Defense Centers for Public Health – Aberdeen
(formerly U.S. Army Public Health Center)

Technical Guide No. 393

Procedures for Managing Inquiries of Significant Long-Term Health Risks from Past Environmental Exposures in the Defense Occupational and Environmental Health Readiness System

October 2022

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Paragraph Page

1 Introduction 1
1.1 Purpose 1
1.3 Authority 1
1.4 Applicability 1
1.5 Abbreviations and Terms 1
1.6 References 2
2 Obtaining Access to the Historical Exposure Inquiries Registry 2
2.1 Users who do not have a DOEHRS Account 2
2.2 Users who already have a DOEHRS Account 3
3 Navigating the Historical Exposure Inquiry Registry 3
3.1 Logging into the Historical Exposure Inquiry Registry. 3
3.2 Setting the Historical Exposure Inquiry Registry as your Home Page 3
3.3 Accessing Requests 4
4 Request Entries 5
4.1 Creating a New Request Entry 5
4.2 Completing the Request Details 5
4.3 Chronological Log of Activity 13
4.4 Attachments 16
4.5 Closing the Request 17
5 DOEHRS-IH Demonstration and Training Environment (DOEHRS Demo) 17
Glossary Glossary-1

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This technical guide (TG) provides instructions for gaining access to the Historical Exposure Inquiry registry of the Defense Occupational and Environmental Health Readiness System (DOEHRS) Department of Defense "(DoD) Registries" program office. It also provides a standard operating procedure for how users of the Historical Exposure Inquiry registry (henceforth referred to as the registry) should create and manage requests in the registry. This TG will provide guidance on how to use the Historical Exposure Inquiry registry and ensure that a unified process is being used to manage the inquiries.

1.2 Background

The Defense Centers for Public Health-Aberdeen (DCPH-A; formerly the U.S. Army Public Health Center (APHC)) frequently receives inquiries for information regarding the identification of potential past environmental exposures for Active-Duty Service members and for Veterans. The DCPH-A created the Historical Exposure Inquiries registry in the DOEHRS "(DoD) Registries" program office as a means to properly manage these inquiries. The Historical Exposure Inquiries registry is not an official registry as the Operation Tomadachi or Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit registries are. The (DoD) Registries program office was leveraged to manage historical exposure inquiries because it can be accessed by DoD and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees and it is protective of Service members and Veterans' sensitive patient health information according to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996.

1.3 Authority

This TG was developed as a means to uniformly manage the recordkeeping and reporting requirements established by Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6055.20, *Assessment of Significant Long-Term Health Risks from Past Environmental Exposures on Military Installations*, 2017.

1.4 Applicability

The DoD receives requests for information regarding a myriad of potential historical exposures to Service members and Veterans. These past environmental exposure inquiries include, but are not limited to, concerns for potential exposure to tactical herbicides, radiological hazards, burn pits, chemical or biological testing hazards, or other environmental hazards of concern. Various stakeholders (e.g., members of Congress, the VA, individual Service members or Veterans, family members) may contact the DoD for information regarding potential past environmental exposures.

1.5 Abbreviations and Terms

See the Glossary for a list of abbreviations and definitions of terms used to prepare this TG.

The mention of any non-federal entity and/or its products is not to be construed or interpreted, in any manner, as federal endorsement of that non-federal entity or its products.

1.6 References

"Defense Occupational and Environmental Health Readiness System," DoD. [website] https://doehrs-ih.csd.disa.mil/Doehrs/displayLoginForm.do

DOD. 2017. Instruction 6055.20, *Assessment of Significant Long-Term Health Risks from Past Environmental Exposures on Military Installations*. http://www.esd.whs.mil/Directives/issuances/dodi/

"DOEHRS Demo," DoD. [website] https://doehrs-ih-demo.csd.disa.mil/Doehrs/login.jsp

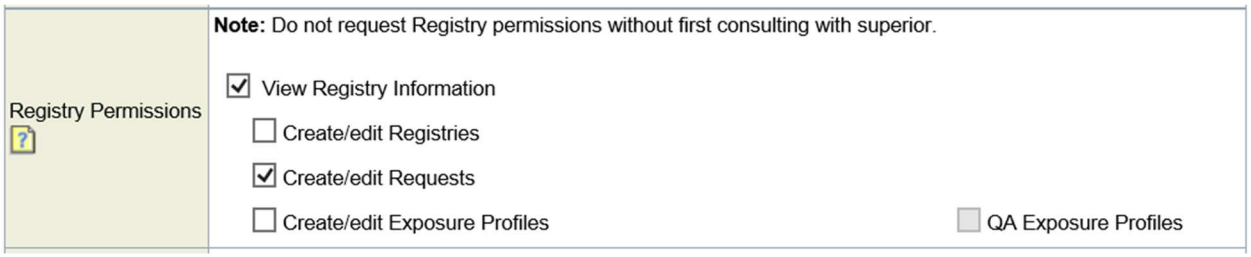
APHC. 2021. Tutorial, *Getting a DOEHRS-IH "Demo/Train" account*. https://ph.health.mil/PHC%20Resource%20Library/(1)_DOEHRS-IH_Demo_Account_Sep21.pdf

2 OBTAINING ACCESS TO THE HISTORICAL EXPOSURE INQUIRIES REGISTRY

2.1 Users who do not have a DOEHRS Account

The initial step to use the Historical Exposure Inquiries registry is to gain a DOEHRS account with access to the (DoD) Registries program office.

