



نظام الشارقة للسلامة والصحة المهنية
Occupational Safety & Health Sharjah

حكومة الشارقة
هيئة الوقاية والسلامة
Government of Sharjah
Prevention & Safety Authority



Code of Practice

Management of OSH Illness and Disease

OSHJ-Cop-14

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1 Introduction

An occupational illness or disease is any chronic ailment that occurs, typically over a prolonged period as a result of workplace hazards or work activities. It is an aspect of occupational safety and health which needs to be managed to protect employees from illness and disease.

Occupational illness and disease can consist of the following, including but not limited to:

- Respiratory diseases.
- Skin diseases.
- Asbestos related disease.
- Cancer.
- Noise induced hearing damage.
- Hand-arm vibration syndrome.
- Stress.

2 Purpose and Scope

This Code of Practice (CoP) has been developed to provide information to entities to assist them in complying with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health System in Sharjah.

This Code of Practice (CoP) defines the minimum acceptable requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health System in Sharjah, and entities can apply practices higher than, but not lower than those mentioned in this document, as they demonstrate the lowest acceptable level of compliance in the Emirate of Sharjah.

3 Definitions and Abbreviations

Entities:	Government Entities: Government departments, authorities or establishments and the like in the Emirate. Private Entities: Establishments, companies, enterprises and economic activities operating in the Emirate in general.
Risk:	Is the combination of likelihood of the hazard causing the loss and the severity of that loss (consequences).
Risk Assessment:	The systematic identification of workplace hazards and evaluation of the risks associated. This process takes existing control measures into account and identifies and recommends further control measures where required.
Hazard:	Anything that has the potential to cause harm or loss (injury, disease, ill-health, property damage etc).
Competence:	The combination of training, skills, experience and knowledge that a person has and their ability to apply all of them to perform their work.
WBV:	Whole Body Vibration.

HAV:	Hand-arm Vibration.
HAVS:	Hand-arm Vibration Syndrome.
VWF:	Vibration White Finger.
Health Surveillance:	Health surveillance is any activity that involves gathering information about an employees' health to help protect them from health risks at work.
Manufacturer's Manual:	The instructions, procedures and recommendations provided by the manufacturer to ensure the safe operation, maintenance and repair of the equipment.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Employer Responsibilities

- Undertake a risk assessment, identify hazards, assess the risks to safety and health and identify adequate control measures.
- Ensure that the adequate control measures identified during risk assessment are in place to prevent risks to employees' safety and health.
- Ensure potential exposure to employees is below the workplace exposure limit.
- Ensure health surveillance is introduced where the risk assessment indicates there is a risk to the health of employees, or employees have been exposed to risks in excess of workplace exposure limit.
- Ensure a rehabilitation and return work policy is implemented.
- Provide employees with information, instruction, supervision and training.
- Provide employees with suitable personal protective equipment.

4.2 Employee Responsibilities

- Not endanger themselves or others.
- Follow precautionary control measures to ensure work activities are performed safely and without risk to health.
- Cooperate with the entity and receive safety information, instruction, supervision and training.
- Report any illness or disease which is likely to endanger the safety and health of themselves or that of any other person.

5 Requirements

The entity shall ensure that occupational illness and disease is managed to reduce health risks to employees.

The entity must plan their work activities, ensuring they are appropriately supervised and carried out safely and without risk to health. Planning includes conducting a risk assessment,

implementing adequate control measures and providing employees with adequate information, instruction, supervision and training.

5.1 Noise

The entity shall ensure that workplace noise exposure to employees does not introduce risks of hearing damage that is permanent and disabling.

Noise exposure in the workplace can cause hearing damage that is permanent and disabling. Hearing damage can be gradual, from exposure to noise over time, but damage can also be caused by sudden and extremely loud noises.

Excessive noise in the workplace can interfere with communications and make warnings harder to hear. It can also reduce the employee's awareness of their surroundings. These factors can lead to safety risks, putting people at risk of injury or death.

5.1.1 Risk Assessment

The entity shall take practical and reasonable steps to protect the hearing of employees and others who may be affected in the workplace and surrounding areas, including but not limited to:

- Conduct a noise risk assessment and identify the type, level and duration of the noise, and who is likely to be affected by exposure to noise in the workplace.
- Estimate employees exposure to noise and determine if it exceeds the workplace exposure limit.
- Identify control measures that are required to eliminate or reduce noise exposure to below the workplace exposure limit.
- Identify employees who require information, instruction, supervision and training.
- Identify employees who need to be provided with health surveillance, where there is a risk to health.

Further information on risk assessment can be found in OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control.

5.1.2 Workplace Exposure Limit

The workplace exposure limit is a noise exposure level at which the entity shall take steps to reduce the harmful effects of noise on hearing.

The workplace exposure limit is a daily or weekly average noise exposure of 85 dB (Decibels).

5.1.3 Control Measures

The entity shall consider ways of reducing noise and noise exposure by introducing practical, effective actions to control noise risks.

