

Unofficial translation

No. 1485/2001

## **Government Decree**

### **on medical examinations in work that presents a special risk of illness**

Issued in Helsinki, December 27, 2001

By decision of the Government, made on the submission of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health,

the following is *decreed* on the basis of section 12(4) of the Occupational Health Care Act (1383/2001) of December 21, 2001:

#### Section 1

##### *Scope of application*

In work that presents a special risk of illness, the employer shall arrange medical examinations at his own expense for employees or other persons whose work is subject to the provisions of the Occupational Safety Act (299/1958) as provided in this Decree.

#### Section 2

##### *Special risk of illness*

Working conditions contain a special risk of illness where there is a physical, chemical or biological factor that is likely to lead to illness, undue exposure or a risk to reproductive health. Night work and a specific threat of violence at work may also present a special risk of illness.

#### Section 3

##### *Investigating a special risk of illness and the need for medical examinations*

Consideration of the need for medical examinations and the associated time limits on the basis of information from a workplace investigation, other available information and the list of examples appended to this Decree shall have regard to:

- 1) previous medical experience on the incidence of health problems in the respective field and workplace;
- 2) the danger, extent of exposure, duration and recurrence pattern regarding chemical substances used in the work or generated or appearing in the work or working environment, or physical or biological factors, and any earlier exposure to them;
- 3) the results of occupational hygiene measurements; and

4) whether or not there exists a generally accepted method in medical science for performing examinations that can demonstrate the extent of the problem and the exposure level.

#### Section 4

##### *Medical examination*

The medical examinations referred to in this Decree consist of clinical examinations performed by a physician and other complementary assessments, examinations or parts of examinations made under the supervision of a physician, and operational tests and exposure measurements.

Wherever possible the initial examination shall be performed prior to the start of the work that presents a special risk of illness, and in any event no later than one month after the start of the work.

As the work continues, a periodic examination shall be repeated, normally at intervals of 1-3 years, in accordance with the list of examples and with this Decree, unless there are special reasons for performing examinations more often or unless otherwise arising from a labour protection authority order referred to in section 7.

When an employment contract ends and the employee changes job, becomes unemployed or retires, consideration shall be given to arranging a medical examination upon the termination of the employment, depending on the exposure substance, which may include substances with a risk of cancer. Provision of guidance on the need for further medical examinations shall also be given in connection with the examination.

#### Section 5

##### *Aims of medical examinations*

Medical examinations shall be performed to:

- 1) identify the health risks present in the working conditions and to produce information for introducing preventive measures;
- 2) investigate the employee's exposure and the probable change in working capacity or health as a result;
- 3) investigate the impact of the employee's health or changes in health on his suitability for the work;
- 4) provide the employee with information on health risks present in the work and instructions for preventing problems;
- 5) dispatch the employee for examination and treatment if an occupational disease is suspected; and

6) monitor the effect of occupational safety measures taken and other changes.

In work that presents a risk of illness the aim shall always be to eliminate the risk of illness and to prevent or control the risk to the employee on the basis of information obtained from periodic examinations.

## Section 6

### *Provision of information*

The provision of information in occupational health care is prescribed in chapter 4 of the Occupational Health Care Act (1383/2001).

Summaries of any health effects noted in the information obtained through medical examinations shall normally be prepared at regular intervals at the individual and group level and information shall be given on them as appropriate.

The physician's duty to notify in the event that an examination reveals an occupational disease or other work-related condition of ill-health is prescribed in section 22(2) of the Act on the Supervision of Occupational Safety and Health and Appeal in Occupational Safety and Health Matters (131/1973).

## Section 7

### *Supervision of the duty to implement*

Provisions on the arrangement of medical examinations referred to in this Decree and on the powers of the labour protection authority to order necessary occupational hygiene measurements and other investigations to assess a special risk of illness shall be laid down separately.

## Section 8

### *List of examples*

Examples of the factors causing a special risk of illness are listed as an annex to this Decree and shall be taken into account in arranging medical examinations.

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This Decree enters into force on January 1, 2002.

The Decree repeals the Government Decision of December 30, 1992 on medical examinations in work that presents a special risk of illness (1672/1992).

Helsinki, December 27, 2001

Minister of Health and Social Services  
*Osmo Soitinvaara*

## ANNEX

### Examples of factors that cause a special risk of illness

This list of examples is not exhaustive; a special risk of illness may be caused by factors other than those stated in the list or comparable to them. In considering the need for medical examinations, account shall also be taken of possible exposure to various different factors and their combined effect.

#### Physical factors

1. Noise
2. Vibration affecting the hands
3. Variations in pressure (diving work and other work performed in raised pressure conditions, for example hyperbaric oxygen treatment)
4. Ionising radiation

Exposure to ionising radiation is monitored primarily using radiation dose measuring equipment in accordance with the Act on radiation (592/1991) and the Decree on radiation (1512/1991) and the regulations issued under them. Instructions on medical examinations for employees exposed to ionising radiation are issued by the Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority.