1. Go to https://doehrs-ih.csd.disa.mil/Doehrs/accounts/processRequestAccount.do
2. Enter your Service Branch.
3. Under "Program Office," choose "(DoD) Registries."
4. Skip to "Registry Permissions" and check "View Registry Information" and "Create/edit Requests" (see figure below).



5. Skip to "Justification for Access to DOEHRS" and provide your justification for access.
6. Fill out the "User Identification," "Personnel Information," and "User Agreement" fields. Note that Privacy Act training, HIPAA certification training, and annual Information Awareness training are all required for access. The form provides links to those trainings if needed.
7. When all starred sections are filled out, submit the Request Account form.

8. DOEHRS-IH administrators will review the request and grant access to the requester once information within the request and the need for access is verified.

2.2 Users who already have a DOEHRS Account

Because you already have a DOEHRS account, you will only need to request access to the (DoD) Registries program office.

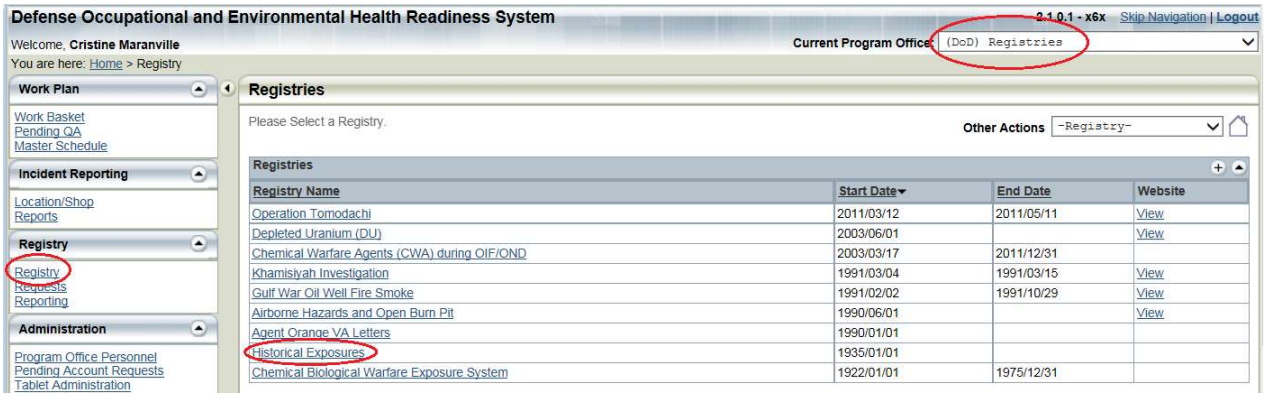
1. Go to https://doehrs-ih.csd.disa.mil/Doehrs/accounts/displayRequestAccessToProgramOffice.do.
2. Follow steps 2 through 5 of Section 2.1.
3. When all starred sections are filled out, submit the Request Account form.
4. DOEHRS-IH administrators will review the request and grant access to the requester once information within the request and the need for access is verified.

3 NAVIGATING THE HISTORICAL EXPOSURE INQUIRY REGISTRY

3.1 Logging into the Historical Exposure Inquiry Registry

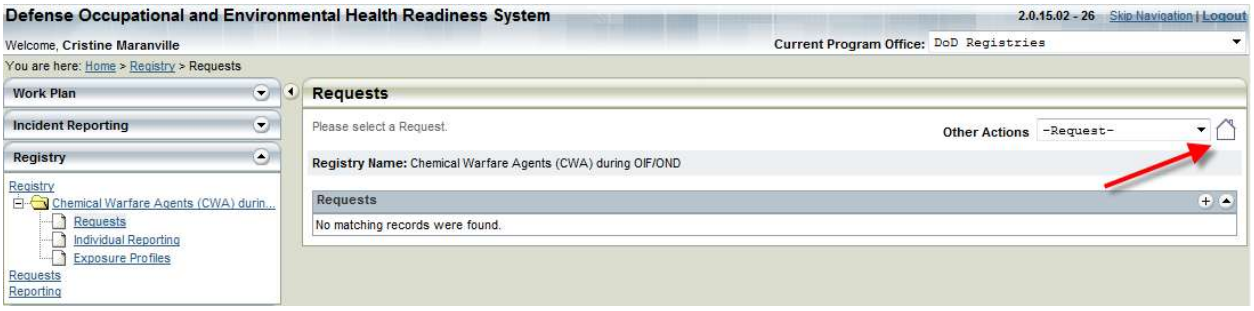
Follow these steps to log into the Historical Exposure Inquiry registry:

1. To access the DoD Registries Program Office, log into your DOEHRS account and choose “(DoD) Registries” from the drop-down list in the Current Program Office.
2. Click Registry from the left-hand navigation.
3. Select Historical Exposures from the Registries list.



