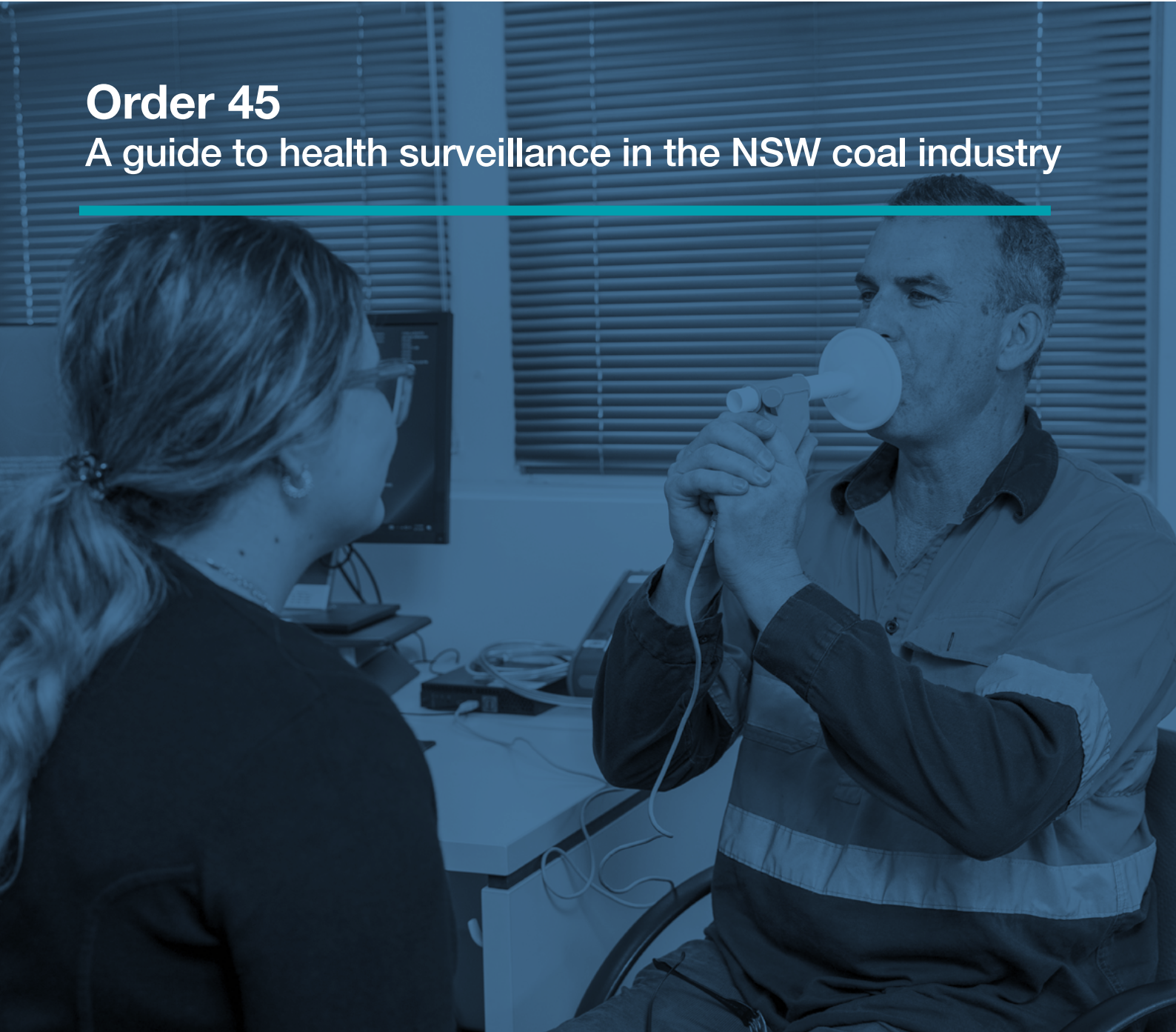


## Order 45

### A guide to health surveillance in the NSW coal industry

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## **Order 45: A guide to health surveillance in the NSW coal industry**

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# Glossary

| Term   | Definition  |
|--|---|
| Alcohol Audit (AUDIT)                                    | The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) is a widely used screening tool developed by the World Health Organization to identify individuals with hazardous or harmful patterns of alcohol consumption. It consists of a brief questionnaire that assesses alcohol use, dependence symptoms, and related problems, helping health professionals identify those who may benefit from further evaluation or support.  |
| Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) | Australia's national regulator of registered health professionals. AHPRA works in partnership with the National Boards to ensure that Australia's registered health practitioners are suitably trained, qualified and safe to practise.   |
| Approved health professional                             | An approved health professional means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) an accredited exercise physiologist who is registered by Exercise and Sports Science Australia (ESSA) to practice as an exercise physiologist in Australia; or</li> <li>b) an occupational therapist who is registered by the AHPRA to practice as an occupational therapist in Australia; or</li> <li>c) a physiotherapist who is registered by the AHPRA to practice physiotherapy in Australia; or</li> <li>d) a registered nurse (Division 1) who is registered by the AHPRA to practice nursing in Australia; and</li> <li>e) complies with the Coal Services Clinical and Service Standard; and</li> <li>f) is approved by Coal Services.</li> </ul> |
| Approved medical practitioner                            | A medical practitioner who is registered by the AHPRA to practice medicine in Australia, complies with the Coal Services Clinical and Service Standard, and is approved by Coal Services.   |
| Audiometry   | A health examination to assess a coal mine worker's hearing. It must be carried out by an approved health professional or approved medical practitioner who has completed appropriate training and follows established standards and guidelines.<br><br>The approved health professional or approved medical practitioner must comply with the Coal Services Clinical and Service Standard to perform the examination.  |
| Cardiovascular risk assessment                           | Cardiovascular risk is assessed using the Australian guidelines and calculator for assessing and managing cardiovascular disease.<br><br>The score from this assessment estimates the probability of a cardiovascular event occurring within the next 5-year period.  |
| Category A: Safety critical                              | A coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker whose immediate action or inaction from an unavoidable and/or sudden medical incapacity may lead directly to a serious incident affecting others in the workplace.<br><br>This category does not refer to the risks that a coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker will be exposed to at work.<br><br>This category will provide guidance to the assessing approved medical practitioner regarding the level of investigation and follow-up required (if necessary).  |

