

Order 43

COAL SERVICES HEALTH MONITORING REQUIREMENTS FOR THE NSW COAL INDUSTRY

Committed to our purpose, 'To Protect'

Since it was introduced in February 2011, Order 41 has provided a clear set of guidelines for industry in regard to the completion of health assessments, and is widely recognised as a key part of the NSW coal mining health and safety scheme.

Our goal is to ensure that the health surveillance program in NSW continues to deliver the best possible evidence based outcomes for coal workers.

The re-identification of coal workers' pneumoconiosis (CWP) led to a review of Order 41. The focus of the review was to strengthen the Order to ensure that is consistent with other legislation and that it continues to provide ongoing protection for the health of NSW coal workers.

While the review verified the quality and strengths of the systems that have successfully safeguarded against occupational disease, a number of recommendations were made. These recommendations have been, or are currently being, implemented and are formalised in Order 43.

Order 43

Coal Services Health Monitoring Requirements for Coal Mine Workers Order No. 43 (Order 43) builds on the processes and systems that were established under Order 41 to protect the health and safety of workers in the NSW coal industry.

Order 43 will come into effect on 1 July 2018.

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The importance of health monitoring

As most occupational illnesses take many years to develop, regular health surveillance allows for early detection and intervention with the goal of ensuring that workers can continue to work safely.

A pre-placement medical assessment is required before an individual commences work or changes roles in the NSW coal industry. This includes a chest x-ray for new entrants to the industry. The medical and chest x-ray serve as a baseline for future health surveillance.

The periodic medical assessment ensures that workers' ongoing health is protected and monitored for any adverse health risks as a result of their employment.

In NSW, every coal worker must undergo periodic health surveillance (known as a periodic medical assessment) every three years.



Strengthening our health surveillance system

The following changes have been made to strengthen our health surveillance system and to align with other workplace legislation to provide ongoing protection for the health of NSW coal workers.

Order 43

Addition of respiratory FIT-testing

Respiratory FIT testing has been an optional extra to both pre-placement and periodic medicals for some time, however; including FIT testing as a regular component in the Order 43 medical process is a proactive step in protecting workers health and providing ongoing education in the use of personal protective equipment.

Increased frequency of chest x-rays and formalisation of reporting standards

Frequency of chest x-rays

- Underground coal workers must undergo a chest x-rays every three years
- Open cut workers involved in the production, processing or maintenance of coal must undergo a chest x-ray every three years
- Workers with a history of hazardous dust exposure must undergo a chest x-ray every three years
- Other workers must undergo a chest x-ray every six years.

Formalisation of reporting standards

All chest x-ray reports are to be prepared by an approved radiologist against the ILO International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconioses. Approved radiologists are those listed on the Coal Workers Pneumoconiosis Register published on the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Radiologists website.

Introduction of an exit medical assessment

Employers must ensure that an exit medical assessment is offered to each worker who is retiring or otherwise ceasing work. This is to ensure that any conditions that may impact on the worker's health in retirement are identified and an appropriate course of action is implemented. The exit medical assessment will be comprised of the components for a periodic medical assessment, with the exception of respiratory FIT testing.

Requirements for medical providers performing Order 43 medical assessments

The Order sets forth minimum qualifications for health professionals conducting Order 43 medical assessments. Only an approved medical practitioner may conduct a pre-placement medical assessment. An approved medical practitioner or registered nurse working under their supervision may complete a periodic medical assessment.

An 'approved medical practitioner' is a doctor who:

- Is registered by the Medical Board of Australia
- Has completed the NSW Coal Industry Medical Induction Program
- Has provided an Annual Calibration Statement to Coal Services
- Has completed a course in spirometry interpretation
- Is listed on the Register of Approved Medical Practitioners as published on the Coal Services website

A 'registered nurse' means a nurse who:

- Is a registered nurse (division 1) registered by the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia
- Has completed a course in audiometry
- Has completed a course in spirometry

Requirement to provide worker lists

Under Order 43, employers are required to supply a list of their employees every 12 months to CS Health to ensure all workers who are due for a periodic health surveillance assessment are properly notified.

For more information please contact CS Health:

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