Where noise exceeds the workplace exposure limit, the entity shall take all reasonably practicable measures to reduce noise exposure, other than the provision to employees of hearing protection.

The entity shall control noise using the following order of priority:

- Eliminate the risks from noise.

- Control the risk of noise at source.
- Control along transmission path:
 - The behaviour of sound at interfaces, including transmission, reflection, and absorption.
 - Sound reduction and absorption coefficients and their use in materials selection.
 - Techniques of damping, isolation, diffusion, barriers, acoustic enclosures, distance.
- Control exposure at the receiver, including acoustic havens, hearing protection zones, and personal protective equipment, limiting exposure time and health surveillance.
- Quieter equipment or using a different, quieter process.
- Engineering/technical controls to reduce, at source, the noise produced by equipment or process.
- Screens, barriers, enclosures and absorbent materials to reduce the noise on its path to the people exposed.
- Designing and laying out the workplace to create quiet workstations.
- Improved working techniques to reduce noise levels.
- Identify hearing protection zones, which are areas of the workplace where access is restricted, and ensure mandatory signage indicating personal hearing protection is compulsory.
- Appropriate maintenance programmes for:
 - work equipment
 - workplace
 - workplace systems
- Limitation of the duration and intensity of exposure to noise.
- Appropriate work schedules with adequate rest periods.
- Where the risk of noise remains, provide for the use of personal protective equipment.

Measures that give ongoing or medium and long-term benefits, include but not limited to:

- A low-noise purchasing policy for machinery and equipment.
- Adequate regular maintenance of machinery and equipment that takes account of noise.

5.1.4 Personal Hearing Protection

The entity shall ensure hearing protection shall be issued to employees where extra protection is needed above what has been achieved using noise control measures, or as a short-term measure, while other methods of controlling noise are being developed.

There are two main types of hearing protection:

- Earplugs - These fit into or cover the ear canal, to form a seal. They sometimes have a cord or neckband to prevent them being lost and can be permanent, reusable or disposable.
- Earmuffs - These are normally hard plastic cups, which fit over and surround the ears. They are sealed to the head by cushion seals. The inner surfaces of the cups are covered with a sound absorbing material, usually soft plastic foam. They can be headband or helmet mounted and some can have communication equipment built into them.

The entity shall ensure that hearing protection is only used where risks to hearing remain despite the implementation of other measures to control the noise, or, while those other measures are being developed or implemented, including but not limited to:

- Provide employees with hearing protectors and ensure they use them correctly when noise exposure exceeds the workplace exposure limit.
- Ensure hearing protection is correctly worn, where required, and is properly fitted or inserted correctly.
- Provide adequate information, instruction, supervision and training.

5.1.5 Training

The entity shall ensure employees are provided with adequate information on noise.

The entity shall provide employees with training in languages and in a format that employees understand, including but not limited to:

- Noise exposure and the risks to hearing.
- Health risks from exposure to noise.
- Control measures in place to control risks and exposure.
- Signs and symptoms of noise exposure and hearing loss.
- How to select, fit, use and maintain hearing protection.
- How to identify and report defects in noise-control equipment and hearing protection.
- Locations in the workplace where the risk from exposure to noise exists and hearing protection is mandatory.

Further information on training can be found in OSHJ-GL-08: Training and Competence.

5.2 Vibration

The entity shall ensure the workplace vibration exposure to employees does not introduce risks of vibration that is permanent and disabling.

There are two types of vibration: Whole-Body Vibration and Hand-Arm Vibration.

Whole-Body Vibration - Is transmitted through the seat or feet of employees who drive mobile machines, or other work vehicles, over rough and uneven surfaces as a main part of their job. Large shocks and jolts may cause health risks including back pain.

Hand-Arm Vibration - Is transmitted via employees' hand contact with a vibrating tool or work process which is a regular part of an employee's work activity. Hand-arm vibration can cause a range of conditions collectively known as hand-arm vibration syndrome and vibration white finger.

The greater the exposure to vibration, the more likely there is for damage to occur. Increased exposure could be due to being exposed to greater magnitudes of vibration or being exposed for longer durations.

5.2.1 Risk Assessment

The entity is required to assess the risks associated with vibration and take all reasonably practicable precautions to ensure the safety and health of employees and others who could be affected by work activities involving vibration.

As part of the risk assessment, the entity shall identify sources of vibration and assess the daily exposure of employees to vibration, including but not limited to:

- Observing work practices.
- Refer to information on the probable level of vibration corresponding to the equipment used in those particular conditions.
- If necessary, arrange for vibration levels to be measured.
- Assess whether any employee is likely to be exposed to vibration at or above the workplace exposure limit.