| Term  | Definition  |
|---|---|
| Category B: Safety sensitive                | <p>A coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker whose immediate action or inaction from an unavoidable and/or sudden medical incapacity may lead directly to a serious incident affecting themselves and is not likely to affect others in the workplace.</p> <p>This category does not refer to the risks that a coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker will be exposed to at work.</p> <p>This category will provide guidance to the assessing approved medical practitioner regarding the level of investigation and follow-up required (if necessary).</p>                                  |
| Category C: Non-safety sensitive            | <p>A coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker whose immediate action or inaction from an unavoidable and/or sudden medical incapacity will not lead to a serious incident affecting others in the workplace and their work environment will not contribute adversely to the outcome.</p> <p>This category does not refer to the risks that a coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker will be exposed to at work.</p> <p>This category will provide guidance to the assessing approved medical practitioner regarding the level of investigation and follow-up required (if necessary).</p>     |
| Coal mine                                   | A coal mine carries the same meaning as defined in the <i>Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Act 2013</i> (NSW) (as amended from time to time or replaced).   |
| Coal mine worker                            | A person who carries out work at a coal mine or a coal handling preparation plant for a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU). It does not include a person who works in an environment in which they are not exposed to airborne contaminant, hazardous chemicals, and/or occupational noise unless the person has previously worked in an area of a coal mine or coal handling preparation plant in which they were exposed to airborne contaminant, hazardous chemicals, and/or occupational noise.   |
| Coal mine worker chest imaging              | <p>An x-ray or other radiological image(s) like a high-resolution computed tomography (HRCT) and a report of the chest of the coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker.</p> <p>It is a chest scan of a coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker that meets strict quality and accuracy standards detailed in the Coal Services Clinical and Service Standard. This ensures that the images and reports are precise, which is crucial for assessing the lung health of NSW coal mine workers.</p> <p>The image and report must comply with the Coal Services Clinical and Service Standards.</p> |
| Coal Services Clinical and Service Standard | The Coal Services Clinical and Service Standard outlines the training and requirements for approved health professionals and approved medical practitioners to conduct health assessments, health assessment reviews, and retirement health assessments.  |
| Complex lung function testing (CLFT)        | A series of tests that measure lung volumes, flow rates and gas diffusion. As a minimum, this testing must include a spirometry and the standardised, calibrated measurement of the diffusion capacity of the lung for carbon monoxide.   |



| Term  | Definition  |
|---|---|
| Deferred health examination                               | <p>A health examination that has been postponed when the approved medical practitioner determines that completing it is not suitable on the day of the assessment due to the coal mine worker's or prospective coal mine worker's clinical finding(s) and/or medical condition(s).</p> <p>The deferred health examination must be completed within 12 months from the date of the health assessment.</p> <p>Examples include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; deferring a chest image of a pregnant coal mine worker</li> <li>&gt; deferring spirometry of a coal mine worker who is recovering from a respiratory infection</li> <li>&gt; deferring an audiometric test of a coal mine worker with an ear infection.</li> </ul> |
| Diffusing capacity of the lung for carbon monoxide (DLCO) | Measures the capacity of the lungs to exchange gas, using carbon monoxide. Measurement of DLCO must form part of any CLFT for any Coal Services-related purpose.  |
| Duty of care referral                                     | A referral made by the approved medical practitioner at the conclusion of a health assessment, health assessment review or retirement health assessment, intended to support the personal health and wellbeing of the coal mine worker. The coal mine worker is not required to report the outcome of this referral to the approved medical practitioner.   |
| External Doctor Network                                   | <p>The External Doctor Network is comprised of approved medical practitioners who have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; fulfilled the criteria listed in Order 45 and the Coal Services Clinical and Service Standard, and</li> <li>&gt; completed all Coal Services Medical Practitioner accreditation requirements, and</li> <li>&gt; are not directly employed by Coal Services.</li> </ul>  |
| Hazard exposure questionnaire                             | A tool used by approved medical practitioners to document workplace hazards and available controls that may affect an individual coal mine worker's health. It collects information about workplace conditions such as noise, dust, and chemical exposure, as well as specific tasks that may increase the likelihood of developing an occupational disease or illness.   |
| Health assessment   | <p>A series of health examinations conducted on a coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker.</p> <p>For a health assessment to be valid, it must meet certain criteria. The health assessment must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; have been completed in the previous three (3) years</li> <li>&gt; be assessed against the position and risk category</li> <li>&gt; be completed by an approved medical practitioner</li> <li>&gt; include all health examinations in Schedule 1 of Order 45, except for any deferred health examinations</li> <li>&gt; be approved by Coal Services.</li> </ul>  |

