

Guidelines for Employee Medical Testing

(Revised 10/15/09)

The Occupational Health Program offers a wide range of medical examinations for current employees. These are designed to assist operating departments in meeting various Cal/OSHA medical screening requirements for workers exposed to environmental hazards, Federal regulatory requirements for Commercial Drivers, Title V program participants, and FBI Bomb School attendees, and to determine fitness for duty when employees are transferred to arduous special assignments.

The following overview describes OHP's recommendations for who should be tested, and how often for each medical testing program.

Cal/OSHA Medical Screening Examinations

Asbestos Medical Surveillance:

Who Should be Tested?

Employees who either remove presumed asbestos containing material (PACM), or who engage in PACM repair and maintenance operations for 30 days or more per year. Employees who do either of these activities for less than 30 days per year should not be enrolled in this program. Similarly, employees who did asbestos work in the past, but are currently not doing, nor expected to do, asbestos work for 30 days or more per year should not be enrolled in the program.

How Often?

Departments must offer* an employee an initial asbestos examination within 10 days following the 30th day of asbestos work, and then, annually while the employee continues to engage, or is expected to engage, in asbestos work for 30 days or more per year. Additionally, any employee who has been in the program at any time during his/her career with the County must be offered a "termination" examination within 30 days before or after the date of termination from employment.

*Note: Departments should have employees who wish to decline testing submit a written declination statement. A copy of this should be forwarded to the OHP for inclusion in the employee's medical record.

Crane Operator Medical:

Who Should be Tested?

Employees who currently operate cranes that have a boom length of 25 feet or more, or a maximum load rated capacity of more than 15,000 pounds.

How Often?

The medical examination is required every five years. However, the medical testing requirement can be waived for crane operators who currently hold a non-restricted Commercial Drivers License, and therefore, undergo periodic medical examinations as part of that program. However, employees holding a Commercial Drivers License with restrictions (other than wearing glasses) must be sent in for Crane Operator medical.

HAZMAT Medical:

Who Should be Tested?

All members of HAZMAT teams. Hazardous Material Specialists, defined as persons who provide technical assistance at a hazardous substance release incident, should be tested if they respond to 30 or more HAZMAT incidents per year, or wear a respirator during any part of a day for 30 or more days per year.

How Often?

The examination is required prior to assignment per CEO/OHP policy. For Hazardous Material Specialists, this is done at the time of the pre-placement exam. HAZMAT team members need to be sent to an OHP contractor for this pre-assignment evaluation (can be done in conjunction with a Fitness-for-Life medical). After the required pre-assignment exam, per Cal/OSHA a HAZMAT exam must be offered* to the employee every two years. Additionally, an exam must be offered* at termination of employment for Hazardous Material Specialists who met the criteria above at any point in their career, and all HAZMAT team members. This can be waived if the employee had a HAZMAT examination within the last six months.

*Note: Departments should have employees who wish to decline testing submit a written declination statement. A copy of this should be forwarded to the OHP for inclusion in the employee's medical record.

Hearing Conservation Evaluation:

Who Should be Tested?

Employees who are currently exposed or who are expected to be exposed to noise levels which average 85 decibels over an 8-hour day (84 decibels over a 9-hour day). Employees are included even if exposure at this level is only expected to occur one day per year. However, employees with prior noise exposure who are no longer exposed should not be included in the program.

How Often?

Departments must offer* an employee a Hearing Conservation Evaluation prior to assignment to a noisy job, and annually thereafter if noise exposures are expected to continue. A pre-placement examination for a non-clerical or administrative position may be substituted for the "prior to assignment" examination if it was done within the last year.

*Note: Departments should have employees who wish to decline testing submit a written declination statement. A copy of this should be forwarded to the OHP for inclusion in the employee's medical record.

Lead Program:

Who Should be Tested?

At the current time, only County employees who do scraping, demolition, or sandblasting of surfaces that have lead-based paint need to be included in the County's blood lead testing program. Recent environmental testing at the Sheriff's Academy indicates that exposure levels do not warrant blood lead testing of firearm instructors and maintenance personnel.

How Often?