3.2 Setting the Historical Exposure Inquiry Registry as your Home Page

For quicker access, the Historical Exposure Inquiry registry can be set as a home page to allow a direct login to the registry. Select the House icon to set as your home page (see figure below).



3.3 Accessing requests

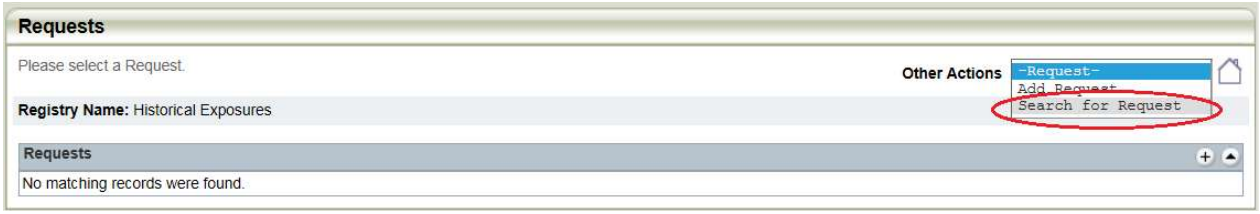
Received inquiries are managed in the Historical Exposure Inquiry registry as “Requests.” Requests can be accessed if they are assigned to you or they can be searched for.

3.3.1 Requests assigned to you

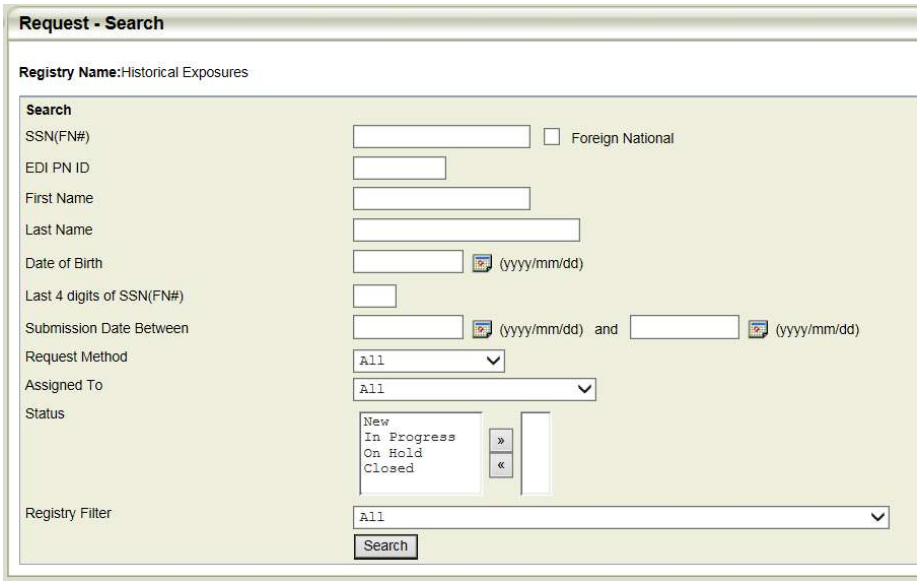
To access requests that are assigned to you, expand the + next to the Registry name and click the “Requests.” By default, the requests listed on this page are those that are assigned to you and their status is “In Progress.”

3.3.2 Searching for Requests

To search for requests that are assigned to someone else or request whose status is “On Hold” or “Closed,” select the “Search for Requests” option from the “Other Actions” drop-down list (see figure below).



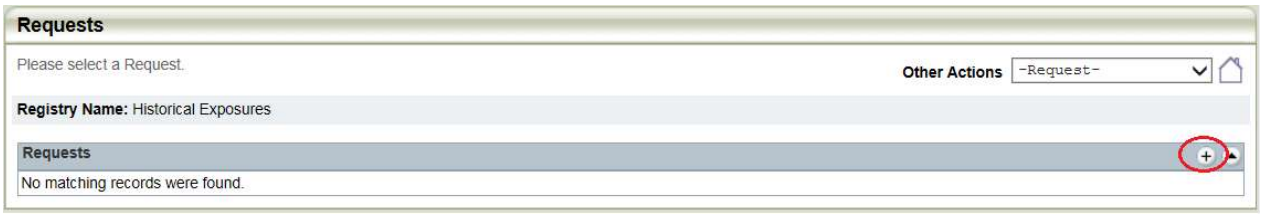
Enter information pertaining to the request in the fields and click the “Search” button (see figure below). If a Registry Request record is found, it will be listed; click the Request ID to view the request.