| Term   | Definition  |
|--|---|
| Health assessment certificate                      | <p>A certificate issued by an approved medical practitioner after the completion of a health assessment, health assessment review, or retirement health assessment.</p> <p>It must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; contain the information in response to items 1 to 13 in Schedule 2 of Order 45</li> <li>&gt; be provided to the PCBU who requested the health assessment, health assessment review, or retirement health assessment; and</li> <li>&gt; be in the form approved by and provided to Coal Services; and</li> <li>&gt; be approved by Coal Services.</li> </ul>   |
| Health assessment review                           | <p>A review of a health condition(s) identified during a coal mine worker's health assessment, health assessment review, or health examination(s) (including a deferred health examination(s)). A review may be a one off or at defined intervals, and must meet certain criteria. The review must have been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; assessed against the position and risk category</li> <li>&gt; completed by an approved medical practitioner</li> <li>&gt; in the form approved by and provided to Coal Services</li> <li>&gt; approved by Coal Services.</li> </ul> |
| Health certification                               | <p>A fitness for work determination by an approved medical practitioner that is documented on a health assessment certificate. The health determination has limited medical information to support the PCBU to create a safe system of work.</p> <p>It follows the completion of health examinations as outlined in Schedule 1 of Order 45 and any health assessment reviews which assess the ability of a coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker to perform the position and risk category as outlined in Order 45, s 6(b)(iii) and (iv).</p>  |
| Health examination                                 | <p>An examination or test listed in Schedule 1 of Order 45 that forms part of a health assessment.</p>  |
| High-resolution computed tomography (HRCT)         | <p>A medical scan that produces a clearer and more detailed image of the chest, lungs and heart than a chest x-ray. It helps to identify early lung disease and checks for other damage, when lung function or chest x-ray test results are abnormal.</p>   |
| Industry Health Standard                           | <p>A practical, risk-based assessment tool designed to facilitate an approved medical practitioner's evaluation of the health certification of coal mine workers for specific risk categories and is approved by Coal Services and published on the Coal Services website (as amended from time to time or replaced).</p>   |
| Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)         | <p>A simple measure of psychological distress which involves 10 questions about emotional states, each with a five-level response scale. It is used as a brief screening tool to identify levels of distress.</p>   |
| Person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) | <p>Person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) has the same meaning given to that term under s 5 of the <i>Work Health and Safety Act 2011</i> (as amended from time to time or replaced).</p>   |
| Position   | <p>A collection of tasks that form a coal mine worker's position, for example, an Open Cut Operator.</p> <p>The terms 'position' and 'role' are considered equivalent. While titles of positions or roles may differ, the inherent requirements (tasks, functions, accountabilities, and responsibilities) are consistent.</p>  |

| Term  | Definition   |
|---|--|
| Prospective coal mine worker                        | A person who is seeking to commence work for the first time at a NSW coal mine or coal handling preparation plant for a PCBU. It does not include a person who will work in an environment in which they are not exposed to airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals, and/or occupational noise.   |
| Respirator fit testing                              | <p>A quantitative assessment of the fitting of personal respiratory protective equipment to ensure that it fits closely to a person's face to minimise the risk of exposure to airborne contaminants.</p> <p>The testing is carried out by a person who has completed an approved course in respirator fit testing and complies with the Coal Services Clinical and Service Standard.</p>  |
| Retirement health assessment                        | <p>The health examinations of a coal mine worker who intends to, or has, retired or ceased work in the NSW coal industry that meets certain criteria. The assessment must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; have been completed by an approved medical practitioner</li> <li>&gt; include all the matters specified in Schedule 1 of Order 45, excluding any deferred health examination(s)</li> <li>&gt; be in the form approved by and provided to Coal Services</li> <li>&gt; be approved by Coal Services.</li> </ul>   |
| Risk category                                       | <p>The category of risk determined by the PCBU of a coal mine worker's or prospective coal mine worker's position as one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Category A: Safety critical</li> <li>&gt; Category B: Safety sensitive</li> <li>&gt; Category C: Non-safety sensitive</li> </ul>  |
| Romberg test  | A test used to diagnose any problems with balance during a neurological exam. It tests visual, vestibular (inner ear), and proprioceptive (positional sense) systems.  |
| Serious incident                                    | An incident resulting in the death or permanently incapacitating illness and/or injury of a person.  |
| Schedule 14, Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 | Schedule 14 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 details the mandatory requirements for hazardous chemicals that require health monitoring for workers who may be exposed. Employers must ensure that health monitoring is provided whenever workers use, handle, generate or store any of these scheduled chemicals when there is a significant risk to the worker's health.   |
| Similar exposure group (SEG)                        | A group of coal mine workers who have the similar general exposure to hazards, and can include similarity and frequency of tasks performed, types of materials and processes used, and similarities in the way a task(s) are performed, as listed on the Coal Services website (as amended from time to time).   |
| Spirometry  | <p>A lung function test for assessing lung health, and in the diagnosis and monitoring of respiratory abnormalities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) It is carried out by an approved health professional or approved medical practitioner who has completed an approved course in spirometry and complies with the Coal Services Clinical and Service Standard.</li> <li>b) The results are interpreted by an approved medical practitioner who has completed an approved course in spirometry interpretation and complies with the Coal Services Clinical and Service Standard.</li> </ul> |



| Term  | Definition   |
|---|--|
| Standardised respiratory questionnaire (SRQ)                      | A set of standardised questions that scientific research has validated for the structured clinical inquiry of respiratory symptoms, if any. These were originally based on the Medical Research Council (MRC) (UK) Respiratory Questionnaire.  |
| STOP BANG Questionnaire   | An 8-question screening tool used to determine the risk of obstructive sleep apnoea. It asks about Snoring, Tiredness, Observed apnoeas, Pressure (high blood pressure), as well as Body mass index, Age, Neck circumference, and Gender. The number of 'yes' responses is given a score that correlates with the risk of obstructive sleep apnoea, which guides the need for further investigation. |
| Tasks   | All the work activities required to be completed by the coal mine worker as part of their position, such as driving a haul truck, conducting a pre-shift walk-around inspection of equipment, accessing/egressing equipment via a ladder or steps, or responding to in-vehicle alarms.   |
| The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) | A United States federal agency responsible for the prevention of work-related injury and illness. It is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, under the Department of Health and Human Services.   |

## **Order 45**

**A guide to health surveillance in the NSW coal industry**

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# Introduction

## Coal Services

Coal Services is a Specialised Health and Safety Scheme proudly protecting the NSW coal industry and its workers for over 100 years.

