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1. OBJECTIVE

This guideline provides information on health monitoring requirements for RMIT staff, students, researchers if they are potentially exposed to hazards that require health monitoring through the course of their work, study or research. Some examples of the types of work, study or research which may require health monitoring include:

- hazardous substances
- radiation - including x-ray, sealed and unsealed sources
- biologicals
- noise
- lead
- asbestos
- working/learning with laboratory animals
- working/learning with risk group 3 and 4 human pathogens
- SCUBA diving
- working/learning with crystalline silica

2. BACKGROUND

N/A

3. SCOPE

This process applies to all RMIT staff, students and researchers globally.

It applies to work, study and research on- or off- campus where the need for health monitoring is identified either through a risk assessment or by legislation. **HSW-PR47-TB01 - Table of Requirements for Health Monitoring** (the **Table**) lists the health monitoring requirements for common hazards and tasks.

NOTE – Referenced legislation applies to Australian jurisdictions only. RMIT campuses in other jurisdiction must refer to local applicable legislation, where available.

4. WHAT MUST GO RIGHT?

Should this process be implemented appropriately by RMIT, the expected outcomes – known as ‘what must go right’ – is:

- Health monitoring requirements are identified, managed and implemented.
- Control measures recommended in health monitoring reports are managed and implemented.
- Health monitoring records are maintained.

5. PROCEDURE/IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. Determining the need for health monitoring

The **Table** lists the scheduled substances, other hazardous materials and tasks which have been identified as potentially requiring health monitoring.

A risk assessment (*HR – HSW-PR09-TM01 – HSW Risk Assessment Template* or electronic equivalent) must be completed for any hazard listed in the **Table** and where:

- there is an identifiable disease or adverse health condition relevant to the work performed
- valid techniques are available to detect indications of the disease (e.g., spirometry, audiometry)
- there is reasonable likelihood that the disease or condition may occur under the work / learning conditions.

Note: the likelihood of illness relates to the exposure to the substance. Based on the circumstances surrounding the activity, personal exposure monitoring may be required to determine the level of exposure, and therefore the requirement for health monitoring.

5.1.1. Mandatory health monitoring

Health monitoring is mandatory for some substances regardless of the outcome of associated risk assessments. For these substances, health monitoring must occur prior to obtaining them and/or their use.

The substances requiring mandatory health monitoring are listed below (extract of **Schedule 9 - Hazardous substances - requirements for health monitoring** of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (Vic)*):

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| ▪ Acrylonitrile | ▪ Lead (inorganic) |
| ▪ Arsenic (inorganic) | ▪ Mercury (inorganic) |
| ▪ Benzene | ▪ 4,4'-Methylene bis (2-chloroaniline) (MOCA) |
| ▪ Cadmium | ▪ Organophosphate Pesticides |
| ▪ Chromium (inorganic) | ▪ Polycyclic Aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH) |
| ▪ Creosote | ▪ Pentachlorophenol (PCP) |
| ▪ Crystalline Silica | ▪ Thallium |
| ▪ Isocyanates | ▪ Vinyl Chloride |

5.2. General Risk Assessment Process

There are many other activities / roles that involve tasks other than the use of hazardous substances that may require baseline assessment and potential ongoing monitoring. Some examples include:

- medical examinations for persons that may be at risk from animal allergens
- general physical assessments for those who are undertaking manual tasks i.e., heavy or frequent lifting
- radiation monitoring for those working with sealed and unsealed sources of radiation.
- hearing tests for people working in noisy environments
- medical examinations for those who are undertaking SCUBA diving
- spirometry testing for those working/learning with hazardous dust

The risk assessment process outlined in the *HR - HSW-PR09 - HSW Risk Management* must be followed to identify any job roles, study or research that may involve these types of tasks or activities that may require health monitoring. If it is identified that health monitoring may be required for these types of tasks or activities, the *HR –*

HSW-PR47-FR01 – Health and Hazard Questionnaire must be completed for those impacted and maintained by the local school or portfolio.

5.3. Hazardous Substances Risk Assessment

To identify that a worker is exposed to a 'significant risk' to their health, a risk assessment must be undertaken. The **HR – HSW-PR09-TM01 – HSW Risk Assessment Template** (or electronic equivalent) should be completed to determine the level of risk of a substance and subsequently, what action must be taken regarding any health monitoring.