The risk assessment shall take into consideration the following factors, including but not limited to:

- The magnitude, type and duration of exposure to vibration, including intermittent vibration and repeated shocks.
- The effects that the vibration might have on employees whose health is particularly at risk from exposure.
- Any effects that vibration might have with regard to work equipment, including:
 - The proper handling of controls.
 - The reading of indicators.
 - The stability of structures.
 - The security of joints.
- Any information on equipment vibration provided by the manufacturer's manual.
- The availability of alternative equipment that is designed to reduce exposure to vibration.
- Exposure of employees to whole-body vibration when not working.
- Specific working conditions, such as working in low temperatures.
- The availability of appropriate information obtained from health surveillance.

The entity shall regularly review the risk assessment, especially in circumstances where:

- There is reason to believe that it is no longer valid.
- There has been a significant change in the work activity to which the assessment applies.
- Changes to the risk assessment are implemented as identified by the review process.

5.2.2 Workplace Exposure Limit

The workplace exposure limit is a vibration exposure level at which the entity shall take steps to reduce the harmful effects of vibration.

Hand arm vibration daily exposure limit is 5 metres per second squared (5 m/s² A(8)).

Whole body Vibration daily exposure limit is 1.15 metres per second squared (1.15 m/s² A(8)).

5.2.3 Control measures

The entity shall ensure that the employees' exposure to vibration is either eliminated or reduced so far as is reasonably practicable.

Where vibration cannot be eliminated the entity shall introduce control measures, including but not limited to:

- Alternative methods of carrying out the work that eliminate or reduce employees' exposure to vibration.
- Choice of work equipment that, because of its design or features, or the nature of the work to be done, produces the least possible vibration.
- The provision of ancillary equipment that reduces the risk of injury being caused by vibration.
- Adequate maintenance arrangements for the work equipment, workplace and workplace systems.
- The design and layout of workplaces and workstations.
- Suitable and sufficient information, instruction, supervision and training for employees so that they may use the equipment safely and correctly in order to minimise their exposure to vibration.
- Limiting the duration and intensity of the vibration.
- Appropriate work schedules with adequate rest periods .
- The provision of clothing to protect employees from cold and damp conditions.
- Arranging for operatives to stay warm by providing heating for the workplace where needed and possible, together with suitable clothing and gloves.
- Ensuring that any new tools have vibration control measures built in.
- The reduction of vibration transmission in the path between the source and the handles or other surfaces gripped by operatives' hands.

- The minimisation of the amount of force required to apply and control the tools, and keeping them in good working order.

5.2.4 Training

The entity shall ensure employees are provided with adequate information on vibration.

The entity shall provide employees with training in languages and in a format that employees understand, including but not limited to:

- How vibration is managed in the workplace.
- Vibration workplace exposure limits.
- The significant findings of the risk assessments.
- How to identify signs and symptoms of vibration related illness or injury.
- How to report and obtain treatment for vibration related illness or injury.
- The entitlement to health surveillance.
- The safe systems of work in place to minimise employees' exposure to vibration.
- The collective results of any health surveillance undertaken.

5.3 Infectious Disease

The entity shall ensure that all job tasks and work environments where employees may be exposed to infectious diseases are identified and documented.

Infectious diseases or communicable diseases are caused by pathogenic microorganisms including bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi. The diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another, including but not limited to:

Bloodborne diseases - Are transmitted by bloodborne pathogens through contact with infected blood or certain bodily fluids. Exposure to infected blood or bodily fluids can occur through needle stick injury or blood splashes.

Contact diseases - Are transmitted through either direct or indirect contact with pathogens. Direct contact involves personal contact transmission, while indirect contact involves touching an object contaminated by an infected person. Disease transmission can also occur via contaminated food or water.

Airborne Diseases - Are spread through the air, employees can contract a disease by breathing in air contaminated with pathogens. Airborne diseases can occur anywhere in the population. therefore, employees across all sectors of industries can be at risk.

Zoonotic Diseases - Are caused by infectious agents, zoonoses, which are transmitted between animals and humans through contact with skin, contact with saliva, via the air, or through bites.

5.3.1 Risk Assessment

The entity is required to assess the risks associated with all identified infectious diseases and take all reasonably practicable precautions to ensure the safety and health of employees and others who could be affected.

As part of the risk assessment, the entity shall assess the exposure of employees to infectious disease, including but not limited to:

- Assess infections with the highest probability and potential for harm.
- Assess how employees may be harmed.
- Assess the possible routes of infection.
- Assess the likelihood of illness and decide if existing control measures are adequate.
- Emergency preparedness and response.

5.3.2 Control Measures

The entity shall introduce adequate control measures where there is a risk of exposure to infectious disease, the following measures to prevent or control risks apply, including but not limited to:

- Prohibit eating, drinking, smoking and the application of cosmetics in working areas where there is a risk of contamination.
- Prevent puncture wounds, cuts and abrasions, especially in the presence of blood and body fluids.
- Cover all breaks in exposed skin by using waterproof dressings and suitable gloves.
- Where possible avoid use of, or exposure to, sharps such as needles, glass, metal etc, or if unavoidable take care in handling and disposal.
- Use devices incorporating safety features, such as safer needle devices and blunt-ended scissors.
- Protect the eyes and mouth by using suitable face protection and a mask, where splashing is possible.
- Avoid contamination by using water-resistant protective clothing.
- Wear rubber boots or plastic disposable overshoes when the floor or ground is likely to be contaminated.
- Use good basic hygiene practices, such as hand washing.
- Control contamination of surfaces by containment and using appropriate decontamination procedures.
- Dispose of contaminated waste safely.

