Notifiable Occupational Diseases — Information for Physicians

Notifiable occupational diseases

This Safety Bulletin is intended to remind physicians of their responsibilities under Alberta’s Occupational Health and Safety Act.

According to Section 6 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, a physician finding a person affected with or suffering from a notifiable disease must notify the Director of Medical Services in writing. The Director of Medical Services is an occupational health physician who is a member of the staff of Safe, Fair and Healthy Workplaces Division, Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour. The notification must include the name, address and place of employment of the affected person, and the name of the notifiable disease. Notification must occur within seven days of the disease being diagnosed. The attached Notification Form may be used for this purpose.

The following occupational diseases are notifiable diseases:
(a) asbestosis;
(b) mesothelioma;
(c) asbestos-induced lung cancer;
(d) asbestos-induced laryngeal cancer;
(e) asbestos-induced gastrointestinal cancer;
(e.1) any other kind of asbestos-induced cancer;
(f) coal worker’s pneumoconiosis;
(g) silicosis;
(h) elevated blood lead level, that is, a worker’s blood lead level greater than 0.5 micromoles per litre (µmol/L); and
(i) noise-induced hearing loss that is medically diagnosed as noise-induced where the average hearing threshold level at 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz, and 3000 Hz exceeds 35 dB bilaterally.

**Legislative Requirements**

**Asbestos, coal dust and silica exposure**

According to the OHS Code, Part 4, Chemical Hazards, Biological Hazards and Harmful Substances, section 40, physicians who perform a health assessment for workers designated as exposed to asbestos, silica or coal dust are responsible for explaining the results of the health assessment to the worker assessed. The health assessment must consist of

1. a chest x-ray, including radiologist’s report;
2. a spirogram that includes
   - forced expiratory volume in the first second (FEV₁), and
   - forced vital capacity (FVC); and
3. history.

Sections 40(3), and 40(4) of the OHS Code require the physician who provides the worker with a written interpretation to ensure that records of the health assessment are kept for a period of not less than 30 years. The radiologist’s interpretation and actual x-ray films, or their electronic equivalent, must be retained.

By agreeing to undertake the assessment, the physician must keep the records for the required period of time as part of the contractual agreement with the employer. As specified in Section 40(13) of the OHS Code, the employer bears the cost of providing the required health assessment and medical interpretation and explanation.
Lead exposure

As a result of changes to the OHS Regulation, Section 6(h) an elevated blood lead level in a worker above 0.5 µmol/L is classified as a notifiable disease and the Director of Medical Services must be notified.

The goal of blood lead monitoring is to keep worker blood lead levels as low as possible and close to the reference non-occupational population upper limit of 0.5 µmol/L.

Noise exposure

According to the OHS Code, Part 16, Noise Exposure, the physician or audiologist reviewing the required audiograms must
(a) advise the worker within 30 days that the worker’s audiogram is abnormal or demonstrates an abnormal shift [Section 223(4)(a)];
(b) with the written consent of the worker, provide results of the audiometric tests to the worker’s physician [Section 223(4)(b)];
(c) advise the employer as to the effectiveness of the employer’s hearing conservation program without divulging individual test results [Section 223(4)(c)];
(d) retain records of the audiometric tests for individual workers for a period of not less than 10 years [Section 223(4)(d)].
Notifiable Disease Notification Form

Section 6 of Alberta’s Occupational Health and Safety Regulation requires a physician to notify the Director of Medical Services within seven days of diagnosing a person affected with, or suffering from, one or more of the notifiable diseases. This form should be completed and forwarded to: Director of Medical Services, Alberta Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour
Email: jstl.oahsmedicalunit@gov.ab.ca
Fax: 780-643-9264
Mail: 8th Floor, Labour Building
10808-99 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 0G5

Worker Information:
Name: ___________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________
Name of employer(s) when exposure occurred: ___________________________________________
Name of employer at date of notification: ___________________________________________

Notifiable Disease (Check where applicable):
- Asbestos Related:
  - Asbestosis
  - Mesothelioma
  - Asbestos-Induced Cancer
    - Lung
    - Laryngeal
    - Gastrointestinal
    - Other (specify) ___________________________________________
- Coal Dust Related:
  - Coal Worker’s Pneumoconiosis
- Silica Related:
  - Silicosis
- Lead Related
  - Blood lead level above 0.5 µmol/L
- Noise Related
  - Noise-Induced Hearing Loss

Comments: __________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

Physician Name (Print): ___________________________
Physician Signature: ___________________________
Telephone Number: ___________________________
Date: ___________________________
Contact us:

Province-Wide Contact Centre

📞 Edmonton
780-415-8690

📞 Throughout Alberta
1-866-415-8690
(Toll Free)

📞 Deaf or hearing impaired
- Edmonton 780-427-9999
- Other locations 1-800-232-7215
(Toll Free)

Web Site

🌐 www.work.alberta.ca

Getting copies of OHS Act, Regulation & Code:

Queen’s Printer

🖥️ www.qp.gov.ab.ca

📞 Edmonton 780-427-4952

Occupational Health and Safety

🖥️ http://humanservices.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation

Call any Government of Alberta office toll-free
Dial 310-0000, then the area code and telephone number you want to reach


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