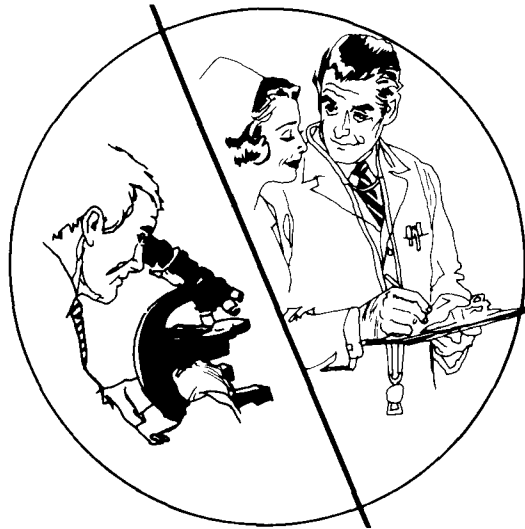


**EPA The Occupational
Medical Monitoring**

**Program for
EPA Employees**

905R80134



**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region V, Library
230 South Dearborn Street
Chicago, Illinois 60604**

A Message from the Office of Occupational Health and Safety

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is vitally concerned with safeguarding the occupational health and safety of its employees. The prevention of work related illness and injury depends on awareness of risk, control of the work environment, the proper use of protection equipment, and careful attention to safe work practices. Providing a safe work environment and promoting healthful and safe work practices are goals at every EPA location, and the responsibility for occupational health and safety is shared by everyone in the Agency. As part of this effort, the Office of Occupational Health and Safety has developed an agency-wide employee occupational medical monitoring program. This pamphlet will acquaint you with the program and answer common questions.

Robert C. Magor

Robert C. Magor, Ph.D. Director
Office of Occupational Health
and Safety

Don Webb

Don Webb, Manager
Medical Monitoring Program

What is Occupational Medical Monitoring?
Medical monitoring is a watch over the health of selected employees by means of periodic medical examinations; it is an effort to detect and prevent adverse effects of occupational exposures. An agency-wide EPA occupational medical monitoring program was started in 1977. This program is in addition to the employee health maintenance examination, offered at some Federal employee health units. These examinations are designed to promote general rather than occupational health.

Is The Program Voluntary?

With a few exceptions, participation in the EPA monitoring program is voluntary. Much of the value of a medical examination depends on open, voluntary communication between physician and examinee. You may choose to participate or to decline. You may withdraw from the program at any time, but you must notify your Medical Monitoring Coordinator. The on-site Medical Monitoring Coordinator will keep a record of all employees to whom the exam is offered. This record will be used to document the agency's compliance with the requirement that it offer the examination.

Who Pays For The Examination

The examinations are paid for by the Agency.

How are the Examinations Arranged?

Each EPA location with a need for medical monitoring arranges to have the examinations performed by a qualified local physician. Each EPA facility has designated a Medical Monitoring Coordinator to organize and schedule the examinations.

What Is The Scope of the Examination and How Frequently Is It Given?

The monitoring examinations and tests are designed to screen for evidence of adverse health effects from occupational exposures and to survey the systems of the body most likely to be affected by such exposures. Medical monitoring is not intended as a substitute for general health care or periodic checkups by your personal physician.

The first, or baseline, examination consists of a detailed medical and occupational history, a physical examination, a chest X-ray, and selected blood and urine tests. If warranted by occupational conditions, additional tests, such as hearing, lung function, and special blood tests, may be included.

Ideally, the frequency and content of subsequent monitoring examinations should

be determined by the nature of the occupational exposures and risks. In practice, most EPA employees can be effectively monitored by examination yearly or every other year.

The Agency Office of Occupational Health and Safety issues periodic monitoring guidelines and can provide consultation and assistance regarding the content and frequency of a specific examination.

What is done with the Examination Findings?

It is the responsibility of the examining physician to advise all participants of his or her examination findings. Those participants with findings considered unrelated to occupation are encouraged to discuss them with their personal medical provider. Employees with examination findings that appear to be related to occupation are referred to their supervisor so that reports and care can be initiated under the Federal employee compensation system.

The physician is asked to inform EPA of those cases with occupationally related medical findings. On being notified of work-related health problems, the Agency initiates appropriate health and safety investigation and remedial action.

Summary

Your occupational health and safety depend on careful attention to proper working conditions and practices. If you are nominated for an occupational medical monitoring examination, remember that such examinations aid in the prevention of occupationally-related illness and in the protection and maintenance of your health. Unless otherwise notified your participation is voluntary. All findings will be handled in a responsible and confidential manner.

Need More Information?

If you want more information or have questions, consult your supervisor, Medical Monitoring Coordinator, or the EPA Office of Occupational Health and Safety.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region V, Library
~~230 South Dearborn Street~~
Chicago, Illinois 60604

Why is a Medical Monitoring Program Necessary?

Although most EPA employees are engaged in work in which the occupational risks are not significantly different from the ordinary risks of everyday life, a considerable number have duties that may involve potential exposure to a wide variety of toxic substances or stressful working conditions.

Medical monitoring can aid in:

- Early recognition of unsuspected health risks
- Monitoring of the effectiveness of protective measures taken for known risks
- Prompt initiation of corrective action and appropriate medical care.
- Evaluation of health factors in safe work performance
- Possible study of long-term subtle health effects of occupational exposure
- Periodic fitness re-certification of employees whose work involves unique physical stresses

How Are Employees Nominated for Monitoring?

The medical monitoring program is intended to provide examinations for EPA employees whose work may involve significant potential for exposure to toxic substances, occupational risks or unique physical stress. It is the responsibility of supervisors, with the assistance of employees themselves and health and safety personnel, to carefully review work assignments and to nominate program candidates. The program is not intended to provide examinations for all EPA employees.