5.3.3 Training

The entity shall ensure employees are provided with adequate information on infectious disease.

The entity shall provide employees with training in languages and in a format that employees understand, including but not limited to:

- How infectious disease is managed in the workplace.

- The significant findings of the risk assessments.
- How to identify signs and symptoms of infectious disease.
- How to report and obtain treatment for infectious disease.
- The entitlement to health surveillance.
- The safe systems of work in place to minimise employees' exposure to infectious disease.

5.4 Drugs and Alcohol

The entity shall ensure that employees who are misusing drugs and/or alcohol or any other substance which can affect safety, health and work performance are identified, as part of the overall management of risk.

Drugs or alcohol taken outside the workplace can affect employees' performance long after the substance is consumed. The indirect effects of alcohol and drug problems on employees' actions within the workplace can also be severe.

The misuse of alcohol or drugs by employees may be identified in a variety of different ways. The following actions by employees may indicate that a problem exists, including but not limited to:

- Absenteeism without notice.
- Poor time-keeping.
- High incident levels.
- Tendency to become confused and disorientated.
- Poor performance of work duties.
- Irritability or aggression, argumentative with work colleagues.
- Misconduct.
- Failure to remember, or failure to comply with, common instructions.
- A sudden need for increased supervision.
- Finding empty alcohol cans, bottles or drug-related paraphernalia.

5.4.1 Developing a Drugs and Alcohol Policy

The entity shall develop a drugs and alcohol policy as part of the overall management of risk and control for the entity. A drugs and alcohol policy shall contain the following, including but not limited to:

- A clear statement of the behaviour that is expected of employees.
- The policy is applied equally to all employees, including managers and supervisors, at the workplace.
- The policy is an integrated part of an overall safety and health policy.

- The policy includes clear statements on the roles and responsibilities of all employees in relation to the policy.
- Employees with a problem are encouraged to come forward under a promise of strict confidentiality and future support.
- State the conduct likely to result in action being taken under the policy.
- Provide for appropriate treatment and rehabilitation for those with problems.
- Be evaluated after implementation and amended, if necessary, in line with the outcome of the evaluation.

The entity shall ensure that all employees are aware of the policy, the policy is likely to be proportionate if:

- It is implemented to protect and promote employee safety.
- Employees are aware of the policy.
- The process of collecting, transporting and testing samples can be proven to be independent and beyond reproach.
- Employees will know what the entity will do with the test results.
- The entity has no other reasonable alternative way of obtaining the same result.

5.4.2 Drugs and Alcohol Screening

Where the entity has identified that the use of drugs and alcohol is a risk to safety critical operations, particularly in certain jobs where employees make safety-critical decisions like drivers, pilots and some machinery operators. In tasks like these the misuse of drugs or alcohol could have disastrous effects for employees, colleagues, members of the public and the environment.

The entity can adopt drugs and alcohol screening as part of the drugs and alcohol policy. Before any decision is taken by the entity to implement a drugs or alcohol screening regime, the entity shall ensure, the drugs and alcohol policy is fully established and communicated to all employees.

There are a variety of testing options available to the entity, including but not limited to:

Recruitment screening - Refers to testing or assessing the health of potential employees during the recruitment process.

Routine testing - Is conducted at specified times, and gives a clear message that it is not acceptable to be affected by drugs or alcohol when working.

Random testing - Is used as a deterrent to identify previously undetected drug or alcohol misusers.

Reason or 'With Cause' testing - Could be used if a manager has reason to believe that an employee has been using drugs or drinking. It may also form a part of a post-incident or incident investigation.

Rehabilitation testing - Could be used where an employee has agreed to treatment and the treatment provider is testing to ensure compliance with a prescription. Testing may be introduced as part of a return to work agreement between employees and the entity.

5.4.3 Disciplinary Procedures

The entity should have a disciplinary procedure in place, the procedure should cover the consumption of drugs or alcohol in the workplace and in what instances employees would be reported to the police.

For the drugs and alcohol policy to be effective, it is essential that it is consistent with disciplinary procedures.

Employees with a substance misuse problem or suspected of misusing drugs or alcohol shall have the same rights to confidentiality and support as they would if they had any other medical condition.

5.4.4 Training

The entity shall ensure employees are provided with adequate information on the drugs and alcohol policy.

The entity shall provide employees with training in languages and in a format that employees understand, including but not limited to:

- Supervisors and managers are able effectively identify and be able to address drug or alcohol misuse problems and how to effectively raise the issue with employees.
- How to report instances of misuse of drugs or alcohol.
- Details on the drugs and alcohol policy.
- Details on when drugs and alcohol screening may be performed.
- Disciplinary procedures.

