

# **Health assessment of fitness to work in the E&P industry**

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**Report No. 6.46/228  
November 1995**



**International  
Association  
of Oil & Gas  
Producers**



# *P*ublications

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# Health assessment of fitness to work in the E&P industry

Report No: 6.46/228

November 1995

This report has been prepared for the E&P Forum by their Committee on Safety Health and Personnel Competence (SHAPCC) through their Medical sub-committee.

#### Medical sub-committee

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# Introduction

It is the duty of the employer to protect the health of the employees and others associated with the employer's activities.

It is in the individual's and the company's interest to determine whether or not the employee is fit to undertake duties within certain given conditions.

Company and contractor have a joint commitment to health management as stated in health policies. They should utilise health assessment based on a full and careful appraisal of the possible health problems and risks to which the individual will be exposed.

Health assessment should be conducted before employment and may be required at certain intervals during the normal course of a working life. When considering work overseas it is important to include accompanying dependants.

No single method of health assessment can suffice for all jobs within the E&P industry. A full doctor's assessment, although highly comprehensive, may not always be necessary.

This document provides health assessment guidelines for various job categories within the E&P industry.

# 1 Health assessment—general aspects

## 1.1 Definitions

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The terms “health assessment”, “health screening” and “health surveillance” are often used interchangeably. For the purpose of this document they are defined as follows:

- **Health assessment** means applying appropriate procedures and test in examining an individual to enable a medical professional to decide whether he or she is **fit for the specific working and living conditions**.
- **Health screening** which is not covered in this document, means applying appropriate procedure and tests in examining an **individual who is assumed to be healthy** in order to reveal signs or symptoms of potential or actual disease. Such disease does not necessarily have any relation to the person’s ability to perform his or her duties or to reside in a specific environment.
- **Health surveillance** for occupational health risk, which is not covered in this document, means applying appropriate procedures and test to review the health of employees actually or potentially exposed to certain work environment conditions. This means targeted procedures and test to a **potentially “exposed” population**.

For the purposes of this document:

- **Unfit** means the presence of a condition under circumstances whereby the condition would cause the person to be a safety or health hazard to him or her self or to others, where the condition cannot be controlled.

## 1.2 The aim of health assessment

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The aim of an individual health assessment is to determine the fitness of a person to perform a specific task or to live within certain conditions.

Ideally, appropriate health assessment should adhere to the following criteria:

- use appropriate methods to detect relevant health problems which may impact future work
- be acceptable to the individual
- be performed by a competent, employer designated, health professional in approved facilities
- maintain employee confidentiality
- comply with local government legislation and industry standards
- identify health trends and determine employer health programs
- reduce employer liability
- maintain cost effectiveness

## 1.3 Frequency of a health assessment

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A health assessment should be performed before employment.

Thereafter, a periodic assessment should be performed at least once every three years but will vary further depending upon:

- type of proposed employment and duty
- work environment (geographical risk, exposure to travel and/or health risk)
- local government and industry standards
- past medical history
- employee’s age

## 1.4 General content of a health assessment

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The content of the assessment may vary, depending upon the parameters described in 1.3 above and the duration of proposed employment.

## 1.5 Medical standards of a health assessment

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### *1.5.1 Medical staff*

The health assessment should be performed by a physician or by nursing staff directly under the physician's supervision. These health professionals should be competent to carry out the assessments and should be employer designated and approved.

It is important that the examining physician has a thorough knowledge of the workplace. This should enable the physician to carry out an adequate health assessment.

### *1.5.2 Medical centre*

The health assessment should be performed in an employer designated and approved medical centre which meets the requirements covered in the OGP report *Standards for local medical support* (ref. 6.44/222).

The medical centre should meet recognised professional standards and have medical equipment in good working order and regularly maintained and calibrated.