We offer a comprehensive range of critical services designed to minimise workplace injuries and illnesses.

In collaboration with our industry stakeholders, we are committed to safeguarding the health, safety and wellbeing of workers within the sector by focusing on prevention, early detection, enforcement, and educational initiatives.

## Role of Coal Services

Coal Services' preventative and responsive services in the areas of workplace health and safety, workers' compensation, emergency response, and training, help to deliver on our purpose, 'to protect'.

Coal Services operates under the provisions set out in the *Coal Industry Act 2001* (NSW) (the Act) s 9 regarding approved companies. We exercise these functions in accordance with s 10(1) of the Act.

Our statutory responsibilities are defined in the Act, and we are responsible for ensuring these and the various Orders pertaining to it are maintained.

Coal Services' unique collaborative model is like no other in the world. With our purpose, 'to protect' at its centre and enabled by collaboration with all industry stakeholders, the model demonstrates our role in supporting industry to comply with the legislative and regulatory framework that exists in NSW, as well as keeping coal mine workers' health, safety and wellbeing at the forefront of decision making.

The collaborative model and the services provided by our Specialised Health and Safety Scheme have delivered proven results in safeguarding against injury and occupational disease.

## The health surveillance scheme for NSW coal mine workers

Under the Act, CS Health is responsible for executing the Coal Services Health Monitoring Requirements for Coal Mine Workers Order No. 45 (Order 45) to monitor the health of NSW coal mine workers for any health effects due to occupational exposures to dust, noise, chemicals, and other workplace hazards.

The health assessments detailed in Order 45 can also identify other health and lifestyle-related conditions that may impact on a coal mine worker's ability to work safely and effectively.

Regular screening provides an opportunity to identify occupational and non-occupational diseases early, often before symptoms manifest. This provides greater scope for effective treatments and preventative measures to keep coal mine workers safe.

Order 45 also helps NSW coal industry employers (employers) to fulfil their health and safety obligations to protect the health and wellbeing of their workforce.

This guide provides information to help employers manage and comply with Order 45 health assessments for coal mine workers.



# Order 45 health assessments

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The Coal Services Health Monitoring Requirements for Coal Mine Workers Order No. 45 (Order 45) will take effect from 1 January 2026.

## Overview

Occupational diseases often take many years to develop, making regular health surveillance essential for early detection and treatment, ensuring that coal mine workers can continue to remain healthy and work safely.

In NSW, employers must ensure that every prospective coal mine worker and coal mine worker undergo a health assessment, including chest imaging, upon entering the NSW coal industry and every 3 years thereafter.

Order 45 health assessments focus on a range of occupational health issues, including exposure to dust, noise, chemicals, and other workplace hazards. They also include screening for other health and/or lifestyle-related conditions that can impact coal mine worker safety.

## NSW coal mine workers

The requirement for health monitoring in the NSW coal industry depends on the frequency, duration, and likelihood of a coal mine worker's exposure to airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals, and/or occupational noise.

Order 45 defines a coal mine worker as:

*a person who carries out work at a coal mine or a coal handling preparation plant for a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU). It does not include a person who works in an environment in which they are not exposed to airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals, and/or occupational noise unless the person has previously worked in an area of a coal mine or coal handling preparation plant in which they were exposed to airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals, and/or occupational noise.*

Employers must review their workforce to identify all coal mine workers and ensure they have an Order 45 health assessment. This includes coal mine workers currently working in non-exposure positions who have a history of previous exposure to airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals and/ or occupational noise.

- > For workers previously exposed to airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals, and/or occupational noise, relevant exposure is generally considered to be 5 years or more, based on the medical evidence of occupational disease development.
- > For workers with previous high silica exposure, relevant exposure is generally considered to be 2 years or more, based on the medical evidence of occupational disease development.

Employers may use similar exposure group (SEG) monitoring data to determine which positions are exposed to airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals, and/or occupational noise.

A worker would generally not be considered a coal mine worker for the purposes of health monitoring under Order 45 if the employer determines that:

- > exposure to airborne contaminants and hazardous chemicals is rare; or
- > exposure to airborne contaminants and hazardous chemicals is unlikely and the duration of the work onsite is occasional.

Similarly, as detailed in the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 (NSW), a worker who is not frequently required to use personal protective equipment to mitigate the risk of hearing loss from noise exceeding the exposure standard would not be considered a coal mine worker under Order 45.

The Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists (AIOH) guidebook, *Simplified Occupational Hygiene Risk Management Strategies*, defines:

- > **rare** as <10% of the mean time weighted average occupational exposure level (TWA-OEL) and,
- > **unlikely** as between 10% to 50% of the mean TWA-OEL.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics defines occasional duration in a work schedule as duties or activities performed between 2% and 33% of the time.

Employers may also refer to other recognised occupational hygiene or health and safety guidelines to inform their own health risk assessments.

Employers should compile the identified coal mine worker information into a coal mine worker list.

## Coal mine worker lists

Under Order 45, employers must provide a list of coal mine workers to help identify which coal mine workers are due to attend a health assessment in the following year.

The list must be submitted to CS Health by 30 September each calendar year, using the template provided by CS Health.

The list must include all coal mine workers employed in the previous 12 months, including current and former coal mine workers.