5.5 Work Related Stress

The entity shall ensure that all job tasks and work environments where employees may be exposed to work related stress are identified and documented.

Stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them. There is a clear distinction between work pressure, which can create a feeling of excitement and be motivating, and stress, which occurs when this pressure becomes excessive.

5.5.1 Risk Assessment

The entity shall take reasonable steps to identify and minimise the causes of work-related stress, including but not limited to:

- Identifying and assessing risks of work-related stress.
- Implementing appropriate control measures to manage work-related stress.
- Provide appropriate resources, where required to implement and maintain appropriate stress control measures.
- Provide information, instruction, supervision and training on stress management to managers and supervisors.

5.5.2 Control Measures

The main focus of the work-related stress program is to address issues that are likely to be potential sources of stress for groups of employees. The entity shall develop ways for employees to raise their concerns. These shall include the following, but are not limited to:

- Create an environment where employees are encouraged to talk, both formally and informally, to their manager or another person in their management chain.
- Remind employees that they can speak to safety and health representatives or human resources personnel.
- Encourage employees to talk to someone in the entity or seek advice from occupational health advisors, or a medical professional if they are concerned about their health.
- Introduce mentoring and other forms of employee support:
- Provide employee assistance or counselling services.

The entity shall react to employee concerns and generate action towards limiting the harm to the employee when it is directly drawn to their attention and it shall be clear who has the responsibility to progress the report or complaint of work-related stress, including but not limited to:

- Speak to the person involved, to find out what has led to the complaint, and what can be done about it.
- Where the stress is serious, fault is identified, and things have clearly gone beyond what the line manager can deal with, they can request for expert assistance.
- When the complaint involves relationship issues with the line manager, or other team members, it can be useful to involve human resources, occupational health and a representative for the employee when working through the problem.
- Where it is possible to identify a clearly work-related problem, it is essential to rectify the situation as swiftly as possible, even if this involves compromise on either side. It is much easier to intervene successfully when the employee remains at work, than after they have gone off on sick leave.
- The entity is not legally responsible for stress that is generated in the home but shall have arrangements to address this and provide access to:
 - Counselling.
 - Adaptation to work.
 - Changes to working hours.

5.5.3 Training

The entity shall ensure employees are provided with adequate information on work related stress.

The entity shall provide employees with training in languages and in a format that employees understand, including but not limited to:

- How work related stress is managed in the workplace.
- The significant findings of the management standards approach.
- How to identify and avoid potential situations where work related stress risks may be increased.
- How to report instances of work related stress.

5.6 Violence and Aggression

Violence and aggression can be defined as, “any incident where staff are abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, wellbeing or health”.

Violence and aggression can occur in the workplace in a range of forms, including verbal abuse, threats and physical assault, these actions can cause physical and psychological harm while posing the risk of short-term and long-term consequences for the entity.

Acts of violence and aggression can manifest between employees, customers, and members of the public.

The entity shall ensure they identify the sources of violence and aggression which could affect their employee’s occupational health, including but not limited to:

- External violence - Associated with robbery or other crimes and the offender is someone from outside the workplace.
- Service-related violence - Arises when providing services to clients, customers, patients or prisoners and occurs within the workplace.
- Internal violence - Can occur between two or more employees, or between employers and employees.

5.6.1 Risk Assessment

The entity is required to assess the risks associated with violence and aggression and take all reasonably practicable precautions to ensure the safety and health of employees and others who could be affected by violence and aggression.

The risk assessment shall take into consideration the following factors, including but not limited to:

- Assessing occurrence of workplace violence and aggression.
- The factors that generate workplace violence and aggression.
- Assess whether violence and aggression is occurring in employee accommodation.
- Workplace design and layout.
- Distribution of the workforce.
- Lone working.
- The mechanism for reporting violence and aggression.
- The information, instruction, supervision and training provided.

5.6.2 Control Measures

The entity shall develop a violence and aggression policy, detailing the entity responsibilities, as well as those of employees, to raise awareness of related issues and set standards for workplace behaviour, including but not limited to:

- A clear statement to employees and service users that violence and aggression will not be tolerated and will be treated as disciplinary offences - up to and including dismissal or, if appropriate, criminal action - together with information on how to report violence and aggression.
- Define what constitutes unacceptable behaviour on the part of managers/other employees as well as service users or members of the public.
- Provide a statement of the overall approach to preventing and dealing with the risks of violence and aggression, including training.
- Provide advice to employees on relevant legislation applicable to their responsibilities within the workplace.
- Ensure that all parties involved will receive an impartial hearing and fair treatment and that the dignity and privacy of all will be protected.
- Ensure that false or malicious accusations will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action.
- Specify what support is available to the victim(s).
- Include information as to how the policy is to be implemented, reviewed and monitored.