4 REQUEST ENTRIES

4.1 Creating a New Request Entry

When a historical exposure inquiry is received, you will need to create a new request for it. To add a new Request, click the + on the top right of the Requests tab (see figure below).



4.2 Completing the Request Details

4.2.1 General Request Information

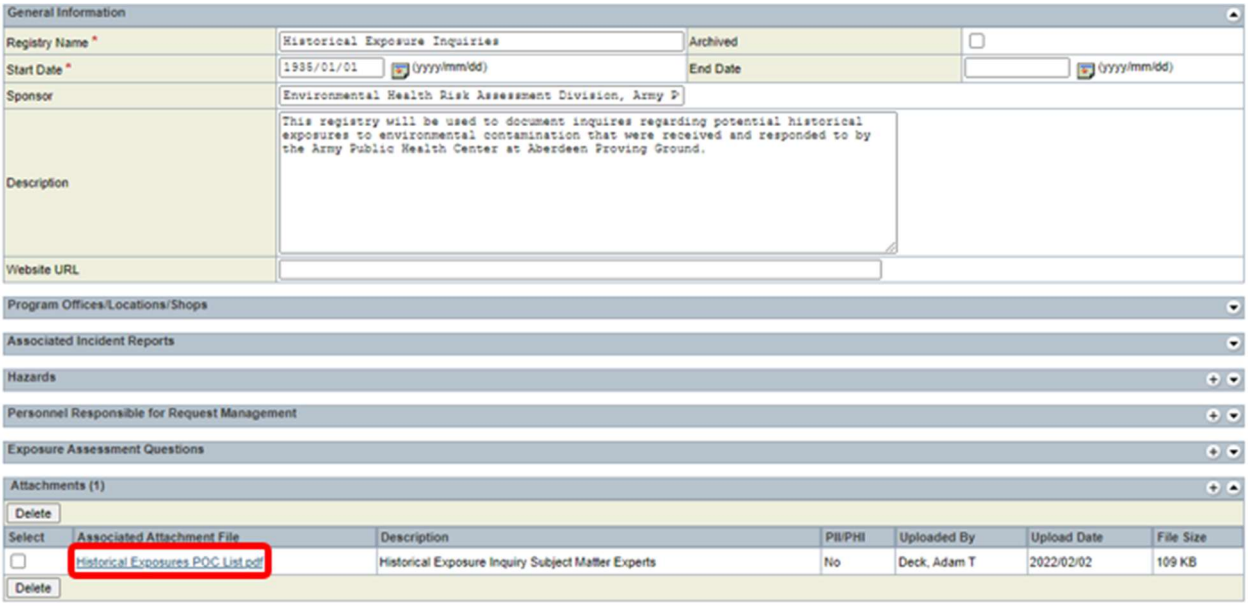
4.2.1.1 Status

This field is used to track the current status of the request. When the request is first created, set the Status to “In Progress.” See Section 4.3.4 for instructions on when the status should be changed.

4.2.1.2 Assigned To

This field tracks the person responsible for managing the request, including investigating and responding to the request. All people who use the registry will be listed. If you are managing the new request, choose yourself. If this is a request you created but are assigning to someone else, choose his or her name instead.

The Historical Exposures Point of Contact (POC) List in the attachments section of the registry home page (see figure below) provides a list of subject matter experts (SMEs) to whom you may want to assign the request. The contact information of these SMEs is included in the Historical Exposures POC List to allow for coordination of assigning the request.



The Assigned To section can be changed at any time to assign the request to someone different.

4.2.1.3 Submission Date

This field indicates when the inquiry was first received by your organization for investigation.

4.2.1.4 Request Method

This field indicates how the request was received from the requester—via a phone call (Phone), via an email message (Email), via a mailed letter (Letter), via the DOEHRS-IH module (Website), or another means, which should be specified (Other). Note that if you receive a letter inquiry via email, choose the request method as “Letter” as it was the original request method. “Email” should be chosen when the inquiry is received solely through email communication.

4.2.1.5 Request Type

This field indicates the general reason for the inquiry.

- If the requester is looking for information on their potential exposure, choose “Request for Exposure Information.”
- If the requester is looking information to support a claim with the VA, choose “Medical/Disability Claim.”
- If the reason does not fall in other categories, choose “General Question/Comment.”

4.2.1.6 Initial Inquiry Message

This field can be used to describe the inquiry message that was received. If the initial inquiry message is too long and/or there is an electronic copy of the inquiry message that will be included in the request, add the note: “Please see the Chronological Log of Activity for the initial inquiry message.”

4.2.2 Requester Information

This section is used to detail whom or what organization submitted the inquiry to your organization. This section should indicate who ultimately started the inquiry (which most often coincides with who you will respond to), rather than who is tasking you to address the inquiry. For example, if an Office of the Undersecretary of Defense tasks you to address an inquiry from the VA, the VA is the requester.