The list must include the coal mine workers’:

- > full name
- > date of birth
- > position
- > risk category
- > similar exposure group
- > commencement date
- > termination date (if applicable).

This information helps to ensure all eligible coal mine workers attend their Order 45 health assessment as required and assists employers to effectively plan and schedule upcoming health assessments to ensure compliance with Order 45.

## Booking a health assessment

After confirming which coal mine workers are due for a health assessment, employers should use this information to develop a schedule for booking health assessments.

Early planning helps ensure appointments are booked with CS Health (or the External Doctor Network) in a timely manner, and that all coal mine workers remain compliant with Order 45.

To support approved medical practitioners in making accurate fitness-for-work determinations, employers must provide essential information when booking a health assessment. This helps ensure the most appropriate medical investigations are conducted, particularly if a medical condition has been identified, while maintaining alignment with relevant NSW Coal Industry Health Standards.

At the time of booking a health assessment, health assessment review or retirement health assessment, employers must provide the following information:

- > Coal mine worker’s details
  - full name
  - date of birth
  - position
  - risk category
  - similar exposure group
- > whether respirator fit testing is required (optional examination under Order 45)
- > whether any Schedule 14, Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 (NSW) health monitoring requirements apply (optional examination under Order 45)
- > whether the coal mine worker completes any remote work
- > whether the coal mine worker uses a breathing apparatus
- > the details of the employer representative who will receive a copy of the health assessment certificate and associated reports (generally known as the report contact).



## Position

The terms 'position' and 'role' are considered equivalent and refer to a specific job or function within the workplace that the coal mine worker performs. It defines the tasks, responsibilities, and duties assigned to the coal mine worker.

## Similar exposure group

Similar exposure groups are used to identify a group of coal mine workers who have the same general exposure to hazards. This can include:

- > similarity and frequency of the tasks performed
- > the types of materials and processes used to complete tasks
- > similarity of the way tasks are performed
- > the types of exposures to hazardous chemicals, airborne contaminants, and noise and vibration.

**Note:** Selecting the correct SEG is the employer's responsibility and must be nominated when booking a health assessment. Approved medical practitioners are not responsible for determining the SEG. Information about [CS Health SEGs](#) is available on the Coal Services website.

## Risk categories

Risk categories refer to the risk a coal mine worker poses to themselves and/or others from an unavoidable and/or sudden medical incapacity, rather than the risks that a coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker will be exposed to at work.

Risk categories guide the approved medical practitioner to the appropriate level of investigation and follow-up required (if necessary) when assessing a coal mine worker's fitness for work, particularly when a medical condition has been identified. Risk categorisation helps reduce unnecessary follow-ups and testing, while supporting health assessment reviews in line with relevant NSW Coal Industry Health Standards.

All coal mine workers or prospective coal mine workers must be classified into one of the 3 risk categories as defined in Order 45:

**Category A: Safety critical** means a coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker whose immediate action or inaction from an unavoidable and/or sudden medical incapacity may lead directly to a serious incident affecting others in the workplace.

**Category B: Safety sensitive** means a coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker whose immediate action or inaction from an unavoidable and/or sudden medical incapacity may lead directly to a serious incident affecting themselves and is not likely to affect others in the workplace.

**Category C: Non-safety sensitive** means a coal mine worker or prospective coal mine worker whose immediate action or inaction from an unavoidable and/or sudden medical incapacity will not lead to a serious incident affecting others in the workplace and their work environment will not contribute adversely to the outcome.

Employers must review coal mine worker positions and assign a risk category to each position. Refer to the [Risk Category Guidelines](#) on the Coal Services website.

Risk category assignment must be reviewed if a coal mine worker changes position.

**Note:** Selecting the correct risk category is the employer's responsibility and must be nominated when booking a health assessment. Approved medical practitioners are not responsible for determining risk categories. Information about risk categories is available on the Coal Services website.

## Preparing for a health assessment

Employers play a key role in informing coal mine workers about how to prepare for health assessments. Arriving prepared helps ensure appointments run smoothly and without unnecessary delays.

A coal mine worker is required to arrive 15 minutes prior to their scheduled health assessment appointment to allow time to register and complete relevant paperwork.

The coal mine worker should bring the following items to the appointment:

- > photo identification (e.g. driver's license)
- > prescription glasses if worn. Coal mine workers should not wear contact lenses as their vision will be tested during the health assessment
- > a list of any current medications
- > any relevant medical or specialist reports (examples may include cardiology reports, diabetes updates, sleep apnoea CPAP machine results).

Coal mine workers should also:

- > be well hydrated and have eaten prior to the health assessment, as they will need to provide a urine sample and will undergo a non-fasting cholesterol and blood glucose test
- > avoid smoking and/or vaping for at least 1 hour prior to their appointment to avoid any impact on lung function testing.

## Respirator fit testing

CS Health will only conduct respirator fit testing in accordance with the Australian Standard *AS/NZS 1715:2009 Selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment*.

If the coal mine worker is having a respirator fit test completed at the time of the health assessment, the respirator must form a proper seal against the coal mine worker's face during testing.

Therefore, the coal mine worker must present clean shaven or have no facial hair between the skin and sealing surfaces of the respirator facepiece or the testing will not be completed.

## Privacy and consent

Coal Services complies with the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth), the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002* (NSW) and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1988* (NSW).

Before the health assessment commences, the approved medical practitioner must obtain the coal mine worker's consent to participate. This consent allows the coal mine worker to undergo the required tests and examinations that form the health assessment. If the coal mine worker does not provide consent, the health assessment cannot proceed.

Consent must also be obtained for the Order 45 health assessment certificate and associated reports to be released to the coal mine worker's nominated employer representative. If the coal mine worker does not provide consent, the health assessment certificate and associated reports cannot be released to the nominated employer representative.

