



## Employee Health Surveillance Guidance

**Roofing work exposes workers to a range of hazards that can affect health over time. These effects are often gradual and may not be immediately obvious. Health surveillance helps businesses identify early signs of work-related ill health so that action can be taken before problems become serious.**

For small and micro contractors, health surveillance does not need to be complicated. In many cases it can start with simple checks and conversations with workers about their health and symptoms. The aim is to protect workers, comply with legal duties, and keep people fit for work.

### What is Health Surveillance?

Health surveillance is a system of ongoing health checks used to detect early signs of work-related ill health where workers are exposed to certain hazards.

It helps employers:

- Identify early symptoms of work-related illness
- Confirm whether control measures are working
- Prevent minor health issues developing into serious conditions
- Protect workers' long-term ability to work

In simple terms, health surveillance is about spotting problems early.

### The legal position in the UK

Health surveillance may be required under several regulations including:

- Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)
- Control of Noise at Work Regulations
- Control of Vibration at Work Regulations
- Control of Lead at Work Regulations

These regulations require employers to provide health surveillance where workers are exposed to risks that could cause identifiable health effects. For example:

- **Silica dust**—respiratory health surveillance
- **Sealants and adhesives**—skin and respiratory surveillance
- **Noise above action levels**—hearing checks
- **Vibration exposure**—HAVS surveillance

The key point is that health surveillance is required when risk assessments identify a need for it.

### Health surveillance doesn't need to be complicated

For small contractors, health surveillance can start with simple steps:

- Short health questionnaires
- Regular conversations with their workers about symptoms
- Recording any reported health issues
- Seeking occupational health advice if symptoms appear

### Benefits for contractors

Good health surveillance helps businesses by:

- Protecting their workforce
- Identifying problems early
- Demonstrating compliance with regulations
- Reducing long-term sickness absence

Most importantly, it helps ensure workers can continue their careers in roofing without preventable health problems.

### A Prevention-First approach

Health surveillance should **not replace good control measures**. Contractors must still prioritise:

- Dust control (*for example water suppression, on-tool extraction*)
- Noise reduction and hearing protection
- Managing vibration exposure
- Safe handling of materials

Health surveillance simply acts as **a safety net to confirm that controls are working**.

### A practical starting point

The accompanying example health surveillance questionnaire is designed to help contractors begin monitoring potential health issues among workers exposed to:

- Musculoskeletal
- Noise
- Vibration
- Skin irritants
- Respiratory
- Workplace stress

If workers report symptoms, contractors should seek advice from a **competent occupational health professional**.

## EXAMPLE EMPLOYEE HEALTH SURVEILLANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

### Purpose of this questionnaire

This questionnaire forms part of your employer's health surveillance arrangements where a risk assessment has identified exposure to hazards that may affect health (*for example vibration, dust, manual handling, hazardous substances, outdoor work*).

The purpose is to:

- Assess whether current control measures are effective
- Identify early signs of work-related ill health
- Enable timely referral to Occupational Health where necessary

All information will be processed confidentially in accordance with the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

### Employee details

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Department/Work Area: \_\_\_\_\_

Manager/Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ (DD/MM/YYYY)

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date questionnaire completed: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ (DD/MM/YYYY)

### Occupational history

Please provide details of your current role and previous roles involving exposure to hazards.

Date(s) (DD/MM/YYYY)	Job title	Company	Main hazards exposed to
/ /			
/ /			
/ /			
/ /			
/ /			

### Musculoskeletal health surveillance

Have you ever suffered from back problems, joint disorders, strains, injuries or required treatment?  Yes  No

If yes, provide details: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you experience back pain during or after work?  Yes  No

Do you have restriction of movement in your back or neck?  Yes  No

Do you have problems with shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, knees or ankles?  Yes  No

Does any work activity worsen these symptoms?  Yes  No

### Noise Exposure Surveillance

Do you regularly work with noisy tools or equipment such as grinders, cut-off saws, nail guns, compressors or other power tools?  Yes  No

Do you need to raise your voice to speak to someone standing about one metre away when using tools or working on site?  Yes  No

Do you use hearing protection when working with noisy equipment?  
 Always  Sometimes  Never

Have you noticed ringing, buzzing or whistling sounds in your ears (tinnitus)?  Yes  No

Do you find it difficult to hear conversations in noisy environments?  Yes  No

Have colleagues or family members commented that you do not hear them clearly?  Yes  No

Have you experienced temporary hearing loss or "muffled hearing" after using noisy tools?  Yes  No

Have you ever had a hearing test carried out for work?  Yes  No

If yes, when was your last hearing test?  
\_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ (DD/MM/YYYY)

### Hand-Arm Vibration Syndrome (HAVS)

Have you ever been diagnosed with HAVS or Vibration White Finger?  Yes  No

Do you experience tingling or numbness after using vibrating tools?  Yes  No

Do your fingers turn white in cold conditions?  Yes  No

Do you wake at night with tingling or numbness in your hands?  Yes  No

Have you noticed reduced grip strength?  Yes  No

### Skin health surveillance

Have you experienced redness or irritation of hands?  Yes  No

Have you experienced cracking or blistering of the skin?  Yes  No

Have you lost time from work due to a skin condition?  Yes  No

Have you seen a GP regarding a skin condition?  Yes  No

### Respiratory health surveillance

Have you experienced wheezing or chest tightness?  Yes  No

Have you experienced shortness of breath?  Yes  No

Have you had a persistent cough at work?  Yes  No

Have you been diagnosed with asthma?  Yes  No

Do you currently smoke or vape?  Yes  No

Have you previously smoked or vaped?  Yes  No

### Wellbeing and work-related stress

Have you felt persistently stressed at work?  Yes  No

Have you experienced difficulty sleeping due to work?  Yes  No

Have you felt anxious, low in mood or irritable?  Yes  No

Have you found yourself using alcohol, medication or other substances to cope with stress?  Yes  No

Do you feel excessively fatigued at work?  Yes  No

Are your working hours affecting your safety?  Yes  No

Additional comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### Employee declaration

I confirm that the information provided is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ (DD/MM/YYYY)

### For Employer/Management Use Only

Reviewed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ (DD/MM/YYYY)

Outcome:

- Fit for role– No restrictions
- Fit with adjustments
- Temporary restriction required
- Referral to Occupational Health

Actions required: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Next Reviewed Due: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ (DD/MM/YYYY)

If a worker's responses raise any concerns, don't ignore it—support is available. Start with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website or contact the NFRC helpdesk for practical guidance.

Published by

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March 2026



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