Occupational Health (Exposure) Monitoring

(SHEMS-STD-GR-082)

Unitas
Stoke-on-Trent Ltd.

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this standard is to define the requirements for Occupational Health (Exposure) Monitoring, thereby preventing health issues and encouraging and ensuring good health, confirmed through the Unitas Occupational Health Surveillance Standard (SHEMS-STD-GR-083).

Occupational Health (Exposure) Monitoring allows us to demonstrate the effectiveness of our SHE Management System (SHEMS) including the management and identification of risk to health.

Occupational Health (Exposure) Monitoring will be based upon hazards identified in the workplace and/or legislative requirements and may include:

- process to measure workers' exposures to hazardous substances or activities;
  - as part of a risk assessment
  - to check against statutory levels
  - to check that controls perform effectively
  - to monitor the effect of changes in work conditions
- it does not require information about a worker's health
- includes methods that vary from simple to more complex but provide a 'picture' of exposure to a lesser or greater extent of reliability.

The risk assessment form (SHEMS-FOR-GR-070) should be used to identify any need for health surveillance, in order to verify the effectiveness of controls implemented from the Risk Management Standard (SHEMS-STD-GR-014).

Health surveillance (SHEMS-STD-GR-083) can sometimes be used to help identify where more needs to be done to control risks and where early signs of work related ill health are detected, Operations management must review controls and implement additional controls/ action to prevent further harm and protect employees.

Where Does Occupational Health (Exposure) Monitoring and Health Surveillance Fit Within Health Risk Management?

When Occupational Health (Exposure) Monitoring and Health Surveillance are combined, they demonstrate the controls implemented for health hazards are working effectively. Neither process provides protection for workers, they are purely to check and monitor. Section 3 shows how Exposure Monitoring and Health Surveillance techniques, fit within a wider approach.

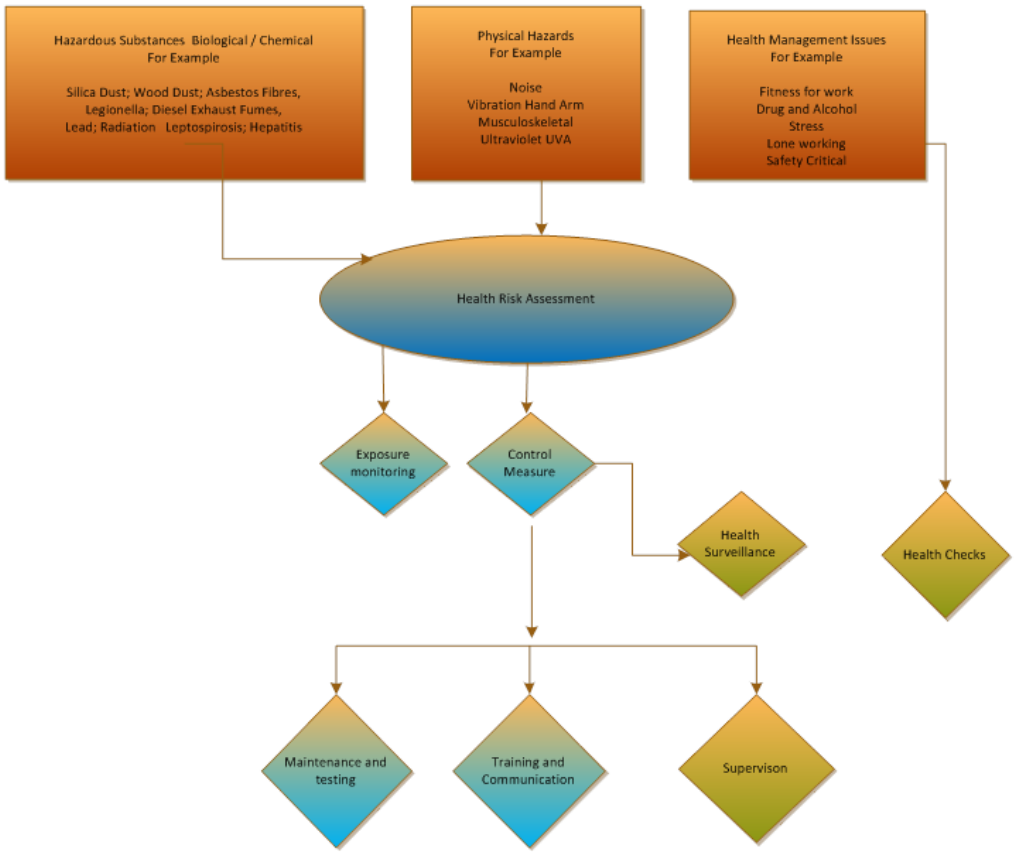
2 Scope

The scope of the SHEMS covers all persons, workplaces and operations in our business.

