

# Health surveillance for silica and asbestos and the management of diagnosed occupational respiratory conditions

*New Standard Briefing*



home safe plan

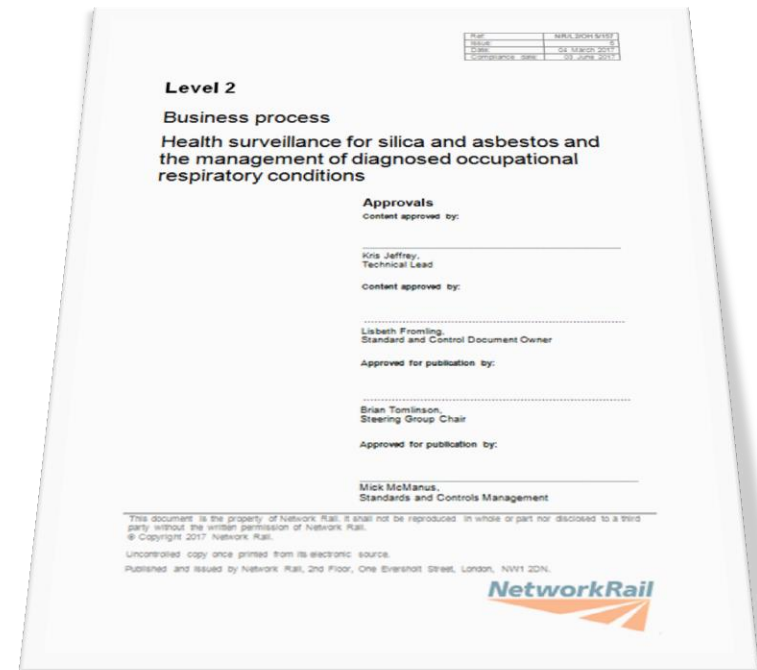
**This Network Rail standard is mandatory and shall be complied with by Network Rail Limited from 03 June 2017.**

Network Rail is committed protecting health and wellbeing of its employees. The implementation of the processes defined within the standard will enable this and allow compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and it's associated regulations.

# Why do we need a company standard?

The company standard defines the process of health surveillance for Network Rail employees who could potentially be exposed to a hazardous substance, and is designed to:

- establish the baseline respiratory status of a new employee, undergoing a level 1 competence medical;
- establish the respiratory status of current employees dependant on exposure;
- detect the early signs of developing or worsening respiratory conditions;
- identify and protect vulnerable employees such as those with pre-existing respiratory health conditions e.g. asthma;
- confirm employees' fitness to continue undertaking work with an exposure to an airborne contaminant; and
- support evaluation of mitigations to control exposure to respiratory hazards.



# ***What is the purpose of the standard?***

- To proactively support the mitigation of health risks associated with exposure to respiratory hazards through inhalation; specifically those health risks associated with silica and asbestos
- The health surveillance process can also be applied to other respiratory hazards, such as, but not limited to, welding fumes dependant on the levels of exposure
- To enable Network Rail to comply with its legal obligations and duty of care under Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 and the Control of Asbestos (CAR) Regulations 2012

# *Who does the standard apply to?*

- Network Rail employees, existing and new, who may be exposed to hazardous substances within their role
- Line managers of above mentioned employees

# What are the key points?



## Identification of 'at risk' employees

Line managers shall identify roles where employees work with an exposure to a respiratory hazard such as RCS.

The identification of employees who may be exposed to hazards can be achieved by:

- risk assessing the work activity in line with the Work Activity Risk Assessment (WARA) process
- where a WARA identifies a risk of inhalation of a respiratory hazard, a COSHH assessment must be completed
- Where the WARA and COSHH assessment identify the likelihood of exposure, exposure monitoring shall be undertaken to determine the actual level of risk posed to employee(s)

# *What are the key points?*

## **Criteria's for referral**

New employees undergoing a pre-placement level 1 competence medical shall receive a baseline respiratory assessment as part of the generic respiratory health surveillance process.

The referral for a level 1 competence medical shall occur as part of the employees pre-placement and shall be requested by the line manager.