From a risk management perspective, it is important to reinforce that health monitoring is not a control measure and it is not to be used as an alternative to the implementation of control measures such as those outlined in the **HR – HSW-PR09 – HSW Risk Management**. However, health monitoring must still be considered in situations where:

- the risks to health are largely controlled through the lower order controls, e.g., PPE or administrative controls
- symptoms have been reported which are likely to be related to the use of a substance
- an incident or near miss has occurred
- control measures have deteriorated significantly because of poor maintenance
- it is a requirement under the regulations

5.4. Immunisation

Consideration must be given to controlling risks of infectious diseases wherever possible. Some of the activities and procedures carried out at RMIT by staff, students, researchers and third parties are recognised as being at risk of exposure to infectious diseases which may be preventable by vaccination.

HR – HSW-PR56 – HSW Immunisations details RMIT's requirements around immunisation.

5.5. Types of Health Monitoring

There are different types of health monitoring procedures used to assess exposure to hazardous materials including:

5.5.1. Interview Questions

This involves asking the person questions about previous occupational history, medical history, lifestyle (e.g. dietary, smoking and drinking habits), and about symptoms related to exposure. It may also involve simple questions about how people carry out their work/learning, their personal hygiene at work or where they eat in the work and learning environment. These questions provide information to assess current or previous exposure to hazardous materials.

5.5.2. Medical Examination

This involves the use of standard clinical and medical assessments, tests and techniques to assess the presence of early or long-term health effects, often at set intervals. It can include an assessment of medical history, occupational and previous exposure history, and a clinical examination. This can also include tests like spirometry (for testing lung function) and radiography, e.g., chest X-ray.

5.5.3. Biological Effect Monitoring

This is the measurement and assessment of early biological effects before health impairment occurs in exposed people, for example measurement of reduction of cholinesterase activity levels in people exposed to organophosphate pesticides.

5.5.4. Biological Exposure Monitoring

This involves measurement and evaluation of the levels of a hazardous substance or its metabolites (break-down products) in body tissues, body fluids like urine or blood - for example blood lead levels, urinary cadmium - or in exhaled breath of an exposed person.

5.6. Frequency of Health Monitoring

Health monitoring should be provided:

- before commencing work/learning with the hazardous substance/material or undertaking the hazardous task. This is known as baseline monitoring, and it is done so changes to the person’s health can be identified during periods of potential exposure
- routine periodic monitoring at a frequency specified in relevant standards or by regulatory bodies, or post incident
- where the person has concerns that may relate to exposure to the hazardous substance/material, e.g., where relevant symptoms are identified
- at termination of work/learning with the hazardous substance/material or the termination or undertaking the hazardous task.

5.7. Health Monitoring Providers

Health monitoring must be carried out by or be done under the supervision of a registered medical practitioner with experience in health monitoring. RMIT’s preferred providers for health monitoring are:

Type of Health Monitoring	Provider
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Collection of demographic data > Work history > Medical history 	To be determined at the time of monitoring/testing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical and physical examination 	Bridge Street Clinic 141 Bridge Street Port Melbourne Victoria Australia 3207 Phone +61 3 96463551 E-mail bsc@bridgestreetclinic.com.au
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hearing tests 	To be determined at the time of testing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biological effect and exposure monitoring 	To be determined at the time of monitoring
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-employment assessments 	To be determined at the time of assessment

5.7.1. Booking appointments

The booking of health monitoring appointments for any staff, student or researcher is the responsibility of the HSW Coordinator.

Depending on the type of health monitoring, pre-appointment requirements may include completing forms, providing blood samples, or performing scans. To ensure that any associated target dates, cut-off dates, or start dates are met in time, bookings should be made well in advance, so that they don't delay the health monitoring process or impact on the working/learning process.

It is the responsibility of the worker/student/researcher to advise the HSW Coordinator that work/learning with the hazardous substance/material or the termination or undertaking of the hazardous task has ended. The HSW Coordinator is responsible for booking any further health monitoring appointments.

5.7.2. Costs of Health Monitoring

Any costs associated with health monitoring for any staff, or researcher is to be paid for by the entity which has financial responsibility for the activity e.g., respective School/discipline/portfolio.

The HSW Coordinator is responsible for forwarding any invoices received from medical practitioners/service providers to the applicable College/School/department. The College/School/department is responsible for the payment of invoices.