4.2.2.1 Contact Information

Contact information for the POC who requested the investigation should be included in the request. This includes name, email address, phone number, and address.

- If the request comes from an organization rather than a specific person, enter the organization name in the Last Name field.
- If a potentially exposed person or their relative contacts their Congressperson and the Congressperson initiates the inquiry, use the Congressperson as the requester.
- Requests assigned to you on the registry home page only displays the requester’s information, not the potentially exposed individual’s information. To make it easier to visualize which registry request record is associated with which potentially exposed individual, add the potentially exposed individual’s first initial and last name in parenthesis.
    - If it is a person, enter it after the first name of the requester; or
    - If it is an organization, enter it entirely in the First Name field (see figures below).

Requester Information			
First Name	Robert (J. Doe)	Email Address	
Middle Name		Phone Number	
Last Name	Kelly		
Street Address			
City			
Country	United States (NATO member)		
State			
Zip Code			
Relationship to Potentially Exposed Individual *	Other		
Justification for Access to Individual Exposure Information *	Congressperson seeking information on behalf of his constituent.		

Requester Information			
First Name	(J. Doe)	Email Address	
Middle Name		Phone Number	
Last Name	Veterans Affairs		
Street Address			
City			
Country	United States (NATO member)		
State			
Zip Code			
Relationship to Potentially Exposed Individual *	Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)		
Justification for Access to Individual Exposure Information *	Seeking information for disability claim.		

This will allow requests on your home page to display the potentially exposed individual's name, as seen in the figure below.

Requests

Assign To Deck, Adam T

Select	Request ID	Submission Date	Requester Name	Potentially Exposed Individual	Relationship	Request Method	Status	Assigned To	Last Updated
☐	112	2022/06/02	Veterans Affairs, (J. Doe)		Department of Vetaran Affairs (VA)	Letter	In Progress	Deck, Adam T	2022/06/02
☐	111	2022/06/02	Kelly, Robert (J. Doe)		Other	Email	In Progress	Deck, Adam T	2022/06/02

Assign To Deck, Adam T

4.2.2.2 Relationship to Potentially Exposed Individual

The relationship between the requester and the potentially exposed individual should be indicated. If the requester is anyone except for the potentially exposed individual ("Self"), provide a justification for why you will provide the requester with the potentially exposed individual's exposure information. (e.g., "Seeking exposure information for a disability claim," "Seeking exposure information on behalf of a constituent.")

4.2.3 Information About Potentially Exposed Individual – Controlled Unclassified Information

This section is used to provide details about the individual who was potentially exposed.

4.2.3.1 Information Provided By Requester

4.2.3.1.1 Contact Information

Contact information for the potentially exposed individual. This includes name, social security number, electronic data interchange personal identifier (EDI PN ID), and date of birth.

4.2.3.1.2 Personnel Category

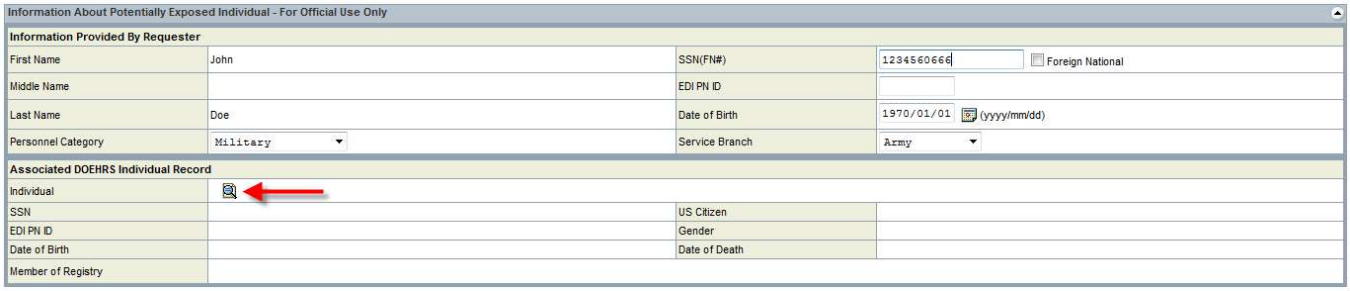
Indicate whether the potentially exposed individual was in the military, was a contractor, was a civilian during his or her potential exposure, was a foreign national, or if the inquiry is made on behalf of a family member of a potentially exposed individual.

4.2.3.1.3 Service Branch

Indicate the potentially exposed individual's branch of service during their potential exposure, if applicable.