Departments must offer* an employee an initial lead exam following the first day that they perform the construction activities described above, unless air monitoring is done and confirms that air levels of lead are acceptable. After this initial test, repeat testing must be offered* to those employees who are or may be expected to perform the construction activities described above for 30 days in any consecutive 12 months. This repeat testing must be offered* every 2 months for the first 6 months, and then every 6 months thereafter.

*Note: Departments should have employees who wish to decline testing submit a written declination statement. A copy of this should be forwarded to the OHP for inclusion in the employee's medical record.

Respirator Medical Program:

Who Should be Tested?

Employees who are trained and fit-tested to wear respiratory protective equipment. However, Deputy Sheriffs who are being trained and fit-tested to use air-purifying masks are exempted from this program.

How Often?

Prior to the initial fit-testing of the respirator. For certain [classifications](#), the Respirator Medical Exam is done at the time of the pre-placement exam. For these classes, and for employees who have been previously had a Respirator Medical, repeat medical testing is not required unless one of the following situations occur:

- An employee reports medical signs or symptoms related to respirator use.
- A supervisor observes the employee to have medically-related problems with using the respirator.
- There is a change in an employee's workplace conditions (e.g. physical work effort, protective clothing, temperature) that results in a substantial increase in the physiological burden placed on the employee.
- There is a change in an employee's job duties to such an extent that an employee who was previously using an air-purifying respirator must now use a self-contained breathing apparatus.

Examinations Mandated by Other Regulatory Agencies

Age 60 Medical Evaluation:

Who Should be Tested?

Deputy Sheriffs, sworn Sheriff command staff, Firefighters, and sworn Firefighter command staff who are mandated by regulation to retire at age 60, but who would like to stay employed. Note: Ocean Lifeguards do not require this examination to remain employed beyond age 60.

How Often?

This is a one-time examination which should be scheduled at least 3 months prior to the employee's 60th birthdate.

Commercial Driver's License Medical Examination:

Who Should be Tested?

Employees who drive, or need to be available to drive, a vehicle which requires an class A or B license, or which has 16 or more seats. [Note: We strongly recommend that these medical examinations be done by our contractor physicians rather than the employee's personal health care provider.]

How Often?

Usually, every two years. However, various medical conditions can require testing more often. The date that the medical clearance expires will be indicated on the back of the employee's Medical Certificate ("green card") which the employee must carry at all times.

FBI Bomb School Medical:

Who Should be Tested?

Sheriff's Department Deputies who are being sent for training.

How Often?

Prior to initial training courses and refresher courses.

Title V Annual Medical Examinations:

Who Should be Tested?

Participants in the Federal Title V employment program who are sponsored by the County of LA.

How Often?

An examination must be offered annually.

Programs without a Regulatory Basis

Armed Reserve Pool (Probation):

Who Should be Tested?

Probation Department employees who wish to be reassigned to Specialized Enforcement Operations.

How Often?

This is a one-time examination given prior to the training academy for Specialized Enforcement Operations.

Bicycle Patrol (Sheriff):

Who Should be Tested?

Sheriff Deputies who are newly assigned to the Bicycle Patrol.

How Often?

This is a one-time examination given prior to assignment to the Bicycle Patrol.

Clandestine Lab Medical:

Who Should be Tested?

Sheriff's Department staff who must enter rooms containing open chemical containers used for illegal production of methamphetamine.

How Often?

Prior to assignment, then every 12 months, and at reassignment to a unit that does not do Clandestine Lab enforcement.

Confined Space Medical:

Who Should be Tested?

Employees who enter confined spaces in which life threatening oxygen-deficient conditions can occur without warning.

How Often?

Prior to assignment and then every two years.

ILL-at-Work (Flu) Evaluation:

Who Should be Tested?

Employees who report to work with flu symptoms and refuse to go home when asked by their supervisor.

How Often?

As needed based on observations of symptoms. For more information, please see http://ceo.lacounty.gov/OHP/flu_assess.htm

Pesticide Medical Program:

Who Should be Tested?

There are no County employees recommended for this testing program. The program is legally mandated only for employees who mix, load, or apply organophosphate or carbamate pesticides for the commercial or research production of an agricultural plant commodity. The County of LA does not produce agricultural plant commodities.

How Often?

Not necessary for County employees

SCUBA Medical:

Who Should be Tested?

Employees who use SCUBA equipment while diving as part of their required job duties.

How Often?

Prior to the initial assignment requiring diving, and then every three years.