5.6.3 Training

The entity shall ensure employees are provided with adequate information on violence and aggression.

The entity shall provide employees with training in languages and in a format that employees understand, including but not limited to:

- How violence and aggression is managed in the workplace.
- The significant findings of the risk assessments.
- How to identify and avoid potential situations where violence and aggression risks may be increased.
- How to report instances of violence and aggression.
- The safe systems of work in place to minimise employees' exposure to violence and aggression.

5.7 Health Surveillance

The entity shall ensure health surveillance is undertaken where the risk assessment and/or occupational hygiene assessments have been undertaken to assess the extent of exposure. The entity shall consider health surveillance after all other control measures have been implemented to control exposure to an acceptable level.

Health surveillance shall be implemented where:

- There is a risk to the health of employees who have exceed workplace exposure limits.
- Those employees are likely to be exposed to illness and disease at or above the workplace exposure limits.
- The entity shall ensure that those employees are placed under suitable health surveillance, where appropriate.

Health surveillance will be appropriate if:

- A link can be established between workplace exposure limits and an identifiable disease or any other adverse effect on health.
- It is probable that the disease or other effect on health may occur during specific working conditions.
- There are valid ways of detecting the disease or other effect on health.

The entity shall:

- Ensure that a record is kept and maintained for each employee who undergoes health surveillance and that records are readily available in a suitable form.
- Allow employees to see their health surveillance records upon being given reasonable notice.

Where, as a result of health surveillance, an employee is found to have an identifiable disease or other adverse effect on health, which is considered by a medical professional to be the result of exposure to illness and disease, the entity shall ensure:

- That the employee is informed by a suitably qualified person, including advice regarding a need for further health surveillance and medical screening/examination, if required.
- That the employee is informed of any significant findings of the health surveillance, allowing for medical confidentiality.
- Review the risk assessment.
- Review existing control measures, taking into account any advice given by a medical professional.
- Consider reassigning the employee to other work where there is no risk from further exposure, taking into account any advice given as above.
- That the health of any other employee/s who has been similarly exposed is reviewed, including the provision of a medical examination when recommended by a medical professional.

The frequency of health surveillance will depend on the results of the risk assessment and the type of safety measures implemented.

Where safety measures are fully implemented and are demonstrated to be highly effective in controlling risks to health and ensuring that there is no likelihood of health effects, then health surveillance will not be required.

5.7.1 Training

The entity shall ensure employees are provided with adequate information on health surveillance.

The entity shall provide employees with training in languages and in a format that employees understand, including but not limited to:

- The entity procedures and technical measures taken to eliminate or control exposure to illness and disease.
- Workplace exposure limits.
- What circumstances health surveillance can be implemented.
- Employees' entitlement to health surveillance.
- How to avoid and reduce risk of exposure to illness and disease.
- Collective results of any health surveillance carried out.

5.8 Rehabilitation and Return to Work

Rehabilitation should be part of the entity strategy on employees' safety, health and wellbeing, the aim should be to tackle the causes of work related ill health and injury, getting involved before absence occurs, and through health promotion encourage employees to take responsibility for their own health.

Rehabilitation has two main aims:

- To help employees return to work after an illness or disability.
- To help employees with chronic health conditions stay in work.

Good rehabilitation practice involves employers, managers, employees and a range of other professionals working together to find solutions to achieving these aims. The methods they use include medical intervention and making changes to the workplace.

5.8.1 Developing a Rehabilitation and Return to Work Policy

The entity shall develop a rehabilitation and return to work policy as part of the overall management of risk and control for the entity. The minimum requirements of a rehabilitation and return to work policy, including but not limited to:

- The policy is clear and understood by all employees.
- Where a health insurance policy from a licensed health insurance provider is not provided, the entity shall cover all costs directly.
- A reporting process to inform the entity when injury/illness occurs in the workplace.
- A process for communicating with the employee and the medical practitioner treating the injury/illness.

- Roles and responsibilities of the entity, managers, supervisors and employees.
- A process for the entity and the employee to determine and agree suitable duties when returning to work.
- A process for monitoring rehabilitation.
- A process for referring cases to the relevant authority where injury, illness or disease result in, or likely to result in partial/total disability or death.
- Provide information, instruction, supervision and training to all employees.
- A process ensuring the employee suffering from injury, illness or disease is not dismissed from employment solely or mainly because of injury, illness or disease as Per Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation regulations, which includes Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021.

5.8.2 Provision of Suitable Return to Work Duties

The entity shall make reasonable adjustments within the workplace and allocate suitable duties for the employee to return to work during rehabilitation, including but not limited to:

- A phased return to work, building up the employee strength and gradually increasing the hours of work.
- Changing working hours to allow for flexible working to support work-life balance.
- Allowing the employee to work from home.
- Time off work to attend medical treatment and assessment.
- Modifying or moving their workstation.
- Modifying work tasks, reduce the pace of work, increase break times.
- Provide additional information, instruction, supervision and training.