There are some situations where Coal Services is required to disclose certain information to the NSW Resources Regulator and the employer without the coal mine worker's consent. This information is limited to:

- > any advice that test results indicate that a coal mine worker may have contracted a disease, injury or illness as a result of carrying out the work; and/or
- > any recommendation that the employer take remedial measures, including whether the coal mine worker can continue to carry out the work.

## Use of de-identified data

Coal Services compiles de-identified statistical reports for the NSW coal industry. The data that informs these reports is grouped to tally the number of health assessments and health assessment reviews that have been completed in the reporting period, as well as other medical information (such as medical conditions identified). It does not include or use any personal identifiers such as the coal mine worker's name or date of birth.

De-identified data may also be used for research purposes to support the ongoing health and safety of the NSW coal mining workforce.

## Health assessment appointment

During a health assessment, a coal mine worker is seen by both an approved health professional (i.e., registered nurse), and an approved medical practitioner (doctor).

The health assessment typically takes around 2 hours 30 minutes to complete; not including chest imaging, which is conducted separately.

The health assessment involves a series of examinations and screening tools, as outlined below:

- > detailed work history
- > detailed medical history, including any past or present disease, illness, or injury (including work and non-work related), use of medication, alcohol intake, smoking/vaping, and tobacco history, and physical activity
- > spirometry, a review of the respiratory system, and the completion of a standardised respiratory questionnaire
- > hearing assessment, including audiometry
- > vision assessment, including visual acuity, visual fields, and colour vision
- > musculoskeletal assessment, including any previous injury or underlying condition(s)
- > cardiovascular assessment, including assessment of heart sounds
- > blood pressure assessment
- > pulse rate
- > urinalysis
- > height, weight, neck circumference, and body mass index (BMI)
- > waist measurement
- > abdominal examination
- > random cholesterol (non-fasting) – total and HDL-C.
- > random blood glucose test (non-fasting)
- > neurological examination, including any sensory or balance disorders, including the Romberg test for balance
- > Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)
- > The STOP BANG questionnaire
- > Alcohol Audit: The Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT)
- > cardiovascular risk assessment
- > hazard exposure questionnaire
- > coal mine worker chest imaging (x-ray or high-resolution computed tomography)
- > respirator fit testing (optional)
- > any health monitoring requirements in Schedule 14, Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 (NSW) (optional).

## Deferred health examinations

The approved medical practitioner may postpone one or more health examination(s) during a health assessment if, in their professional opinion, completing the examination(s) at the time could adversely affect the coal mine worker's health.

Any deferred health examinations must be completed within 12 months of the original health assessment. Where a health examination is deferred, the health assessment certificate will note that a health assessment review is required.

## Time and payment provisions

Where reasonably practicable, employers must allow coal mine workers time during their normal rostered hours to attend a health assessment. If this is not possible, the employer must pay the coal mine worker for their time. If a workplace has an approved enterprise agreement, its terms may apply instead.

## Chest imaging

Chest imaging is a required component of Order 45 health assessments. CS Health uses two types of chest imaging: a chest x-ray and/or high-resolution computed tomography (HRCT).

### Chest x-ray

A chest x-ray is a simple, non-invasive test that produces a 2D image of the chest. It usually takes between 15 and 30 minutes. To capture the images, coal mine workers typically stand in front of an x-ray machine.

Order 45 chest x-rays are reported using the International Labour Organization (ILO) International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconioses and must be reviewed by at least 2 radiologists with B-reader accreditation. This globally recognised method helps identify and document radiographic changes associated with occupational lung disease and is a critical part of protecting coal mine workers' health. This standardised reporting supports early diagnosis, enables approved medical practitioners to monitor changes over time, and ensures health assessment reviews are scheduled promptly when needed.

If the chest x-ray shows abnormalities or is inconclusive, an HRCT scan may be recommended for a more detailed view of the lungs and to support further clinical investigations.

### High-resolution computed tomography

An HRCT scan is a specialised imaging test that produces detailed images of the lungs and surrounding chest structure, including the lungs and heart. It is used to help detect early signs of occupational lung disease and to assess further lung damage when lung function results are abnormal, or the ILO chest x-ray is inconclusive.

The procedure usually takes between 15 and 30 minutes. During the scan, coal mine workers lie on an examination bench that slowly slides into the centre of the HRCT machine while the images are captured.

All HRCT scans are classified according to the International Classification of HRCT for Occupational and Environmental Respiratory Diseases (ICOERD). This system ensures consistent interpretation across radiologists, supports accurate documentation of occupational lung disease, and enables better tracking of disease progression. It also helps to inform clinical decisions.

# Health assessment reviews

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During the health assessment, the approved medical practitioner may identify an occupational or non-occupational medical condition(s) that requires further investigation and/or ongoing monitoring. In such cases, a health assessment review will be required. Health assessment reviews gather additional information about the condition(s) to support the ongoing health and safety of coal mine workers.

Approved medical practitioners use the relevant NSW Coal Industry Health Standard to make accurate fitness-for-work determinations and request the most appropriate medical investigations.

A health assessment review may be a one-off or occur at defined intervals, depending on the condition. In most cases, the results and/or information are provided back to the approved medical practitioner for assessment. However, the coal mine worker may need to attend a face-to-face appointment if further or repeat testing is required e.g. spirometry or audiometric testing. Once the health assessment review is complete, a health assessment review certificate will be issued.

## Duty of care referrals

The approved medical practitioner may also provide a 'duty of care referral' to the coal mine worker to support their personal health and wellbeing. Coal mine workers are not required to report the outcome of these types of referrals to the approved medical practitioner (i.e. they do not need to provide further information or results). Additionally, duty of care referrals do not require a health assessment review or earlier follow-up.

