

Protecting your health

Health monitoring of coal mine workers in NSW began in the 1940s to reduce the risk of occupational lung diseases such as coal workers' pneumoconiosis (black lung).

The health surveillance scheme has strengthened over time, and since 2011, industry health Orders (such as Order 43) have set clear standards to protect coal mine workers' health.

A replacement to Order 43 has been developed to strengthen the health surveillance scheme and continue to deliver on our purpose 'to protect'.

About Order 45

For coal mine workers, most of the health assessment stays the same under Order 45, but there are some important changes.

These changes are detailed below:



One medical

Under Order 43, coal mine workers had to complete a pre-placement medical and then a periodic health surveillance medical every 3 years.

Order 45 combines these into a single health assessment, meaning you only need to complete 'one medical' in a 3-year period, even if you change jobs. This makes the process simpler and reduces the need for multiple medicals.

Introduction of health assessment reviews

Health assessment reviews have been introduced to ensure that any follow-up actions are completed in a timely manner, helping to protect your health and safety at work.

Order 45 states that when a health assessment review is related to your exposure to airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals, and/or occupational noise investigations, your employer must allow time for you to attend during your normal rostered hours (where reasonably practicable), or provide payment to you if this is not possible. If your workplace has an approved enterprise agreement, its terms may apply instead.

Introduction of retirement health assessments

Retirement health assessments are available to all coal mine workers when retiring or leaving the NSW coal industry.

These health assessments are optional, and provide ongoing monitoring of your health after you have ceased working.

What is a health assessment?

A health assessment and chest imaging (chest x-rays) are required every 3 years. The health assessment monitors your health and checks for any adverse health effects resulting from workplace exposures, such as dust, noise, chemicals, and other hazards.

Health assessments can also identify other health and/or lifestyle-related conditions that might affect your ability to work safely and effectively.

A health assessment helps detect work-related and other health issues early, often before symptoms appear, giving you the best chance for timely treatment.

What happens at a health assessment?

During a health assessment, you will see a health professional (e.g., nurse) and a medical practitioner (a doctor). They will complete a range of examinations and tests as part of the health assessment, including, but not limited to:

- blood pressure
- spirometry (lung function test)
- audiology (hearing) examination
- vision test
- musculoskeletal assessment

Note: In addition to the above, you will also need to complete additional tests, questionnaires, and a chest x-ray.

What happens after a health assessment?

With your consent, a health assessment certificate and additional reports like chest imaging, audiology reports, and fit testing (if applicable), are provided to your employer. These certificates and reports contain only limited medical information to advise your fitness for work.

Your employer must give you a copy of the health assessment certificate within 4 weeks of receiving it. You can also request a copy from CS Health by completing a request to release form.

What is a health assessment review?

You may be asked to attend a health assessment review if a medical condition could affect your health or safety if it is left unmonitored until your next routine health assessment (i.e. 3 years).

A health assessment review gives conditional clearance for the period shown on your health assessment certificate (3, 6, 12 months). If the health assessment review is not completed within this timeframe, your health assessment certificate will expire.

- **Appointment reminders**

CS Health will send reminders to both you and your employer about upcoming health assessment reviews.

- **Time and payments to attend**

When a health assessment review is related to your exposure to airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals, and/or occupational noise investigations, your employer must allow time for you to attend during your normal rostered hours (where reasonably practicable), or provide payment to you if this is not possible. If your workplace has an approved enterprise agreement, its terms may apply instead.

- **Health assessment certificate**

Your health assessment certificate will detail when a health assessment review is related to airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals, and/or occupational noise investigations.

Your employer will not be told any medical details; only that you need a health assessment review.

CS Health is here to help if you have questions about your health assessment

CS Health nurses offer confidential support to help you understand your results and guide you through the health assessment review process. Your information will not be shared without your consent.

Call 1800 274 633 (press 4)
Monday to Friday, 8.00am to 5.00pm.