5.8.3 Training

The entity shall ensure employees are provided with adequate information on rehabilitation and return to work.

The entity shall provide employees with training in languages and in a format that employees understand, including but not limited to:

- The support the entity will provide to employees.
- Details of the rehabilitation and return to work policy.
- The process for employees returning to work.
- Provision of suitable return to work duties.

5.9 Record Keeping

The entity shall ensure that appropriate records of exposure monitoring, health surveillance, medical examination and consultation records are retained.

6 References

OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control

OSHJ-GL-08: Training and Competence

7 Document Amendment Record

TITLE	Management of OSH Illness and Disease		
DOCUMENT AMENDMENT RECORD			
Version	Revision Date	Amendment Details	Pages Affected
1	15 SEP 2021	New Document	N/A
2	24 June 2024	Change to the guideline code (OSHJ-GL-26 to OSHJ-GL-08)	7
2	24 June 2024	Risk Register Added	25
2	24 June 2024	Checklist Added	28,29,30,31

APPENDIX 1. Risk Register

Some manuals within Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System include a sample risk register as an advisory document that entities can emulate. The examples listed in this sample may not be directly applicable to every entity; however, they serve as illustrative cases to enhance understanding of the methods used to evaluate activities within the entity, potential risks, and possible consequences. The sample demonstrates how to assess risks by calculating their likelihood and consequences.

Some manuals present this sample to emphasize the importance of risk monitoring, evaluation, and the implementation of appropriate control measures. It is unacceptable for an auditor from the Prevention and Safety Authority to find any entity engaging in hazardous activities without a thorough risk assessment process. We can anticipate and prevent workplace risks, and the risk monitoring process is not complex. Therefore, this appendix aims to provide a sample that aids in the monitoring, evaluation, and implementation of control measures, monitoring residual risks, and defining tasks and responsibilities for managing hazards.

Every government entity or private establishment has its unique nature of work and environment, which contain risks specific to its operations. Hence, each entity should develop its monitoring procedures based on this appendix. We can develop more detailed assessment tools beyond what this sample presents. As stipulated by Executive Council Resolution No. (15) of 2021 regarding the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System, employers are required to identify all foreseeable workplace hazards, assess the risk of injury or illness to workers, and implement consistent preventive measures to ensure workers' safety, health, and well-being. The same resolution also holds employers responsible for their employees, contractors, visitors, and anyone affected by the employer's activities. Therefore, this sample recommends including these individuals in the risk assessment process.



Activity/task	Dangers	Consequences	Existing control measures	Risk			Additional control measures	Residual risks			Executing person	Administrator: Date:
				L	C	R		L	C	R-R		
Operating Vibrating Machinery	Prolonged exposure to vibrating machinery	Hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS), musculoskeletal disorders	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Provide adequate training on safe machine operation. Use anti-vibration gloves and maintain equipment regularly.	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Vehicle Operation	Driving heavy vehicles or machinery	Whole-body vibration (WBV), back injuries	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Ensure vehicles are properly maintained. Implement shock-absorbing seats and provide ergonomic training for drivers.	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Construction Work	Using jackhammers or other vibrating equipment	Hand-arm vibration syndrome (HAVS), injuries	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Use tools with low vibration levels. Rotate workers and provide adequate rest periods. Provide personal protective equipment (PPE).	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Food Storage	Storing food at improper temperatures	Bacterial growth and food poisoning	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Maintain proper and consistent storage temperatures	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Food Preparation	Cross-contamination between raw and cooked foods	Food poisoning	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Use separate kitchen tools for raw and cooked foods	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Cooking Food	Undercooking food	Foodborne illnesses	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Ensure food reaches safe internal temperatures	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]
Handling Food Waste	Waste accumulation attracts pests	Disease transmission via pests	-	[1-5]	[1-5]	L x C	Effective waste management and regular cleaning	[1-5]	[1-5]	Existing control measures – risk (R) = residual risk (R-R)	-	[Date]

APPENDIX 2. Checklist

The checklist is used by Prevention and Safety Authority to monitor compliance levels during audit and inspection operations; it is not intended for use by government entities or private establishments.

Every code of practice or guideline published by the Prevention and Safety Authority within the Sharjah occupational safety and health system contains requirements that employers in the Emirate of Sharjah must comply with. Each manual includes an inspection checklist that summarizes the essential items used by the SPSA auditor to verify that government entities or private establishments comply with the manual's requirements. Auditors can add additional essential items as necessary. The inspection checklist also includes a manual reference for each essential item, as well as a sample of acceptable compliance evidence for each item. The SPSA's auditor may request additional compliance evidence based on the item's condition, as well as the severity and potential impact of non-compliance.

The SPSA's auditor uses the inspection checklist to provide a comprehensive report on the entity's status. We will use the same checklist to monitor manual standard violations. Non-compliance with these standards constitutes a violation of Executive Council Resolution No. 15 of 2021 regarding the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System. If the SPSA's auditor detects non-compliance, they can issue violations based on the approved violation list.

