



NOTIFIABLE OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE SYSTEM (NODS) – INFORMATION FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

What is NODS?

The Notifiable Occupational Disease System (NODS) is a scheme that has been established for doctors, other health professionals and individuals to notify the Department of Labour of suspected occupational health-related conditions.

Why is there such a system?

It's estimated that 700–1,000 premature deaths occur annually to workers from work-related diseases in New Zealand¹. NODS enables the Department of Labour to monitor occupational health-related conditions and implement promotional and intervention strategies. It also assists workers and managers to recognise and remedy harmful work practices.

What types of disease can be notified?

The categories of suspected occupational diseases for notification are:

- Diseases caused by a chemical agent (e.g. lead poisoning)
- Diseases caused by a physical agent (e.g. noise-induced hearing loss)
- Diseases caused by a biological agent (e.g. leptospirosis)
- Occupational respiratory diseases
- Occupational skin diseases
- Occupational musculoskeletal disorders
- Mental and behavioural illnesses
- Occupational cancers.

How do I notify the Department of Labour?

The notification system is designed to minimise the health professional's workload. The health professional records the patient's details and diagnosis on the [NODS notification form](#). The form is sent to the NODS registrar. Patients can also self-refer.

Notifications can also be accepted by phoning the Department of Labour on 0800 20 90 20.

What happens after notification?

The notification is assessed, and if appropriate, an investigation of the worker and the workplace is carried out. Details are referred to a Departmental Medical Practitioner (DMP) before being entered in the NODS database. The DMP may refer cases to a specialist medical panel for further consideration. The full process is shown in the accompanying chart.

Is a separate notification to ACC required?

If a patient presents with symptoms of a work-related gradual process injury, disease or infection as defined by the Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2001, the health professional must notify ACC separately.

What if the worker has left the workplace or has retired?

Many occupational health-related conditions have a long latency period. In some cases, individuals may not experience symptoms until many years after exposure to occupational health hazards. The Department of Labour uses this data for monitoring and strategic purposes, even if the workplace no longer exists.

If the workplace still exists but the individual is no longer employed there, the Department may investigate the workplace to ensure that existing employees are not affected.

1. *Workplace Health and Safety Strategy for New Zealand to 2015*, Department of Labour. www.whss.govt.nz

Further information about NODS

Further information can be found at the following links:

- NODS form: www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/pdf/form-nods-notify.pdf
- Notifiable Occupational Disease: <http://www.osh.govt.nz/services/notification/nods.shtml>
- Annual Reports on the NODS System: www.osh.govt.nz/order/catalogue/179.shtml

You can find out more about NODS from:

- The Department of Labour's Contact Centre on 0800 20 90 20
- The Department of Labour's website at www.dol.govt.nz
- Your nearest branch of the Department of Labour (listed under Government Department Contacts in your phone book).

The NODS Registrar can be contacted on 04 915 4000, or in writing to PO Box 3705, Wellington 6140.

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