Unitas SHEMS (SHEMS-STD-GR-003) provide guidance and signposting for the compliance, implementation, monitoring, audit and review of our systems, demonstrating continual improvement and achievement of the business objectives.

Exceptions will be documented through a SHEMS appendix B process (SHEMS-FOR-GR-999), authorised by the Unitas Director responsible for coordinating SHE.

3 Process- Occupational Health Monitoring versus Surveillance



4 Unitas Requirements

Risk assessments are completed for all works and highlight those with significant risks through Risk and Impact Management Standard (SHEMS-STD-GR-014). The risk assessment (SHEMS-FOR-GR-070) shall include health hazards i.e. those which expose the employees/individuals to Chemical, Physical, and Biological hazards to be monitored.

Such identified risks shall include occupational health (exposure) monitoring at the place of work by line management, at regular and routine intervals and where any changes occur that may affect that exposure.

Such monitoring can be escalated to OH for Health surveillance and/or medicals, in addition to regular and planned surveillance and medicals (SHEMS-STD-GR-083).

Ensure adequate information and supervision is provided to employees so they understand what Occupational health monitoring requires.

4.1 Conducting Occupational Health Monitoring

Occupational Health (Exposure) Monitoring assessment is the process of quantifying how much of a material comes into contact with a person in a given environment. This can range from simple measures such as "exposed" or "unexposed" through to quantitative indices of level e.g.; mg m^{-3} of air, noise exposure levels dBA and/or HAVS exposure levels .

There are a range of techniques available to prevent health risk through Occupational Health (Exposure) Monitoring and/or health surveillance. Collectively they indicate the level of risk by looking at:

- Exposure going into the body (exposure monitoring)
- How exposure is affecting the body (health surveillance)

The key motivation for undertaking these checks shall be as a result of RISK (Risk Management Standard SHEMS-STD-GR-014), which will also determinate the choice of technique and level of complexity.

Exposure monitoring can be done by 'qualitative' or 'quantitative' methods.

- Qualitative methods include - Evaluation of potential personal exposure to health risks based on manufacturer's data, personal experience and professional judgment.
- Quantitative methods include - Evaluation of actual personal exposure to health risks using accredited methods and equipment and in some cases laboratory analysis.

Much can be done by simple techniques which don't necessarily require great cost or expert help. However, some circumstances will require expert help in undertaking the checks and interpreting the results. **ALL** will require consideration of what the data collected tells you and what help it gives to assessing and responding to the risk.

Unitas have a legal responsibility as a duty holder, to have enough information to be able to assess the risk and ensure the control measures are working, ideally through qualitative and quantitative exposure monitoring techniques as described above.

Health surveillance techniques required are mostly specified in response to legislation and advice should be sought from the Occupational Health Surveillance standard (SHEMS-STD-GR-083) or the Occupational Health team.

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4.2 Types of Occupational Health (Exposure) Monitoring

- Noise and Vibration Assessment Calculator (SHEMS-FOR-GR-031)
- HAV- completion of daily monitoring charts (SHEMS-FOR-GR-029)
- Asbestos Notifiable Non-licensed Record (Personal exposure) (SHEMS-FOR-GR-020)

4.3 Records

Records of OH Monitoring should be kept with the project files and retained for 40 years.

5 Case Study – checking noise on your site

A Site Manager wants to know more about the health risks they have on site. The Site Manager decides to start to thinking about the noise exposures for their workers.

The first thing they do is take a walk around the site to gauge how noisy the activities on site are and what tasks are the highest noise sources (using the rule of thumb that if you have to shout to be heard from 2 metres away exposure is likely to be above 85dB (the legal action value).

This helps to get a quick overview of noisy site activities and who is exposed. Taking notes, as they walk around the Site manager starts to collect a record of the noise on site, whilst being aware that they might not be the full picture of all potential noisy activities that may take place such as on other days or times so the Site Managers is able he to look at manufacturer's data for the tools he knows the workers use via the internet or local tool shops.

Having knowledge of who is doing what and when, the Site Manager is able to review both Unitas and supply chain (Risk assessment/Method statements) RAMS to verify the documented control activities at high noise activities for effective implementation.

Following verification of effective implementation of documented controls the Site manager can arrange for a sound level meter to check sound emission levels from those identified activities.

The sound meter showed the noise readings were below 85dB but to be sure the Site manager arranges to employ a noise consultant to do some personal monitoring of a selected group of potentially highly noise exposed workers. This reassures the Site manager that the controls are working but also helps to target education and advice for those workers. A formal noise survey using calibrated equipment using qualitative and quantitative exposure monitoring techniques can confirm the levels and also provides a legal record of noise on site and can be used to defend future noise claims.

Not all of this process is legally required but a duty holder needs to have enough information to be able to assess risk and ensure controls are working.