4.2.3.2 Associated DOEHRS Individual Record

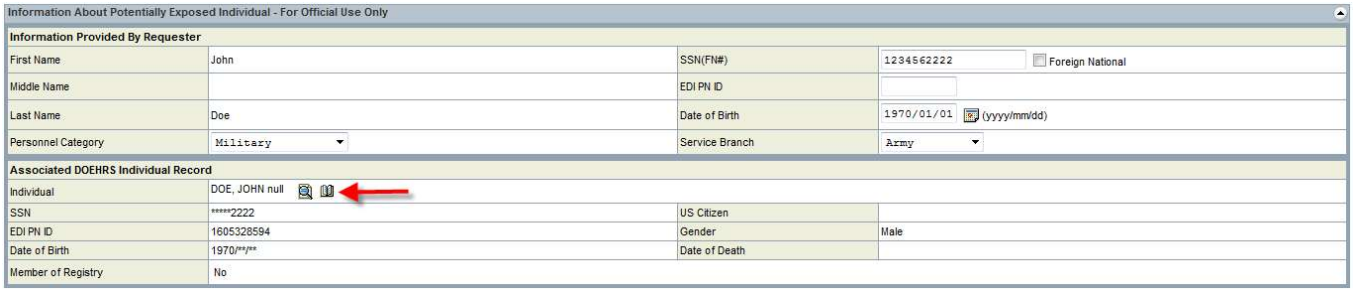
DOEHRS receives a data feed from the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), and the individual's DMDC record may be available. To find out if it is, click the magnifying glass icon in the Associated DOEHRS Individual Record section (see figure below).



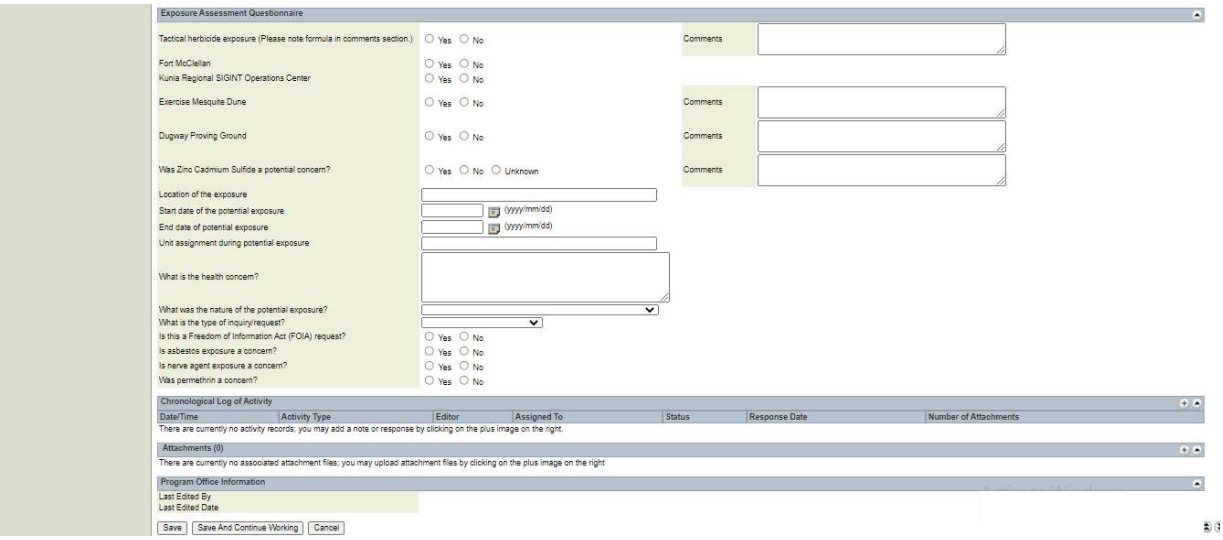
Enter the individual's identifying information in the form that opens and click "Search" button (see figure below).

Select the correct individual and click the “Add to Form” button (see figure below).

“Associated DOEHRS Individual Record” will now display DMDC’s information about the individual, as well as a book icon where additional information regarding his or her time with DoD can be viewed (see figure below).



4.2.4 Exposure Assessment Questionnaire



4.2.4.1 Answering Current Questions

To assist in the management of each inquiry, the person assigned to the request completes the exposure assessment questionnaire.

4.2.4.1.1 Tactical Herbicide Exposure

Confirm if tactical herbicide exposure is a concern in the inquiry. If a specific tactical herbicide mixture or formulation is of concern, describe which formulation (e.g., Agent Orange, Agent Purple) is of concern.

4.2.4.1.2 Fort McClellan

Confirm if the historical exposure concern occurred at Fort McClellan.

4.2.4.1.3 Kunia Regional SIGINT (Signals intelligence) Operations Center

Confirm if the historical exposure concern occurred at the Kunia Regional SIGINT Operations Center.

4.2.4.1.4 Exercise Mesquite Dune

Confirm if the historical exposure concern occurred at Camp Irwin during Exercise Mesquite Dune.

4.2.4.1.5 Dugway Proving Ground

Confirm if the historical exposure concern occurred at Dugway Proving Ground.

4.2.4.1.6 Was Zinc Cadmium Sulfide a Potential Concern

Confirm if exposure to zinc cadmium sulfide was a potential concern.