## Health assessment certificate conditional clearance periods

The health assessment certificate details the requirements for a health assessment review, including whether the review relates to airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals or occupational noise exposure investigations.

When a health assessment review is required, the health assessment certificate will specify a conditional clearance period (e.g. 3, 6, or 12 months). If the health assessment review is not completed within this timeframe, the health assessment certificate will expire.

Employers should build sufficient time into their processes to ensure health assessment reviews are completed before the health assessment certificate expires. This includes time for scheduling and completing the health assessment review, as well as processing and administrative timeframes. Planning for these requirements will help minimise the risk of the health assessment certificate expiring.

## Time and payment provisions

Where reasonably practicable, employers must allow coal mine workers time during their normal rostered hours to attend a health assessment review whenever it is related to airborne contaminants, hazardous chemicals or occupational noise exposure investigations.

If this is not possible, the employer must provide payment to the coal mine worker for their time. If a workplace has an approved enterprise agreement, its terms may apply instead.

## Health assessment review appointment timeframes

The following timeframes provide an estimate of how long common health assessment review services usually take to complete. Coal mine workers are asked to arrive 15 minutes before their scheduled appointment to allow time to register and complete relevant paperwork.

| Service type  | Time  | Test(s) and examination(s)  |
|---|---|---|
| Spirometry  | 1 hour  | > Spirometry  |
| Spirometry and complex lung function testing                          | 1 hour 30 minutes   | > Spirometry<br>> Complex lung function testing with DLCO   |
| Audiometry  | 1 hour  | > Hearing assessment<br>> Audiometric testing   |
| Vision  | 1 hour  | > Vision testing  |
| Repeat testing  | 1 hour  | > Blood pressure<br>> Weight<br>> Urinalysis  |
| Schedule 14, Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 health monitoring | 1 hour  | > Tests and examinations are determined by the health monitoring requirements   |
| Respirator fit testing  | 30 minutes  | > Quantitative respirator fit test  |
| Medical review (information only)                                     | Not applicable.<br>Face-to-face appointment not required. | > Information-only review by the approved medical practitioner, after the coal mine worker has provided the necessary details |



# NSW Coal Industry Health Standards

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The NSW Coal Industry Health Standards stipulate the framework that Coal Services requires approved medical practitioners to operationalise to ensure consistent and uniform delivery of quality Order 45 health assessments.

The NSW Coal Industry Health Standards:

- > are practical, risk-based tools to help approved medical practitioners assess a coal mine workers' fitness for work for specific positions and risk categories
- > define Coal Services' tolerance for operational health-related risks by considering the physical and psychological demands of tasks and associated work environments and hazards
- > help identify health issues that may limit capacity, impair job performance and/or pose foreseeable health and/or safety risks
- > address clinically relevant aspects of safety-critical work, including physical and psychological fitness include health assessment review requirements and medical management plans based on internationally recognised medical best practices.

Benefits of NSW Coal Industry Health Standards:

- > help approved medical practitioners identify necessary job accommodations or adjustments for safe and effective work
- > use risk stratification to ensure consistent and appropriate medical evaluations for similar roles
- > reduce ambiguity and the need to escalate routine matters
- > provide clear health certification criteria
- > promote consistency, transparency, and fairness in Order 45 health certification.

## Health assessment certificates and release of results

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### Health assessment certificates

After completing a health assessment or health assessment review, the approved medical practitioner determines the coal mine worker's fitness for work and must record this on a health assessment certificate.

The health assessment certificate provides limited medical information, but includes sufficient detail to assist employers to create a safe system of work while also protecting the coal mine worker's privacy. The health assessment certificate confirms the coal mine worker's fitness for the position and risk category, which supports employers in meeting their work health and safety obligations.

The Order 45 health assessment certificate includes a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) report. This is a visual summary that outlines the coal mine worker's fitness for their position and risk category.

Table 1: Order 45 health assessment certificate health certification RAG report

| Health certification |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>GREEN</b>         | Medically fit to undertake the position within the nominated risk category.       |
| <b>AMBER (1)</b>     | Has a health condition that requires ongoing monitoring.                          |
| <b>AMBER (2)</b>     | Has a health condition that imposes a restriction on some aspect of the position. |
| <b>RED</b>           | Medically unfit to undertake the position within the nominated risk category.     |

The following table explains each health certification status and provides examples of common health conditions that may be associated with each classification.

Table 2: Order 45 health certification RAG report explanations

| RAG report       | Health certification explanation  | Examples   |
|------------------|---|--|
| <b>GREEN</b>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; No health conditions identified that need earlier monitoring or workplace accommodations and/or restrictions</li> <li>&gt; Routine health surveillance</li> <li>&gt; Meets the requirements of any NSW Coal Industry Health Standard</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; No current health issues</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker may have health conditions such as well-controlled blood pressure or gout that require regular engagement with general practitioner and/or specialist but does not impact workplace safety</li> </ul>  |
| <b>AMBER (1)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Occupational or non-occupational health condition(s) identified that requires more frequent monitoring and/or review by approved medical practitioner</li> <li>&gt; Could result in safety issues if left unmonitored</li> <li>&gt; Could result in coal mine worker harm if left unmonitored</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with managed health conditions that could lead to sudden incapacity or decline over time</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with non-compliance with treatment for a health condition</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with a poorly-controlled health condition</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with abnormalities in health monitoring, such as lung function or hearing</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with known ischemic heart disease</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with known diabetes</li> </ul>  |
| <b>AMBER (2)</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Occupational or non-occupational health condition(s) identified that requires some restriction and may or may not require more frequent monitoring by approved medical practitioner</li> <li>&gt; Could result in safety issues if not restricted</li> <li>&gt; Could result in coal mine worker harm if not restricted</li> <li>&gt; Restrictions may be temporary or permanent</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with managed health conditions that could lead to sudden incapacity</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with occupational or non-occupational lung impairment may require dust restrictions</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker who weighs more than 120kgs will have equipment weight restrictions</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker who is an amputee may be restricted from some equipment</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with monocular vision may be restricted from some equipment</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with an injury may have a restriction e.g. weightlifting restrictions</li> </ul> |
| <b>RED</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Occupational or non-occupational health condition(s) identified that means they cannot continue to work safely.</li> <li>&gt; Could impact health and safety of coal mine worker if they continue to work</li> <li>&gt; Could impact the health and safety of others if the coal mine worker continues to work</li> <li>&gt; Determination may be temporary or permanent</li> </ul>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with blood pressure &gt;200/110 mmHg</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with a cardiovascular risk score &gt;15%</li> <li>&gt; Coal mine worker with recent seizure activity</li> </ul>   |