## 2 Contents of a health assessment

All three level modular system is recommended:

- Level 1 – A nurse-based health assessment
- Level 2 – A physician-based health assessment
- Level 3 – Additional investigations

### 2.1 Level I Module – nurse-based health assessment

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For all occupations

A health questionnaire should be completed by each individual and a basic clinical examination performed. This can be undertaken by a designated nurse working under the physician's supervision.

#### 2.1.1 *The health questionnaire*

The health questionnaire should include:

##### 2.1.1.1 Administrative information

- last name, first name, address, date of birth, sex
- proposed occupation.

##### 2.1.1.2 Medical information

- past medical and dental history
- occupational history
- family medical history
- current medical complaints
- known allergies
- current medication taken
- immunisations received (type, date of last booster)
- lifestyle (smoking, alcohol intake, exercise)

#### 2.1.2 *The basic clinical examination*

After review of the completed questionnaire, the following should be noted:

- height
- weight
- blood pressure
- pulse
- visual acuity (eye chart)
- urine analysis (dip stick urine test)

If any significant abnormalities are detected during the Level 1 Module, the person should be referred to a Level 2 physician-based health assessment. If any major lifestyle risks are identified, appropriate advice could be given.

## 2.2 Level 2 Module – physician-based health assessment

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A Level 2 Module should include a review of the Level 1 nurse-based health assessment, an interview and a physical examination as appropriate.

A Level 2 module health assessment may be required:

- as a result of Level 1 findings
- by the occupation involved
- by the living and working environment
- to comply with legislative requirements
- to comply with industry standards.

Results of the physical examination and its consequences should be discussed with the individual. Significant abnormalities detected during the Level 2 physician's assessment may require Level 3 additional investigations.

## 2.3 Level 3 Module – additional investigations

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A Level 3 health assessment may be required:

- as a result of Level 2 findings
- by the occupation involved
- by the living and working environment
- to comply with legislative requirements
- to comply with industry standards.

The above criteria will determine which of the following additional tests may be performed. This list is non-exhaustive.

### 2.3.1 *Eye testing*

- colour vision
- testing of visual fields and visual depth
- peripheral vision
- night vision (where applicable)

### 2.3.2 *Hearing*

- audiometry

### 2.3.3 *Laboratory tests*

#### 2.3.3.1 Blood tests

Type of blood tests to be performed depend on the above criteria.

Testing for blood borne diseases should not be performed as part of a routine health assessment for fitness.

#### 2.3.3.2 Urine Analysis

Further tests may be required if the initial dip-stick test results were abnormal.

#### 2.3.3.3 Stool Analysis

- analysis for blood, parasites, ova, cysts and pathogenic organisms in stools.

### 2.3.4 *Radiological investigations*

2.3.4.1 Chest X-ray may be required if:

- Level 2 assessment is abnormal
- required by law
- required by industry standards
- required by exposure.

No other X-ray investigations should be considered as mandatory for basic health assessments unless required by law or industry standards.

### 2.3.5 *Pulmonary function – spirometry and/or peak flow may be required if:*

- Level 2 assessment is abnormal
- required by law
- required by industry standards
- required by exposure.

### **2.3.6 *Electrocardiogram (ECG)***

An ECG should not be mandatory for a basic health assessment. A resting ECG is not a predictive test but can be considered useful by the examining physician if clinically indicated. In case of cardiological problems, a specialist's advice is recommended.

### **2.3.7 *Drug testing***

With reference to the OGP report *Substance abuse: guidelines for management* (report ref. 6.87/306, June, 2000), drug testing should respect a chain of custody and include all or some of the following:

- amphetamines
- barbiturates
- benzodiazepines
- cannabinoids
- cocaine
- methadone
- methaqualone
- opiates
- phencyclidine
- propoxyphene

### **2.3.8 *Alcohol testing***

Testing for chronic or acute alcohol intake can be performed through a breathalyser (breath alcohol concentration) or a blood test (blood alcohol concentration). Further guidance is available in OGP report *Substance abuse: guidelines for management* (report ref. 6.87/306, June, 2000).

### **2.3.9 *Psychological assessment***

The examining physician may recommend, if indicated, a referral for psychological assessment.