4.2.4.1.7 Location of the Exposure

Indicate the location or locations where the potential environmental exposure occurred.

4.2.4.1.8 Start Date of the Potential Exposure

Indicate the start date for the timeframe of historical exposure concern. If a day is not specified, use the first day of the month as a surrogate. If a month is not specified, use January as a surrogate.

4.2.4.1.9 End Date of the Potential Exposure

Indicate the end date for the timeframe of historical exposure concern. If a day is not specified, use the last day of the month as a surrogate. If a month is not specified, use December as a surrogate.

4.2.4.1.10 Unit Assignment during Potential Exposure

Indicate the unit with which the potentially exposed individual served during the potential exposure.

4.2.4.1.11 What is the Health Concern

Describe the health concerns that the potentially exposed individual and/or the requester believes may be associated with their potential exposure. If the individual's concerns are due to potentially being exposed to a chemical or other stressor but does not detail a specific health concern, include the potential exposure concern in this field.

4.2.4.1.12 What was the Nature of the Potential Exposure

Indicate whether the potential exposure was due to the individual's duty responsibility, due to the individual's training, or due to being in proximity to a potential environmental release event (regardless of whether it was during the individual's duties or training).

4.2.4.1.13 What is the Type of Inquiry/Request

Indicate whether the inquiry originated from Congress, the DoD, the VA, or a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. (Note that responding to FOIA inquiries is not the purview of this program or registry. FOIA inquiries that are received should get a request entry for tracking

purposes; the request should be handed over to your FOIA office for resolution; a note should be added to the Chronological Log of Activity indicating it was turned over to the FOIA office; and the request in this registry should be closed.)

If the inquiry has a different origin, an additional question should be added (see Section 4.2.4.2) that includes the additional origin.

4.2.4.2 Adding Additional Questions and Choices

The exposure assessment questionnaire is not a comprehensive questionnaire. If pertinent exposure assessment information would assist in the management of past environmental exposures inquiries, additional questions should be added to the exposure assessment questionnaire.

Contact the DCPH-A historical exposure inquiries project managers (found in the Historical Exposures POC List on the registry home page) with the additional questions you would like added to the questionnaire, and the project managers will add questions based on stakeholder and user input.

4.3 Chronological Log of Activity

The Chronological Log of Activity section of a request tracks the creation of the request and changes in status, reassignments, notes, and responses.

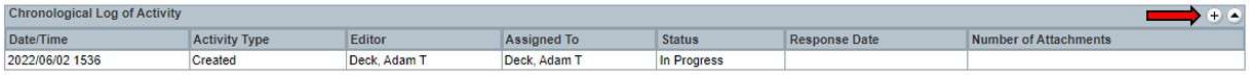
4.3.1 Request Creation, Changes in Status, Reassignments

DOEHRS-IH automatically creates an entry detailing the creation of the request, status changes, and reassignments.

4.3.2 Initial Inquiry Communication

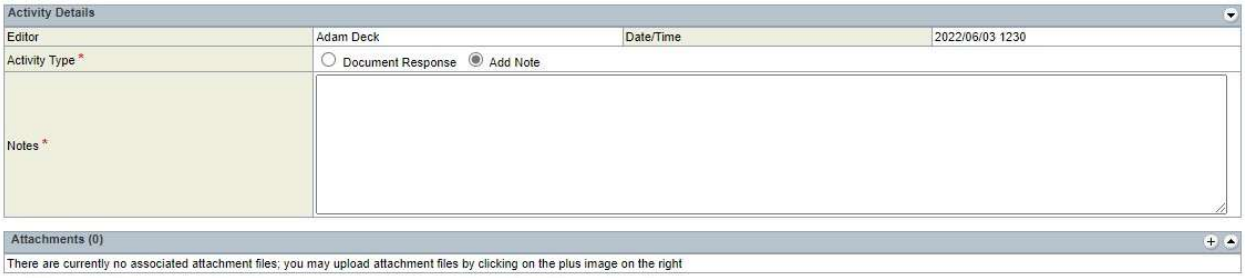
Electronic copies of the initial inquiry received from the requester should be added to the Log of Activity.

- Click the + on the right side of the Chronological Log of Activity (see figure below).

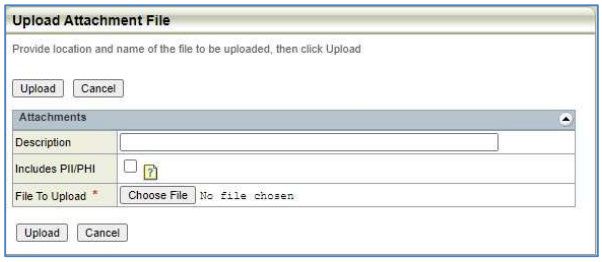

Chronological Log of Activity

Date/Time	Activity Type	Editor	Assigned To	Status	Response Date	Number of Attachments
2022/06/02 1536	Created	Deck, Adam T	Deck, Adam T	In Progress		

- Choose the “Add Note” radio button (see figure below).



