

STANDARDS AND INTERPRETATIONS

INTERP

**1910.20—ACCESS TO EMPLOYEE EXPOSURE
AND MEDICAL RECORDS**

(a) **Purpose.** The purpose of this section is to provide employees and their designated representatives a right of access to relevant exposure and medical records, and to provide representatives of the Assistant Secretary a right of access to these records in order to fulfill responsibilities under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. Access by employees, their representatives, and the Assistant Secretary is necessary to yield both direct and indirect improvements in the detection, treatment and prevention of occupational disease. Each employer is responsible for assuring compliance with this section, but the activities involved in complying with the access to medical records provisions can be carried out, on behalf of the employer, by the physician or other health care personnel in charge of employee medical records. Except as expressly provided, nothing in this section is intended to affect existing legal and ethical obligations concerning the maintenance and confidentiality of employee medical information, the duty to disclose information to a patient/employee or any other aspect of the medical-care relationship, or affect existing legal obligations concerning the protection of trade secret information.

[45 F.R. 54333, August 15, 1980.]

(b) Scope and application.

(1) This section applies to each general industry, maritime, and construction employer who makes, maintains, contracts for, or has access to employee exposure or medical records, or analyses thereof, pertaining to employees exposed to toxic substances or harmful physical agents.

(2) This section applies to all employee exposure and medical records, and analyses thereof, of employees exposed to toxic substances or harmful physical agents, whether or not the records are related to specific occupational safety and health standards.

(3) This section applies to all employee exposure and medical records, and analyses thereof, made or maintained in any manner, including on an in-house or contractual (e.g., fee-for-service) basis. Each employer shall assure that

the preservation and access requirements of this section are complied with regardless of the manner in which records are made or maintained.

(c) Definitions.

(1) "Access" means the right and opportunity to examine and copy.

(2) "Analysis using exposure or medical records" means any compilation of data, or any research, statistical or other study based at least in part on information collected from individual employee exposure or medical records or information collected from health insurance claims records, provided that either the analysis has been reported to the employer or no further work is currently being done by the person responsible for preparing the analysis.

(3) "Designated representative" means any individual or organization to whom an employee gives written authorization to exercise a right of access. For the purposes of access to employee exposure records and analyses using exposure or medical records, a recognized or certified collective bargaining agent shall be treated automatically as a designated representative without regard to written employee authorization.

(4) "Employee" means a current employee, a former employee, or an employee being assigned or transferred to work where there will be exposure to toxic substances or harmful physical agents. In the case of a deceased or legally incapacitated employee, the employee's legal representative may directly exercise all the employee's rights under this section.

(5) "Employee exposure record" means a record containing any of the following kinds of information concerning employee exposure to toxic substances or harmful physical agents:

(i) environmental (workplace) monitoring or measuring, including personal, area, grab, wipe, or other form of sampling, as well as