

## 5 Special occupational medical investigations

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The procedure for special occupational medical investigations cannot be adequately described in the form of questionnaires and flowcharts. People's health is generally influenced not only by their workplace but also, to a significant degree, by factors such as individual constitution, medical history, home/family life, lifestyle and consumption habits. Consequently, the procedure and diagnosis usually need to be tailored to each specific case.

Since confidential matters and personal data are involved, the organisation's occupational physician should be responsible for coordinating these investigations. He or she will know the employee in question and be familiar with the adverse health effects of their workplace and their general state of health. The occupational physician is in a position to judge whether further investigations are necessary and to explain the occupational medical grounds for them. Ideally, he or she should work closely with the employee's family doctor who can disclose information on any health complaints the employee might have that are not

related to the workplace. The latter, like the former, is bound by medical confidentiality. More often than not, the occupational physician can quickly determine whether the complaints presented were caused by a factor outside the workplace by sharing information and diagnoses with the family doctors and specialists treating the employee (release from medical confidentiality must be at hand). If there are grounds to believe that an employee's health has been impaired by their working environment, special investigations should be carried out in consultation with the occupational physician and based on the results of any other investigations.

It should be noted that it is not possible to list all of the competing and potential causes of the complex conditions that manifest themselves in individual health complaints. Questionnaire S1 (available at [www.dguv.de/ifa](http://www.dguv.de/ifa), webcode e650356), which is intended to document employees' health situation outside the workplace, can therefore only point to possible and common causes.