



## **EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK ON NOISE RISK MANAGEMENT CASE STUDY**



# **Health and hygiene feedback letters CASE STUDY**

### **FULL DESCRIPTION OF THE RISK ADDRESSED**

In assessing and responding to the identified noise risk as a requirement of the Mine Health and Safety Act (MHSA) 29 of 1996 (as amended), personal noise measurement samples are required to be taken as per the occupational hygiene sampling plan.

Due to a lack of forthcoming feedback from the Occupational Hygiene Department on the obtained results post sampling, employees were losing faith and the desire to participate in the monitoring programme.

Employee unwillingness to participate in the personal sampling plan put the quality of the sampling data at risk due to undesirable conduct relating to sampling equipment. Ultimately such practices underestimate or overestimate the noise hazard and distort the response to the risk.

The control measures employed are a direct response to the data collected and the risk of undesirable conduct is addressed through proactive and formal feedback given to the employees by the Occupational Hygiene Department. Subsequently, the improved quality of the data collected allows for a more co-ordinated risk management approach.

Improved quality of monitoring data also supports the story that occupational medicine statistics tells through the medical surveillance assessments conducted. The risk of possible over-exposure which is misrepresented through poor quality samples is minimised. Employees are better served by structures such as compensation bodies as envisioned in the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Disease Act 61 of 1997 (as amended) when exposure data corresponds to the degree of injury confirmed.



“Proactive and formal feedback given to employees following personal sampling reduces and addresses undesirable conduct, resulting in better noise risk management and control.”