5. Non-ionising radiation

#### Laser radiation and other optical radiation

Radiation with a power density that can damage the eyes in work in which it is not possible to fully ensure technical preventive measures

6. Abnormal temperatures

#### Work in cold and hot conditions

#### Chemical factors

1. Metals

Aluminium and its compounds

Barium and its compounds

Beryllium and its compounds

Mercury and its compounds

Silver and its compounds

Cadmium and its compounds

Cobalt and its compounds

Chromium and its compounds

Lead and its compounds

Manganese and its compounds

Nickel and its compounds  
Platinum and its compounds  
Zinc and its compounds  
Tin and its compounds  
Vanadium and its compounds  
Tungsten and its compounds

## 2. Non-metals

Arsenic and its compounds  
Antimony and its compounds  
Phosphorus and its compounds  
Graphite  
Halogens and their inorganic compounds, such as chlorine, chlorine dioxide and hydrogen chloride; fluorine, hydrogen fluoride, fluorides and products of fluoropolymer degradation; and bromine, iodine and their inorganic compounds  
Persulphates, such as ammonium persulphates and potassium persulphates  
Sulphur compounds, such as sulphur dioxide, sulphuric acid, carbon bisulphide and hydrogen sulphide  
Selenium and its compounds  
Cyanogen compounds, such as hydrogen cyanide, cyanides and nitriles

## 3. Inorganic gases (in addition to the above)

Phosgene  
Carbon monoxide  
Nitrogen oxides  
Ozone

## 4. Hydrocarbons and their mixtures and derivatives

Aliphatic hydrocarbons, such as n-hexane and 1,3-butadiene  
Alicyclic hydrocarbons, such as terpenes and cyclohexane  
Aromatic hydrocarbons, such as benzene, toluene, xylene, styrene and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons  
Halogen derivatives of hydrocarbons, such as carbon tetrachloride, chloroform, 1,2-dichloroethane, tetrachloroethane, tri- and tetrachloroethylene, 1,1,1-trichloroethane, methylene chloride, fluorine-containing hydrocarbons such as freons and HCFC compounds, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and vinyl chloride  
Nitro-, amino- and amido-derivatives of hydrocarbons, such as trinitrotoluene, aniline, naphthylamines, benzidine, ethanolamines, triethylamine and dimethylformamide

## 5. Nitroglycol and nitroglycerine

## 6. Alcohols and glycols

Methanol, isopropanol and butanol

## 7. Phenols and their derivatives, such as phenol, pyrocatechol, resorcinol, pyrogallol, cresol, butylphenol and picric acid or trinitrophenol

8. Ketones, such as acetone, ethyl methyl ketone, methyl isobutyl ketone and hydroquinone

9. Ethers, esters and epoxids

Ethers and glycol ethers (cellosolves), such as methoxy ethanol and ethoxy ethanol.  
Esters and cellosolve esters, such as ethyl acetate and cellosolve acetates  
Epoxides, such as ethylene oxide

10. Aldehydes, such as formaldehyde and glutardialdehyde

11. Organic acids and acid anhydrides, such as formic acid, phthalic acid anhydrides, maleic anhydride and trimellitic anhydride

12. Other chemical exposure substances

12.1 Control agents

Plant disease control agents, such as imazalil, carboxin, maneb, mancozeb and thiram  
Weed control agents, such as chlorinated phenoxy acids, triazines and glyphosate  
Plant growth regulators, such as chlormequat  
Pest control biocides, such as nicotine, organophosphates, organic chlorine compounds, carbamates, pyrethrins and synthetic pyrethroids  
Provisions on medical examinations in the case of pesticide handling and application in forest work are laid down in the Government Decision on application of the Occupational Safety Act to the handling and application of pesticides in forest work (538/1989).

12.2 Chemical preservatives; wood preservatives, slimicides such as ethylhexanoic acid and its derivatives, isothiazolinones, organic tin compounds, thiocyanomethyl thiobenzoate, coconut trimethyl ammonium chloride and hydrogen peroxide.

12.3 Plastics and artificial resins and the substances used in their preparation and intermediate products, such as organic peroxides, amines, organic acid anhydrides, phthalates, epoxy compounds, polyamides, isocyanates, acrylates, phenolic resins and acrylamide

12.4 Natural resins, such as common resin, tall resin, natural rubber (latex)

12.5 Reactive and disperse dyes

12.6 Antibiotics

12.7 Cancer drugs

12.8 Other medicines

13. Dust

13.1 Quartz and other silicon dioxide crystalline forms

13.2 Asbestos and other silicate fibres (e.g. erionite) with a similar composition and adverse effect on health

13.3 Refractory ceramic fibres

13.4 Organic particulates, such as flour dust, wood dust, fur dust and other animal epithelial dust, enzymatic dust, raw coffee dust, raw flax dust, raw cotton dust, fish meal dust, feed yeast dust and dry milk dust

14. Environmental tobacco smoke

15. Factors other than those referred to in the Decision of the Ministry of Labour on factors that cause a risk of cancer (838/1993) given above.

Biological factors

Bacteria and viruses, fungal and mould spores and other biologically active substances released by them

Night work

Special work-related threat of violence

For example the work of a prison guard, police officer or night watchman