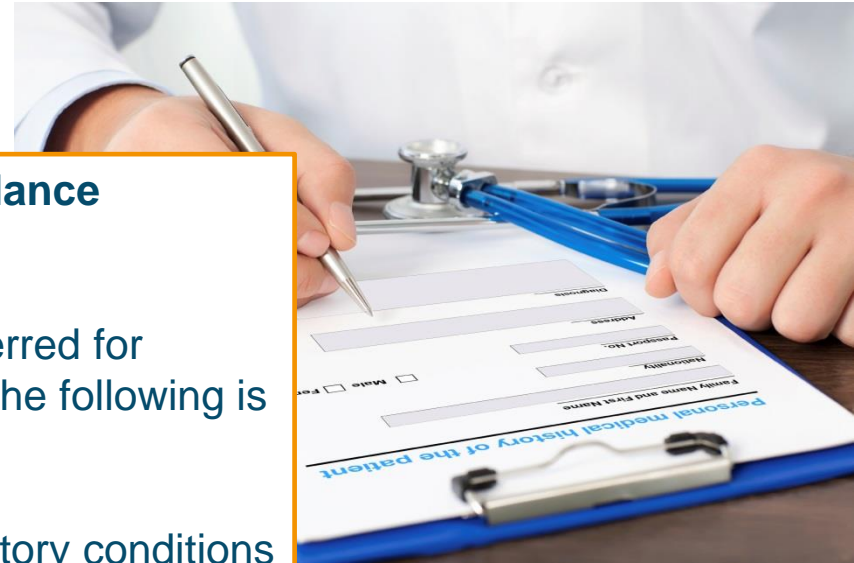


# What are the key points?

## Criteria's for referral to respiratory health surveillance following identification by a risk assessment

Following identification of risk, employees will be referred for respiratory health surveillance when one or more of the following is identified:

- previous cases of diagnosed occupational respiratory conditions exist in the workplace or industry
- personal exposure monitoring identifies an activity as exceeding 50% of the workplace exposure limit (WEL) where in existence
- an employee identified as working with a respiratory hazard has an existing diagnosed respiratory condition such as asthma
- reliance on respiratory protective equipment (RPE) as an additional exposure control measure for Respirable Crystalline Silica where exposure monitoring identifies and exceedance of 50% of the WEL.





# What are the key points?



## Suspension of competence on Sentinel for non-compliance to health surveillance process

If an appointment is not attended after a six-week period, HRSS shall inform the employee, line manager, Occupational Health and Wellbeing Manager and/or business equivalent.

If after a further six weeks, the health surveillance has not been complied with, the following individuals will be advised of the need to comply with health surveillance or the employees track competence will be suspended:

- a) employee;
- b) line manager; and
- c) Occupational Health and Wellbeing Manager and/or business equivalent and Head of Route Safety, Health and Environment (HoRSHE) or equivalent.

The employee's track access competency shall not be reinstated until the employee has attended health surveillance.

# What are the key points?

## Inadvertent exposure to asbestos

- Where work with asbestos is required to be undertaken, it shall be done in accordance with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, and NR/L2/CIV/168.
- If an employee, through the course of their work, is inadvertently exposed to asbestos, it shall be investigated in accordance with NR/L3/INV/3001 and NR/L2/INV/002, using the Level 1 – preliminary report Investigation form (NR2072P) which can be found on the reporting of accidents and safety incidents section on Connect
- Where it has been confirmed that an employee has been inadvertently exposed to asbestos the employee can be referred to :
  - Network Rail's Asbestos helpline and/or
  - The medical assessment for the 'non-licenced post asbestos exposure'.



# *Diagnosed conditions*

- Where an employee is diagnosed with an occupational respiratory condition, the employee, HRSS and the line manager will be notified by the occupational health provider with details of the diagnosis and the fitness of the employee to continue to work.

A Health Management Action Plan (HMAP) shall be completed by line managers for each of employee diagnosed with an occupational respiratory condition using the outcome report issued by the occupational health provider and recommendations made within.

# Further Support

## OH Assist

### Occupational health support – Asbestos Helpline

0845 608 0656

select option 4

<https://safety.networkrail.co.uk/healthandwellbeing/employee-information/respiratory-hazards/asbestos-helpline/>

## Safety Central

### Respiratory Hazards

<https://safety.networkrail.co.uk/healthandwellbeing/employee-information/respiratory-hazards/>

<https://safety.networkrail.co.uk/healthandwellbeing/employee-information/respiratory-hazards/silica-iosh-dual-branded-materials/>