In this manual, the SPSA provides information and standards that employers conducting activities in the Emirate of Sharjah must adhere to. This is to ensure the safety of workers, property, and the environment. Adhering to the requirements of this manual helps improve the level of occupational safety and health at the workplace, and it shields private establishments from potential violations or financial penalties for non-compliance.

The Emirate of Sharjah's Executive Council Resolution stipulates that employers must exercise due diligence to ensure the safety and health of workers, contractors, visitors, and all those affected by the employer's activities. To avoid non-compliance, employers must ensure adherence to the Sharjah Occupational Safety and Health System requirements. Entities should develop their procedures and inspection checklists according to their activities, nature of work, and risk level.

Depending on recorded or reported incidents, and as necessary, the SPSA may amend the requirements in this manual. As a result, the attached inspection checklist may change. Occupational safety and health practitioners must stay up-to-date on published standards and any changes to the inspection checklist attached to each manual.

Audit/Inspection Checklist

Code Title	Management of osh illness and disease	Code No.	OSHJ-CoP-14	Rev. No.	2.0
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Sr.	Checklist Item	Clause in the Code	Acceptable means of compliance
1	Is there a proper arrangement for hearing protection from noise? Is there a noise risk assessment?	5.1, 5.1.1, 5.1.3: Noise, Risk Assessment, Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Copy of noise risk assessment – Copy of Noise Monitoring Record – Copy of Noise Permit
2	Are workers provided with the best form of hearing protection? Is there a noise risk assessment?	5.1.3: Personal Hearing Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Check for PPE compliance. – Check availability of hearing protection (Earplugs and Earmuffs)
3	Are all employees trained and competent for use ear muffs or ear plugs?	5.1.4: Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Copy of the training records/certificates
4	Is there a vibration risk assessment?	5.2, 5.2.1, 5.2.3: Vibration, Risk Assessment, Control Measures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Copy of Vibration analysis report – Copy of vibration RA
5	Are employees have enough information about vibration?	5.2.4: Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Copy of the training records/certificates
6	Is the infection disease identified and controlled?	5.3,5.3.1;5.3.2: Infection Disease, Risk Assessment, Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Copy of Infectious RA – Copy of infectious disease reports – Visual verification – Wear rubber boots or plastic disposable overshoes when

Sr.	Checklist Item	Clause in the Code	Acceptable means of compliance
			<p>the floor or ground is likely to be contaminated;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Use good basic hygiene practices, such as hand washing
7	Is there a disciplinary procedure for drug and alcohol policy?	5.4, 5.4.1, 5.4.2, 5.4.3: Drugs and Alcohol, Developing a Drugs and Alcohol Policy, Drugs and Alcohol Screening, Disciplinary Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Check disciplinary procedure in-line with policy
8	Are the employees provided with information on drugs and alcohol misuse?	5.4.4: Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Check pamphlets / training records / communication channels for training
9	Is there a risk assessment on work-related stress?	5.5, 5.5.1: Risk Assessment, Work Related Stress	<p>Copy of RA that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Job tasks exposed to work stress – Causes of work-related stress precautions
10	Is there a provision for employees to raise their safety concerns?	5.5.2 : Control Measures	<p>Check for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Email system – Software system – Written reports on safety concerns – Safety cards – Action plans for comments / concerns
11	Are the employees provided with information on work-related stress?	5.5.3: Training	<p>Check</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – pamphlets – training record

Sr.	Checklist Item	Clause in the Code	Acceptable means of compliance
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> communication channels for training with languages employees understand
12	Is there a risk assessment on violence and aggression incidents?	5.6, 5.6.1: Violence And Aggression, Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of RA that includes: Distribution of workforce Provision for reporting violent acts Factors that generate workplace violence and aggression
13	Is there a policy that tolerates violence and aggression incidents?	5.6.2 : Control Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of policy
14	Are the employees provided with information on violence and aggression in the workplace?	5.6.3 : Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check pamphlets / training records / communication channels for training with languages employees understand
15	Is there a system of ongoing health checks for employees?	5.7: Health Surveillance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of Risk assessment including all health risks in the workplace Check for health surveillance records in suitable format.
16	Are the employees provided with information on their health checks and the health surveillance system?	5.7.1: Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training records / documentation
17	Is there a return-to-work policy?	5.8.1 : Developing a Rehabilitation and Return to Work Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of employee return to work
18	Are there procedures for employees returning to work duties?	5.8.2 : Provision of Suitable Return to Work Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of procedures documentation or Standard Operating Procedures

Sr.	Checklist Item	Clause in the Code	Acceptable means of compliance
19	Are the employees provided with information on return-to-work policies?	5.8.3: Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Check for emails or training records
20	Are all records concerning OSH Illnesses and Diseases maintained?	5.9 : Record Keeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Check for availability of: – Exposure monitoring records – Health surveillance records – Medical Examination records – Consultation records