## Release of health assessment results

After the health assessment is completed, and with the coal mine workers' consent, the approved medical practitioner will release a copy of the health assessment certificate and associated reports to the coal mine worker's nominated employer representative. If the coal mine worker does not provide consent, the health assessment certificate and associated reports cannot be released to the nominated employer representative.

Order 45 requires employers to provide a copy of the health assessment certificate to the coal mine worker within 4 weeks of receiving the health assessment certificate.

Coal mine workers can also request a copy of their health assessment information directly from CS Health. This information will be provided in accordance with requirements of the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002* (NSW).

Coal mine workers must complete a 'request to release information' form which is available on the Coal Services website. CS Health's policy is to release this information within 30 days of receiving the request.

Under the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002* (NSW), CS Health must confirm the coal mine worker's identity before any medical records or personal information can be released.

- > The coal mine worker can visit a CS Health office to submit the request. They will need to show a photo ID (e.g. driver's license, passport)
- > If they are not submitting the request in person, the coal mine worker's identity will need to be confirmed by someone who is entitled to witness a Commonwealth of Australia Statutory Declaration as defined in the Statutory Declarations Regulations 2018.

Eligible persons include, but are not limited to, certain medical providers (doctor, dentist, chiropractor, nurse, optometrist), legal practitioners, financial advisors/accountants, a Justice of the Peace, Minister of religion, or police officers.

## Retirement health assessments

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Supporting the long-term health of coal mine workers extends beyond their time in the NSW coal industry. When coal mine workers retire or leave the industry, they are entitled to attend retirement health assessments offered by CS Health.

Coal mine dust lung diseases, including black lung disease, can develop or progress even after a coal mine worker has left the coal mining industry. Regular lung health monitoring through retirement health assessments supports early detection of these diseases and reinforces Coal Services' commitment to the ongoing health and safety of coal mine workers.

Retirement health assessments include:

- > a respiratory health questionnaire
- > lung function testing
- > chest imaging.

While retirement health assessments are voluntary and can be initiated by coal mine workers themselves, employers play an important role by:

- > informing coal mine workers of the option to undertake a retirement health assessment when they retire or leave the NSW coal industry
- > encouraging participation by explaining the importance of continued health monitoring after leaving the industry
- > assisting in booking a retirement health assessment.



After a retirement health assessment:

- > the coal mine worker will receive a health assessment certificate and be advised of any findings or recommended follow-up actions
- > CS Health will support any investigations related to occupational exposure, including referrals to respiratory physicians where required
- > any general health findings are referred to the coal mine worker's general practitioner for further investigation and management.

# Resources and references

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## Employer resources

[Coal Services Health Monitoring Requirements for Coal Mine Workers Order No. 45](#)

[Guide to Order 45](#)

[Order 45: change readiness guide for employers](#)

[Order 45: transitional arrangements guide for employers](#)

[Coal Services Risk Category Guidelines](#)

## Coal mine worker resources

[Order 45: information for coal mine workers](#)

[Order 45: preparing for your health assessment](#)

[Order 45: health assessment reviews](#)

[Order 45: retirement health assessments](#)

## Reference list

[Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists \(AIOH\) Simplified Occupational Hygiene Risk Management Strategies](#)

[Australian Standard AS/NZS 1715:2009 Selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment](#)

[Coal Industry Act 2001 \(NSW\)](#)

[Coal Services Clinical and Service Standard](#)

[Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 \(NSW\)](#)

[National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#)

[Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)

[Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1988 \(NSW\)](#)

[Statutory Declarations Regulation 2018](#)

[US Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

[Work Health and Safety \(Mines and Petroleum Sites\) Act 2013 \(NSW\)](#)

[Work Health and Safety Regulation 2025 \(NSW\)](#)



# CS Health contact information

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## Contacts

| Service type |  |
|--------------|--|
| Phone        | Customer support: 1800 CSH MED (1800 274 633)                        |
| Email        | <a href="mailto:csh@coalservices.com.au">csh@coalservices.com.au</a> |
| Website      | <a href="http://www.coalservices.com.au">www.coalservices.com.au</a> |

## Office locations

| Address      |  |
|--------------|--|
| Gunnedah     | Cnr Reservoir Street and Anzac Parade, Gunnedah NSW 2380 |
| Lithgow      | 3 Pronto Avenue, Lithgow NSW 2790                        |
| Mudgee       | 4/64 Sydney Road, Mudgee NSW 2850                        |
| Singleton    | 1 Civic Avenue, Singleton NSW 2330                       |
| Speers Point | 143 Main Road, Speers Point NSW 2284                     |
| Woonona      | 558-580 Princes Highway, Woonona NSW 2517                |

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