

Chapter 11: EXPOSURE EVALUATIONS, MEDICAL CONSULTATIONS AND EXAMS

Lehman College will provide employees who work with hazardous chemicals a medical consultation and/or examination whenever an employee suspects chemical exposure, or develops signs and symptoms of exposure associated with chemicals used/stored in the laboratory. The process is divided into the following phases: suspected exposure, evaluation of exposure, medical consultation/exams (including follow-up exams).

Criteria for Suspicion of Exposure

The following are examples of events or circumstances which might be reasonably considered as evidence of likely toxic chemical exposure:

- employee had direct skin or eye contact with a chemical because of a spill, leak etc.;
- odor was noticed, especially if the person was working with a chemical with a PEL or TLV lower than the odor threshold;
- there is a manifestation of health hazard symptoms such as headache, dizziness, rash, nausea, coughing, tearing irritation or redness of eyes, irritation of nose or throat, or loss of motor control or judgment;
- some or all of the symptoms disappear when the person is taken into fresh air;
- symptoms previously reported reappear soon after working with chemicals again;
- other people in the same work area report similar symptoms.

Exposure Evaluations

Exposure evaluation will be conducted the employee, principal investigator, department chair, and CHO. The following procedure should be followed in evaluating exposures:

- Person initiating the complaint will be interviewed;
- Essential information concerning the incident should be gathered such as:
 - chemical name
 - other chemicals used by complainant
 - chemicals used by others in the immediate area
 - chemicals stored in the area
 - symptoms
 - control measures such as fume hoods and personal protective equipment used
 - air sampling or monitoring devices (if available)
- Conduct air sampling of area for suspected chemicals;
- Compare symptoms with potential symptoms of other chemicals in the area;
- Determine if a medical consultation is needed;
- Review the present control measures and safety procedures to insure that they are adequate;
- File an Incident Report with Public Safety.

Medical Consultations and Exams

The exposure evaluation may indicate that a medical consultation should be offered to employees who are suspected of having been exposed to a hazardous chemical. The purpose of the medical consultation is to determine whether the employee needs a medical examination. The employee may be referred to a licensed physician who specializes in Occupational Medicine. If an emergency (spill, fire) may have resulted in employee exposure, Public Safety will immediately summon EMS to take the employee to the hospital. Consultations and exams will be provided at no cost to the employee, during the employee's normal work time (if possible) and with no charge to either sick leave or annual leave and no loss of pay. Any medical costs incurred by the employee will be paid directly to the physician or to the employee if reimbursement is required.

The CHO will refer to the incident report form to provide the following information to the physician:

- The hazardous chemicals the employee was exposed to;
- Conditions under which the exposure occurred;
- Signs or symptoms of exposure experienced by the employee during, soon after, and within 72 hours after the incident.

The physician must inform the College in writing and the examined employee of any necessary medical follow-up. The physician must also report the results of the medical exam, and associated tests, and any medical conditions which would place the employee at increased risk as a result of exposure to a hazardous chemical in the workplace. The written opinion will not reveal specific findings of diagnoses unrelated to occupational exposure.

The following are occupational medicine clinics in New York City and vicinity:

Mount Sinai Irving J. Selikoff Occupational Health Clinical Center
12th Floor Guggenheim Hall
5 East 98th Street
New York, New York 10029
212-241-9738
Director - Philip J. Landrigan, MD, Dean of Preventive Medicine
Medical Director – Madelynn Azar-Cavanagh, MD
Hours: Monday - Friday, 9:00 - 5:00 pm

Additional locations:

Staten Island Clinical Center
690 Castleton Avenue, 2nd Floor
Staten Island, NY 10310
Tel: 888-702-0630

Hudson Valley Clinical Center
1020 Warburton Avenue
Yonkers, NY 10701
Tel: 888-702-0630

The Occupational and Environmental Medicine Program

Division of Occupational, Environmental, and Clinical Preventive Medicine

SUNY at Stony Brook, SB Med Park, 2500 Nesconset Hwy, Bldg 16C, Stony Brook NY 11794

631-444-6250

Division Head: Iris Granek, MD, MS

Medical Director - David Graham, MD

Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 - 5:00 pm