

Chemical Hygiene Plan: Medical consultation and medical examinations

SAFER SCIENCE: BE PROTECTED

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Chemical Hygiene Plan:

Medical consultation and medical examinations

The Chemical Hygiene Standard or Laboratory Standard (29 CFR 1910.1450)

does not mandate medical surveillance for its employees. However, it does stipulate that the employer must provide employees working with hazardous chemicals the opportunity to receive medical attention, including follow-up examinations, under certain circumstances. [1910.1450(g) (1)] Those circumstances include:

I.	Develops signs and symptoms associated with hazardous chemicals;
II.	Exposure monitoring revealing exposure levels above the action level (or in absence of action level, the PEL)
III.	Exposure resulting from an incident (spill, leak, explosion or other situation).

The medical examination and consultations must be performed by or under supervision of a licensed physician with no cost to the employee. This includes no loss of pay and at a reasonable time and place. In this instance, the employer is required to provide the following information to the physical [1910.1450(g) (3)]:

I.	Identify the hazardous chemical(s) to which the employee has been exposed;
II.	Describe the conditions under which the exposure occurred;
III.	Describe any signs and symptoms the employee is experiencing.

Once the employee is examined by the physician, the employer is entitled to the following information [1910.1450(g) (4)]:

I.	Recommendations for further medical action;
II.	Results of examination and any tests associated with the activity;
III.	Information of any medical condition revealed during the examination which may place the employee at increased risk as a result of exposure in the workplace;
IV.	Statement that the employee was informed by the physician of the examination results, including any medical condition requiring further inquiry or treatment.
V.	The physician's opinion cannot reveal specific findings unrelated to the occupational exposure.



Given that the science supervisor or Chemical Hygiene Officer (CHO) may represent the employer in these cases, he or she may need to take an active role in facilitating medical examinations for employees. The bottom line is the supervisor or CHO needs to have clear guidelines or standard operating procedures relative to their responsibilities in these cases. This information needs to be a component of the Chemical Hygiene Plan. This is a good time to check your plan, given it is required to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis.



Potential Hazards

1. Electric shock
2. Toxic vapors & irritants
3. Compressed gases
4. Flammable liquids
5. Radioactive material
6. Corrosive substances
7. Mechanical trauma
8. Poisons
9. Biologic materials
10. Cryogenic materials