5.8. Responding to Health Monitoring Reports

The appropriate distribution of health monitoring reports is managed by the HSW Coordinator.

Once a health monitoring report is received from the registered medical practitioner, relevant actions are to be taken where the health monitoring report has any of the following:

- test results indicating the person has been exposed to the substance and has an elevated level of the substance or its metabolites in their body for that hazardous substance
- advises the person is suffering a disease, injury or illness as a result of exposure
- recommends RMIT take remedial action
- advises medical counselling is required

Any actions taken will be reported through P.R.I.M.E. or equivalent in accordance with **HR - HSW-PR10 - Incident Management & Investigation**.

5.9. Health Monitoring Records

Any health monitoring report is to be treated as a confidential medical record and not released to any other individual without the individual's consent. Health monitoring records shall be stored in accordance with **HR - HSW-PR04 - HSW Records Management**, RMIT **Privacy Policy** and managed by the HSW Coordinator.

6. Responsibilities

6.1. Senior Leaders

- Ensure adequate resourcing is provided, within the area of responsibility, to ensure adequate safe systems of work relating to this process are effectively implemented.
- Ensure mechanisms are in place for effective and meaningful consultation regarding matters relating to this process
- Implement this process within their area of responsibility
- Ensure staff, students and researchers are provided with necessary information, instruction, supervision, and training regarding this process

6.2. Operational Leaders

- Identify and risk assess activities that require the implementation of a health monitoring program
- Consult with staff, students and researchers on matters directly affecting their health and safety including notification of health monitoring needs for any hazardous substance, material or activity listed in HSW-PR47-TB01 Table of Requirements for Health Monitoring
- Co-ordination of all health monitoring issues/matters including medical appointments and liaison with health monitoring providers
- Ensure that all new staff, students and researchers receive appropriate health monitoring prior to employment or study as required.
- Ensure that all staff, students and researchers receive appropriate health monitoring during the course of their employment or study and at the termination of employment or end of study as required
- Early and effective implementation of injury management process following an incident
- Identifying and implementing corrective action(s) following adverse health monitoring results]
- Maintenance of all health monitoring records
- Ensuring that staff, student and/or researcher confidentiality is maintained at all times.

6.3. Staff, students and researchers

- Follow the requests to undergo health monitoring requirements relevant to their work or study
- Participate in the RMIT risk management process which includes the reporting of hazards that are identified in their workplace or place of study which may require health monitoring to be implemented.
- Notify the HSW Coordinator that they have finished working/learning with the hazardous substance/material or the termination or undertaking of the hazardous task.

6.4. HSW Coordinator

- Book health monitoring appointments
- Book and/or arrange any pre appointment checks, blood tests or scans as required
- Provide staff, students, researchers with any pre-appointment documents, ensure they are completed and forward them to the medical practitioner prior to the appointment
- Manage health reports received from medical practitioners and/or service providers
- Manage invoices received from medical practitioners/service providers

6.5. HSW Team

- Development, communication, review and monitoring of this process
- Assist with the analysis of health monitoring reports from health monitoring providers
- Maintain the confidentiality of staff, students and researchers undergoing health monitoring
- Ensure the implementation of injury management processes when required

7. Definitions

Defines any key terms and acronyms relating to the process where they apply

Term / acronym	Definition
Health monitoring	Monitoring of a person to identify changes in the person's health status because of exposure to certain substances or hazards
Exposure standard	An exposure standard in the publication Workplace Exposure Standards for Airborne Contaminants
Scheduled chemical	A chemical listed in Schedule 9 of the OHS Regulations that requires health monitoring
Tests	Investigative techniques that can be used in the periodic assessment of individual workers to assist in determining their degree of exposure to or effect from hazardous chemicals

8. Supporting Documents

Lists the supporting and related Processes and Guidance Material, Legislative references, Australian and International Standards etc. that may be useful references for process users

- HR - HSW-PR04 - HSW Records Management.
- HR - HSW-PR09 - HSW Risk Management
- HR – HSW-PR09-TM01 – HSW Risk Assessment Template
- HR - HSW-PR10 - Incident Management & Investigation
- HR - HSW-PR47-TB01 Table of Requirements for Health Monitoring
- HR - HSW-PR47-FR01 – Health and Hazard Questionnaire
- HR - HSW-PR56 – HSW Immunisations
- Health Monitoring – Safe Work Australia
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations (VIC)