### **2.3.10 *Testing of physical fitness***

The examining physician may recommend that an appropriate test of physical fitness be carried out.

The examining physician will determine if other tests are necessary.

## 3 Target population of a health assessment

Annex 1 summarises the recommended modules to be performed for each occupational category.

### 3.1 Employee working outside their country of domicile

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The type of pre-employment and periodic health assessment will depend on the following:

- type of proposed employment
- local geographical or environmental conditions of country of residence and country of proposed employment
- past medical history of personal health problems
- local government regulations and industry standards
- availability of immediate medical care.

For the purpose of this document, geographical areas of the world can be divided into low health risk areas (North America, Western Europe, Japan, Australia, New Zealand) and the remaining areas which are considered to have a higher health risk.

#### 3.1.1 *Employees living in or transferred to low health risk areas*

**Pre-employment:** A Level 2 health assessment is recommended.

**Periodic:** A Level 1 health assessment is recommended.

#### 3.1.2 *Employees living in or transferred to a higher health risk area*

**Pre-employment:** A Level 2 health assessment is recommended. Emphasis must be placed on any pre-existing health condition which could become worse or directly affect the health of the individual during expatriation.

All employees considered fit should receive, unless medically contra-indicated, the Company recommended course of vaccinations which may vary depending on the country of expatriation.

**Periodic or upon return from expatriation:** A Level 2 health assessment is recommended. A level 3 investigation may be required for detection of certain endemic diseases (*eg* tuberculosis, malaria, bilharziasis, *etc*)

#### 3.1.3 *Dependants (adults and children) accompanying employee living in or transferred to a higher health risk area*

**Before departure:** A Level 2 health assessment is recommended. Emphasis must be placed on any pre-existing health condition (*eg* dental care) which could worsen or directly affect health of the individual during expatriation. This may prevent an emergency situation resulting in a costly and life threatening medical evacuation.

**Periodic or upon return from expatriation:** A Level 2 health assessment is recommended. A level 3 investigation may be required for detection of certain endemic diseases (*eg* tuberculosis, malaria, bilharziasis, *etc*)

### 3.2 Catering and Food Handling Staff

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**Pre-employment:** A Level 1 module should be performed with particular emphasis on potential communicable disease sites such as skin, ears, upper respiratory and gastro-intestinal tract.

When clinically indicated and in endemic areas, it is recommended that a stool examination be performed to test for the presence of pathogenic organisms or parasites.

**Periodic:** A Level 1 module should be performed. Stool examination is not considered necessary on a routine basis, but a new health assessment may be necessary following any recent illness.

### 3.3 Offshore employees

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**Pre-employment:** A Level 2 health assessment should be performed. In addition, the following Level 3 tests should be performed:

- hearing - baseline audiometry
- pulmonary function
- alcohol and drug testing where legally acceptable
- psychological assessment may be considered for certain key personnel, as well as a test of physical fitness.

**Periodic:** Health assessment should include a Level 2 based module and additional Level 3 tests as necessary.

### 3.4 Drivers

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**Pre-employment:** A Level 1 health assessment should be performed. In addition, the following Level 3 tests should be included:

- eyes - visual fields, visual depth, peripheral vision, colour vision, night vision
- hearing - baseline audiometry
- alcohol and drug testing.

Particular emphasis should be placed on musculo-skeletal capacity and co-ordination.

**Periodic:** Level 1 health assessment with Level 3 eye and hearing testing.

Any serious vehicle accident should require further medical assessment in order to eliminate a health related cause and to assess the fitness of the driver to return to work.

### 3.5 Video Display Unit Operators (VDU)

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**Pre-employment:** Level 1 health assessment is recommended with Level 3 eye testing for visual acuity.

