



25.11 Biological Monitoring: A Guide for Employees

What is Biological Monitoring?

Biological monitoring is a way of assessing chemical exposures by measuring the chemical or its breakdown products in a biological sample (usually urine, blood, or breath).

Why might Biological Monitoring be helpful?

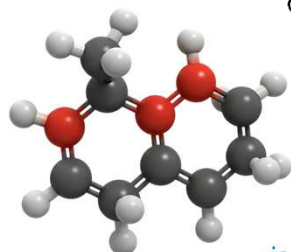
Biological monitoring has several roles in exposure assessment. Some situations where it might prove useful include checking that control measures are working, checking that work practices are protective, or to ensure that training is understood and followed.



What

sort of sample may be required?

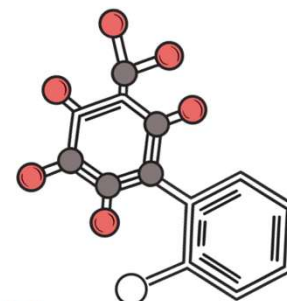
In most cases, urine samples are the best way to determine if an individual has been exposed to a chemical or compound. Occasionally, a blood, breath or hair sample may be the best way to take a sample.



Why

should I provide a sample?

Your employer will explain this. It may only be taken with your informed consent. If you have a concern about the use to which a sample might be put, please raise it with your employer or your OH advisor.



When

is the best time to provide a sample?

Some chemicals need to be sampled within a specific time frame after you have been exposed, however this is quite unusual.

For most chemicals, the general guidance is that a sample should be provided near the end of a shift and near the end of a working week (or work period).

How

should I go about providing a sample?

In the case of a urine sample, you will be told when it is required (usually near the end of a shift). You should be given a clean container that you will need to write your name and date of birth on. This should be provided in a resealable plastic bag.

What happens next?

The sample will be sent to the laboratory for analysis. This can take some time (sometimes several weeks). Once the results have been received by your OH provider, they will be reviewed by an Occupational Health Physician who will decide if they are within safe limits and when they should be checked again.

What do the actual numbers mean?

Your employer or OH advisor should explain how to interpret your results and what action should be taken as a result.

Further information regarding Biological Monitoring may be found on the HSE website:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg167.htm>

A copy of this & other documentation can be found from <https://mohs.co.uk/resources> or using the QR code at the top of this page.

