

# Fact sheet

## Understanding health monitoring

June 2024

### Introduction to health monitoring

As outlined in Safe Work Australia: Health Monitoring – guide for persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBUs), health monitoring means checking a worker to identify changes in their health status due to exposure to certain substances. Health monitoring must be supervised by a registered medical practitioner with experience in health monitoring. There are different health monitoring techniques used to assess exposure and their health impacts, including:

- worker interviews
- medical examination
- biological effect monitoring.

### Legislative obligations

A (PCBU) has an obligation to provide health monitoring for a worker if:

1. a worker is exposed to hazardous chemicals referred to in Schedule 14, table 14.1 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 and there is a significant risk to their health, or
2. there is a significant risk that a worker is exposed or will be exposed to a hazardous chemical not referred to in Schedule 14 and there is either a:
  - valid technique to detect the health effects or
  - valid way of determining biological exposure and it is uncertain whether the exposure has exceeded the biological exposure standard.

Refer to the [legislation for a full list of hazardous chemicals](#) where health monitoring is required

### Crystalline silica

Crystalline silica is an example of a chemical listed in Schedule 14 that may be present in mining and extractive work places.

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## Coal dust

Coal is an example of a chemical not included in Schedule 14 where health monitoring is required as there is a significant risk to worker health and X-ray and spirometry are valid techniques to detect the effect of exposure.

## Asbestos

Health monitoring is also required for exposure to asbestos if, as a result of asbestos-related work, a worker is at risk of exposure when carrying out that work.

Table 1: Health monitoring requirements for common hazardous chemicals in mining

Hazardous chemicals	Health monitoring requirements
<b>Crystalline silica and coal dust</b>	demographic, medical and occupational history records of personal exposure completion of standardised respiratory questionnaire standardised respiratory function tests, for example forced expiratory volume (FEV), forced vital capacity (FVC), and FEV/FVC chest x-ray full size PA (posterior anterior) view
<b>Lead (inorganic)</b>	demographic, medical and occupational history physical examination biological monitoring
<b>Asbestos</b>	demographic, medical and occupational history records of personal exposure physical examination

Note: These are the most common health hazards found in mines but depending on the type of operation, other health hazards may be present.

## Reporting health monitoring results

A copy of health monitoring results must be provided to the worker. If a health impact has been detected, a copy of this report must be provided to any other PCBUs who may have a duty and the Regulator.

The following information must be included in the report:

- Advice on test results that indicate the worker may have contracted a disease, injury or illness as a result of carrying out work with the chemical.
- A recommendation that remedial measures be taken in relation to whether the worker can continue to carry out work with the hazardous chemical that triggered the requirement for health monitoring.
- For lead risk work, test results that indicate the worker has reached a blood level at or above the relevant removal level.

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The health monitoring, reports must be identified as a record in relation to that worker and must not include other information that is not connected to the health monitoring.

Adverse health monitoring reports are required to be reported to the Resources Regulator under clause 376 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017.

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