**Periodic:** Level 1 health assessment is recommended with Level 3 eye testing for visual acuity.

### 3.6 Wearers of respiratory protective equipment

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For employees who are required to wear respiratory protective equipment as part of their job:

**Pre-employment:** To include Level 2 health assessment with the following Level 3 tests to be performed:

- pulmonary function

Emphasis to be placed on cardio-pulmonary fitness as well as facial hair and skin problems which may interfere with the efficiency of the mask.

**Periodic:** A Level 1 health assessment is recommended with Level 3 pulmonary function.

### 3.7 Return to work assessment after significant accident or illness

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All members of a work force should be reassessed before returning to their normal duties following a significant accident, illness or surgical operation.

The assessment should be Level 1 in the first instance but referred to a Level 2 if a more detailed examination is required.

### 3.8 Divers

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Contents and periodicity of pre-employment and periodic health assessments are based on industry standards and local laws. These health assessments will be performed by specifically trained and certified physicians.

### 3.9 Pilots

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Contents and periodicity of pre-employment and periodic health assessments are based on industry standards and local laws. These health assessments will be performed by specifically trained and certified physicians.

### 3.10 Fire-fighters

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**Pre-employment:** To include Level 2 health assessment in addition to the following Level 3 tests:

- hearing - audiometry
- pulmonary function

Emphasis to be placed on cardio-pulmonary and musculo-skeletal fitness.

**Periodic:** To include Level 2 assessment with pulmonary function.

### 3.11 Crane Operators

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**Pre-employment:** To include Level 2 health assessment in addition to the following Level 3 tests:

- eyes - visual fields, visual depth, peripheral vision, colour vision

Particular emphasis to be placed on unrestricted mobility and full coordination.

**Periodic:** To include Level 1 assessment with Level 3 eye tests.

### 3.12 Temporary employment in low risk occupation or geographical area - less than 3 month contract

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**Pre-employment:** Should include a Level 1 health assessment.

**Periodic:** No periodic assessment is necessary.

### 3.13 Local or national employees

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**Pre-employment:** A Level 1 health assessment is recommended.

In countries where certain diseases are endemic some Level 3 tests may be necessary (*eg* tuberculosis, malaria, bilharziasis).

**Periodic:** A Level 1 health assessment is recommended.

In countries where certain diseases are endemic some Level 3 tests may be necessary (*eg* tuberculosis, malaria, bilharziasis).

## 4 Handling medical data after a health assessment

### 4.1 Medical data and the employee

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#### 4.1.1 *Informing employee of his health status and employee confidentiality*

Medical confidentiality between an employee and the Employer's health professional is of the utmost importance.

Individual clinical details of the health findings will be provided only to the employee examined and to no other person with the exception of epidemic diseases requiring urgent or legislative public health measures. Even in this case, everything will be done to maintain physician-employee confidentiality.

#### 4.1.2 *Informed and authorised employee consent*

Any medical information exchanged between external and Employer designated health professions or vice-versa will be done only after authorised employee consent.

#### 4.1.3 *Employee's access to their files*

Employees should have the right of access to their medical files, unless to do so would be detrimental to their well being.

### 4.2 Reporting employee fitness to managers and non-medical personnel

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Non-authorised personnel will not have access to confidential employee health files.

The health status (fitness to work) of the employee will be disclosed by Employer designated health professional to management.

Results of health assessment provided to management will be limited to classification of worker's fitness such as:

- fit to work
- fit with restrictions
- temporarily unfit to work
- unfit for specific occupation
- unfit to work

### 4.3 Saving confidential health information

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#### 4.3.1 *On paper files*

All confidential information recoded on paper files will be kept in a secure environment and will only be accessible to authorised health personnel.

#### 4.3.2 *In computer files*

Computers used to store individual confidential medical information will be used specifically and only for the medical department. Systems must be in place to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

#### 4.3.3 *Duration of record keeping*

Records must be kept for a minimum of thirty years, or longer if local legislation dictates.

### 4.4 Transfer of medical files

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Within the Company, medical information should only be transferred between health personnel.

### 4.5 Data collection and analysis

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One of the aims of maintaining health data by health professionals should be to identify, study and analyse health trends. Reported medical data should be such that specific individuals cannot be identified.

