

## Telephone Health Surveillance - Frequently Asked Questions

### What is my Telephone Health Surveillance appointment for?

If you are exposed to a hazard at work which could affect your health, Network Rail are obliged by law to check if the exposures are affecting your health. Some of these checks can be done by phone by answering a set of questions to determine if you have any symptoms related to any exposure.

### What sort of hazards?

Using vibrating tools for long periods such as strimmer, angle grinder or drills could cause problems with the fingers, hands and arms. If you are exposed to dust at work this could cause chest problems and exposure to loud noise could cause hearing loss. There are also several substances that you may handle at work which could cause skin problems.

### Do I have to take part?

You are obliged by law to take part in health surveillance, checking for any health problems that might be caused by exposure to skin, respiratory hazards, working with vibrating tools or in noisy environments. The health check for night work is voluntary and you do not have to answer these questions., however should you be experiencing any health issues which are made worse by working at night we may be able to offer some assistance to support you in your role.

### What about Night Work?

Working at night can make certain health conditions worse, your employer is required by law to offer you a regular health check to make sure that you do not have a health conditions which could be made worse by working at night.

### Why are you doing this by telephone?

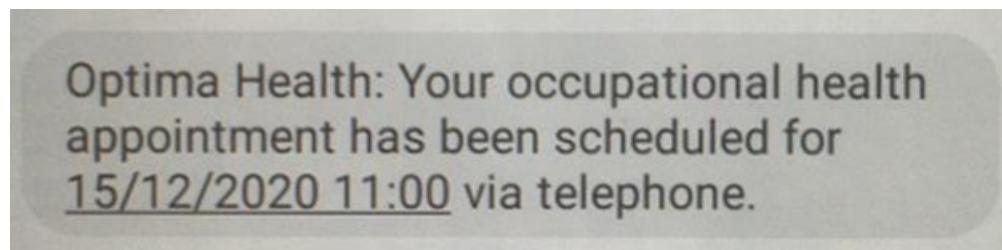
In previous years we sent out a questionnaire to everyone for the hand arm vibration surveillance (HAVS). The response rate was quite low, and it took a considerable amount of effort to get the questionnaires filled in and returned. By capturing the information by telephone, it means that it is easier for everyone to organise and complete. It also allows us to capture additional information which means that we can check if you had any health problems that might be caused by the other hazards you were exposed to at work and offer the health check for night workers at the same time. We are now able to collate information for 4 elements of Health Surveillance and Night Worker assessments.

### What do I need to do?

An appointment will be arranged for you to talk to one of our Wellbeing Advisors who will ask you a series of questions about your health in relation to exposure at work. The call will last up to an hour. You will need to make sure that you are available at the time of your appointment to take our call. You should be in a place where you can talk confidentially about your health so somewhere quiet where you can talk on the phone for up to an hour without being overheard. You need to answer all the questions asked, if you do not understand the question then ask the advisor to explain it.

## How will I be notified of my appointment?

Your Line Manager will be sent confirmation of your appointment by email and you will also receive an SMS message. Example Below;



## What happens if I miss the call?

You will be called 3 times over a period of up to 10 minutes. You will be left a message with a number to return the call. You will need to call back no later than 15 minutes from the allotted time of your appointment and the Wellbeing Advisor will conduct the appointment. If you know you cannot attend your appointment, you must inform your TO (or the person within NR who confirmed the appointment with you).

## What is the impact if I miss the call?

Missed appointments incur charges with the risk of competencies expiring. Your competencies may be removed if you don't engage in the scheduled appointment. Your Line Manager will be informed of appointments that have failed. The programme has a deadline completion date so all appointments have been prescheduled and factored in to ensure Network Rail can comply.

## What happens if I receive a cancellation notice?

If your appointment needs to be rearranged and/or the Wellbeing Advisor who was scheduled to conduct the appointment has been changed, your Line Manager will receive a 'Cancellation notice' this will be followed by an updated confirmation of the rearranged appointment. The same applies if the time and/or date of the appointment has changed.

**IMPORTANT:** Please ensure to look out for the updated confirmation.

## What happens next?

If you do not have any health issues in relation to exposures at work, then it is likely that nothing more will be needed. If it is identified that you have symptoms that might be related to your exposure at work, then the advisor may refer you for a follow up appointment. This could be for a follow up call with a specialist occupational health practitioner, a skin check or for further tests such as a lung function test, hearing test or tests for hand arm vibration syndrome.

## What do I do if I have completed my Health Surveillance call and I get a notification to complete a further questionnaire?

Following your telephone assessment. If you are required to attend an onward referral for 1 or more element of Health Surveillance, the Optima portal will automatically trigger a notification to you asking you to complete a questionnaire by post/email. This is due to the Optima system set up and you may ignore this notification. Our team will advise you of this at the end of the Health Surveillance call but do contact our team if you have a query.

## **Does this mean that I won't have to go to Occupational Health for tests?**

Not necessarily. If it is identified at the telephone screening that you require a further appointment to discuss any work-related health issues, then you may need to be seen face to face. For example, if you are exposed to noise at work, then we cannot check your hearing over the telephone and so you will still need to have a hearing test every three years. During the telephone screening, we will ask you questions about your hearing, and if you have developed a problem since your last test, we will refer you for a further test face to face. We will also ask about the amount of noise that you are exposed to at work and will make sure that in future everyone who is at risk gets tested.

## **What about my test for Hand Arm Vibration?**

Previously everyone who worked with vibrating tools had to be seen by a practitioner every 3 years and undergo a series of tests. The guidance has now changed, and we must ask the questions annually. Only those employees who have relevant symptoms will need to be seen for a test.

## **What will you do with the information you have asked?**

The answers to the questions will be held in your occupational health records and will not be shared with Network Rail. We will report any exposures to your manager and if you have any health issues that require onward referral. We will advise Network Rail on recall dates for each of the different types of exposure. Network Rail will then use this information to put together a matrix which identifies what health hazards each job type is exposed to.