, transportation will be provided for those individuals, and appointments will be scheduled during working hours.

Exposure Monitoring

Environmental monitoring can only be conducted by an appropriately qualified person. When conducting environmental monitoring, it is essential to ensure that:

- i. All samples are representative of the process under investigation.
- ii. The sampling methods used are appropriate.
- iii. The standards against which any results are assessed are suitable.
- iv. The interpretation of the results is accurate and relevant.

Environmental monitoring results will be documented in audit and health and safety reports. These results will be communicated to staff who may be exposed to the hazard by the Health and Safety Specialist or Occupational Health Nurse.

If an assessment determines that there is a significant health hazard that cannot be eliminated, health monitoring will be required. Health monitoring may be conducted through pre-employment and ongoing screening. The Health and Safety Specialist will collaborate with the area manager to organize the necessary monitoring.

Health Monitoring

Health monitoring can only be conducted by an appropriately qualified person. Health monitoring may be required in the following instances:

- i. Where there is an identifiable disease or health effect that may be related to the exposure.
- ii. Where there is a reasonable likelihood that the disease or health effect may occur under the particular conditions of work.
- iii. Where there are valid techniques for detecting the indicators of the disease or effect.

Types of health monitoring include:

- i. Audiometry testing
- ii. Lung function testing
- iii. Cardiovascular testing
- iv. Pre-employment communicable disease screening
- v. Respirator fit testing

Education

The Health and Exposure Monitoring results can be used to raise awareness of the detrimental effects hazards can have on employee health.

The Health and Safety Specialist will discuss the below information with appropriate staff:

Information

1. Why monitoring is taking place
2. Who funds this
3. What is the process of the monitoring
4. How regularly is the monitoring going to occur

5. What information is passed on to the provider
6. Information included in the monitoring report
7. Personal/confidential information handling processes
8. Sharing results
9. Result storage

Evaluation

Employees at risk from workplace hazards to health are monitored to establish that workplace hazard controls are effective. The information relating to exposure, work and medical history, and signs and symptoms of exposure will be collated and interpreted by a person who has an understanding of both the work activities and occupational health.

The results of all tests will be kept on the individual's confidential personnel file. These will be stored for 40 years if relating to Asbestos exposure and 30 years for any other category.

Where an abnormal result indicates that a hazard control is not effective, then the result may be used (with the informed consent of the individual) as a basis for improving the hazard control mechanism.

Evaluation is also documented in:

- Risk Register
- Application for employment form
- Environmental monitoring reports
- Staff health file records
- Health and safety / infection control monthly reports
- Staff Radiation dosimeter reports
- Staff Hepatitis B immunisation ACHS clinical indicator reports
- Staff audiology reports
- Staff lung function test reports
- Staff chest x rays

Associated Documents

External

- Approved Code of Practice for the Management and removal of asbestos
- Management of Noise In the Workplace, OSH, October 2012
- Health monitoring under the health and safety at work (general risk and workplace management) regulations 2016
- Workplace Exposure Standards and Biological Exposure Indices, June 2016

- Privacy Act, 1993

Internal

- Health and Safety Policy
- Hazard Identification Policy
- Mercy Hospital Employee Health Monitoring Consent Form
- Staff Immunization Policy
- Infectious diseases – Staff information
- Asbestos Management Surveys
- Radiation Policy
- Section 3 Recruitment, Selection and Appointment, Human Resources Policy Manual
- Risk Register
- Organisational Risk/Hazard register