The data obtained can serve in determining the impact of past, and in guiding the development of future health programmes.

# Annex 1

## Summary of recommended modules

|                                                       | Level 1 - Nurse | Level 2 - Physician | Level 3 - Additional investigations                                                |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|------------|----------------|-------|--------------------|-----|-------|---------|---------------|------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|                                                       |                 |                     | Eyes                                                                               | Hearing | Blood test | Stool analysis | X-ray | Pulmonary function | ECG | Drugs | Alcohol | Psychological | Physical fitness |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.1 Employees working out of country of origin</b> |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Living in/transfer to low risk country                |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| pre-employment                                        | †               | †                   |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| periodic                                              | †               |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Living in/transfer to high risk country               |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| pre-employment                                        | †               | †                   |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| periodic                                              | †               | †                   |                                                                                    |         | ‡          | ‡              | ‡     |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Dependants to high risk country                       |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| before departure                                      | †               | †                   |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| periodic                                              | †               | †                   |                                                                                    |         | ‡          | ‡              | ‡     |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.2 Catering and food handling</b>                 |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| pre-employment                                        | †               |                     |                                                                                    |         |            | †              |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| periodic                                              | †               |                     |                                                                                    |         |            | ‡              |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.3 Offshore employees</b>                         |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| pre-employment                                        | †               | †                   |                                                                                    | †       |            |                |       |                    | †   |       | †       | †             | ‡                | ‡ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| periodic                                              | †               | †                   |                                                                                    | †       |            |                |       |                    | †   |       | †       | †             | ‡                | ‡ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.4 Drivers</b>                                    |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| pre-employment                                        | †               |                     |                                                                                    | †       |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         | †             | †                |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| periodic                                              | †               |                     |                                                                                    | †       |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.5 VDU operators</b>                              |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| pre-employment                                        | †               |                     |                                                                                    | †       |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| periodic                                              | †               |                     |                                                                                    | †       |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.6 Respiratory protective equipment</b>           |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| pre-employment                                        | †               | †                   |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    | †   |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| periodic                                              | †               |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    | †   |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.7 return to work after accident/illness</b>      |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                                                       | †               | ‡                   |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.8 Divers</b>                                     |                 |                     | Health assessment to be performed by specifically trained and certified physicians |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.9 Pilots</b>                                     |                 |                     | Health assessment to be performed by specifically trained and certified physicians |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.10 Firefighters</b>                              |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| pre-employment                                        | †               | †                   |                                                                                    | †       |            |                |       |                    | †   |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| periodic                                              | †               | †                   |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    | †   |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.11 Crane operators</b>                           |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| pre-employment                                        | †               | †                   | †                                                                                  |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| periodic                                              | †               |                     | †                                                                                  |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.12 temporary employment &lt; 3 months</b>        |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| pre-employment                                        | †               |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| periodic                                              |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <b>3.13 Local or national employees</b>               |                 |                     |                                                                                    |         |            |                |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| pre-employment                                        | †               |                     |                                                                                    |         | ‡          | ‡              |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| periodic                                              | †               |                     |                                                                                    |         | ‡          | ‡              |       |                    |     |       |         |               |                  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |

† should be performed

‡ should be performed under certain conditions



## **What is OGP?**

The International Association of Oil & Gas Producers represents the world's oil and gas industry. Our members include private and state-owned oil and gas companies, national associations and petroleum institutes.

## **What do we do?**

Our purpose is to:

- provide information about the oil and gas exploration and production industry;
- represent our members' interests at global and regional regulatory bodies; and
- develop operating guidelines.

## **What are our aims?**

We aim to:

- increase understanding of the industry;
- work with international regulators to develop workable proposals which take full account of industry views;
- contribute to continuous improvements in industry operating standards;
- be a visible and approachable organisation to which governments and others refer on matters relating to the industry;
- maintain a large, diverse and active membership; and
- communicate issues affecting members to international bodies and the public.



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