### **OVERVIEW**

#### **Mining company**

South32 Hotazel Manganese Mining

#### **Commodity**

Manganese

#### **Operation/Mine**

Mamatwan Mine

#### **Health and safety case study**

Health and hygiene feedback letters

#### **Number of employees affected**

Total sampling compliment - 721

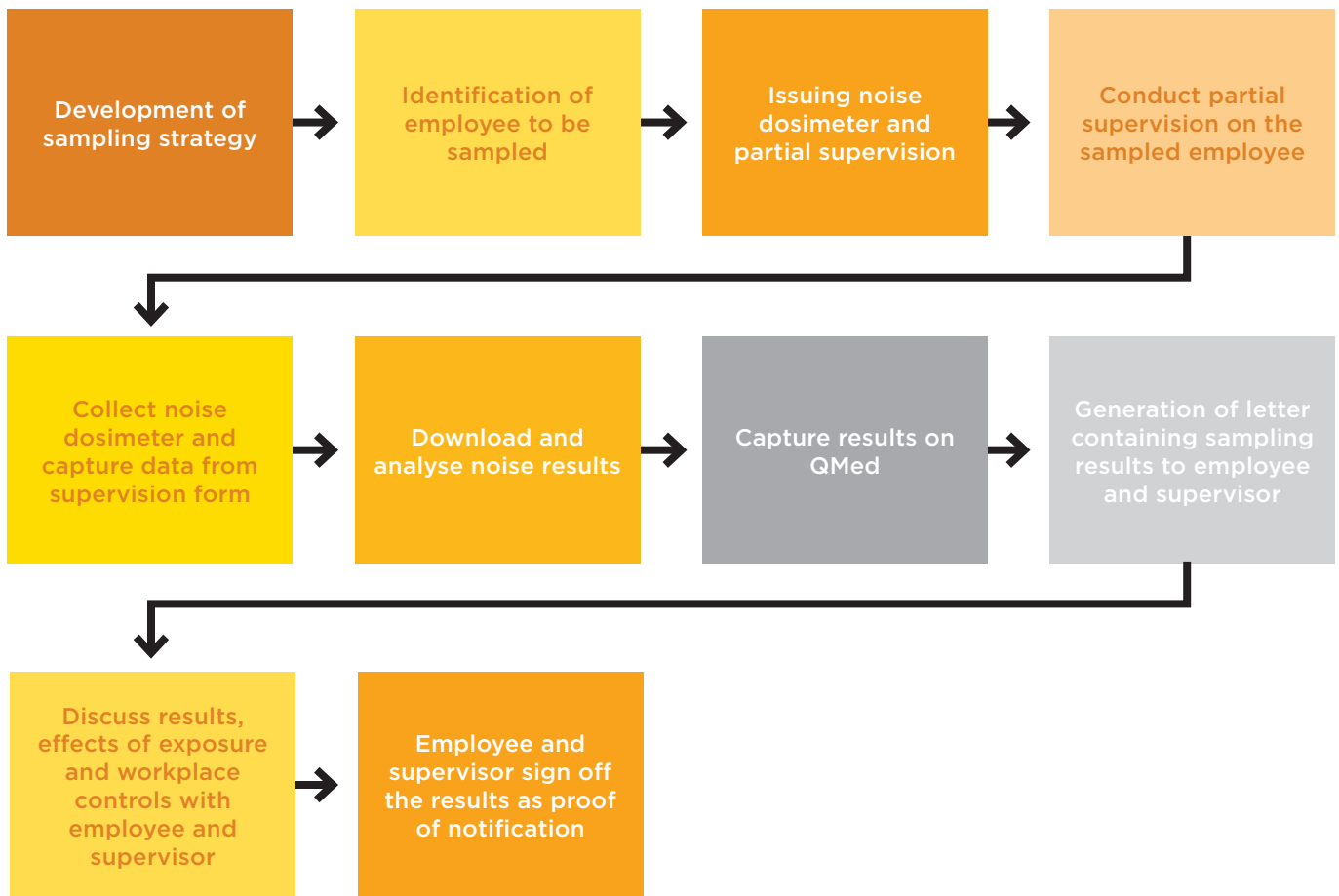
#### **Stakeholders consulted**

Employees through a consultative platform with the health and safety committee, health and safety representatives, health and safety practitioners and senior management.

#### **Occupations affected/benefited**

Total sampling compliment - 721

## PERSONAL NOISE SAMPLING AND FEEDBACK PROCESS FLOW



## FINDINGS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE IMPLEMENTATION AND INCORPORATION OF THE INITIATIVE

### Findings:



The lack of proactive feedback hinders the participation of employees in the sampling programme and ultimately compromises the quality of collected data



Employees had very limited understanding of the service offered by the Occupational Hygiene Department through collection of sampling data and how this information is used to implement appropriate controls

### Lessons learnt:



Employees have a genuine interest in their own health and safety and that of other employees



Informed employees make for better sampling candidates



Proactive feedback encourages reporting of health incidents/events (controls not in place, controls not working and/or controls not in use)



Information has allowed employees to move from being compliance driven and more health and safety conscious

### EMPLOYEES:

Resistance to partake in the monitoring programme when selected to wear the noise dosimeter has drastically reduced. Employees look forward to receiving their results and using them as a basis to challenge management for the implementation of improved controls.

Initiatives, such as the ear plug fit test which demonstrate the attenuation benefit of properly fitted earplugs when applied for the entire duration of exposure is an added layer of awareness which makes the uptake of the sampling data feedback easier and has improved employees risk behaviour around noise sources and/or demarcated noise zones.

Employees have subsequently also been able to exercise Section 23 (the right to refuse work under unsafe conditions) due to noise exposure because of understanding the noise exposure risk as explained by the occupational hygiene personnel during feedback sessions.

### HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES:

As representatives of the workforce in all matters pertaining to health and safety, these representatives are also sampled and have used the feedback results to

hold the maintenance execution team accountable for improved engineering controls.

The line of sight of these results has also facilitated robust yet fruitful leadership discussions during toolbox talks around being my brother's keeper and leading by example by applying hearing protective devices as required in demarcated noise zones. Correcting undesired behavior around noise sources when identified and being proactive in the requirement for the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) namely Hearing Protective Devices (HDPs).

### MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT (ENGINEERING):

The maintenance department through the active participation of employees in the hearing conservation programme has been receiving improved reporting through structures such as the health and safety committees of identified sources that are recorded to emit noise and the engagement of engineering controls are facilitated. An example is the cabin integrity project has been initiated to ensure that noise ingress is minimised into operator cabins due to better understanding of the noise measurement result by the employees.



# EXAMPLE: PERSONAL NOISE SAMPLING FEEDBACK REPORT



## Personal Sampling Employee Feedback Report



Feedback Report date:

Employee:

Coy:

Site:

SEG:

Occupation:

Sample Type:

Sample Date:

OEL:

Result: 86.08333333333333 dB(A)

Risk Classification: **High**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_, please find included in this report your results for the Noise sample taken on 15/4/2021. The results for the Noise sample was 86.08333333333333 dB(A), which is over the Occupational exposure limit of 85 dB(A). Your exposure is currently classified as High. For any additional information, please contact the Occupational Hygiene Department on site.

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisor:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

S.Mzenda  
Hygiene Technician  
Mamatwan  
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Tel + 27 537422863

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date:

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