- In the Notes section, add “Initial inquiry request” and any other descriptive information.
- Click the + at the right side of the Attachments portion to open the Upload Attachment File screen.



- Enter a description for the attachment, and mark the personally identifiable information/personal health information (PII/PHI) indicator, if applicable. Browse for the file, and click the “Upload” button. Click the “Save and Continue Working” button.

4.3.3 Additional Inquiry Communications

Additional communication that occurs regarding the inquiry or pertinent notes that would be valuable to capture should be added to the Chronology Log of Activity following the same process outlined in Section 4.3.2.

4.3.4 Changes in Status

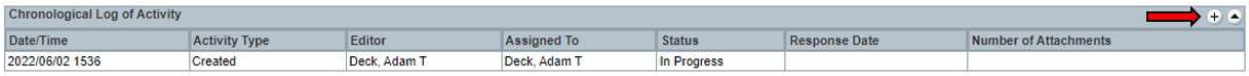
If no one connected to the request (i.e., the individual who is assigned to it, the potentially exposed individual, the requester, etc.) is actively addressing the request and the individual assigned to the request is unable to work on the request, change the status to “On Hold” and add a Note in the Chronology Log of Activity explaining why the status was changed.

For example, if the individual addressing an inquiry cannot proceed with their investigation of an informal inquiry because DCPH-A is awaiting a formal request from the VA, the status can be changed to “On Hold” until work on the inquiry can proceed.

4.3.5 Documented Response

After the environmental exposure inquiry response is finalized, an electronic copy of the response should be uploaded to the Log of Activity.

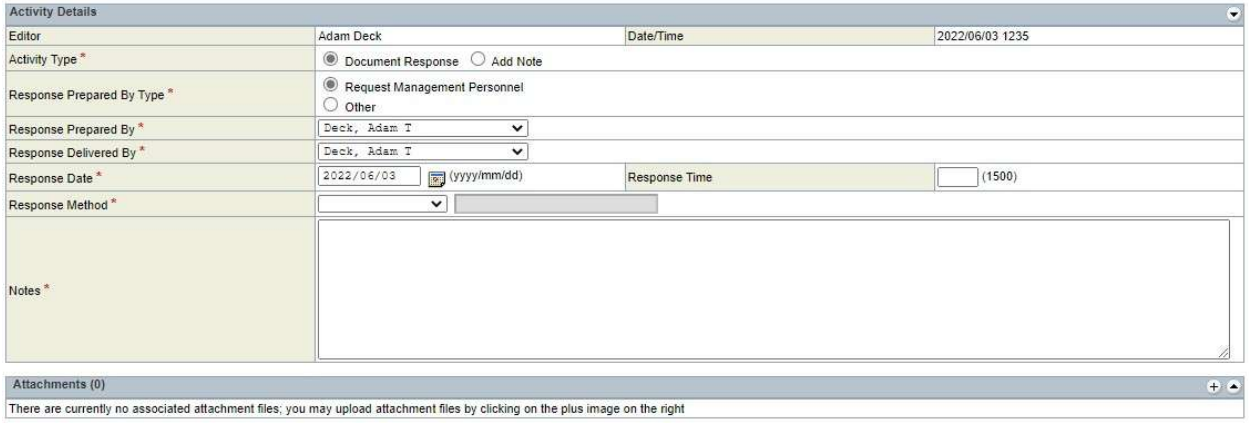
- Click the + on the right side of the Chronological Log of Activity (see figure below).



Chronological Log of Activity

Date/Time	Activity Type	Editor	Assigned To	Status	Response Date	Number of Attachments
2022/06/02 1536	Created	Deck, Adam T	Deck, Adam T	In Progress		

- Choose the “Document Response” radio button (see figure below).



Activity Details

Editor	Adam Deck	Date/Time	2022/06/03 1235
Activity Type *	(•) Document Response ( ) Add Note		
Response Prepared By Type *	(•) Request Management Personnel ( ) Other		
Response Prepared By *	Deck, Adam T		
Response Delivered By *	Deck, Adam T		
Response Date *	2022/06/03 (yyyy/mm/dd)	Response Time	(1500)
Response Method *			
Notes *			

Attachments (0)

There are currently no associated attachment files; you may upload attachment files by clicking on the plus image on the right

4.3.5.1 Response Prepared By

If personnel who are assigned permissions in the Historical Exposure Inquiries registry prepared the response, identify them by selecting Request Management Personnel and choosing the appropriate person from the drop-down list.

If personnel who are not in the Historical Exposure Inquiries registry prepared the response, identify them by selecting “Other” and choosing them from the drop-down list. If they are not in the drop-down list, click the “+” and add their contact information.

4.3.5.2 Response Delivered By

Only users of this registry are available in the Response Delivered By drop-down list. The person who prepared the response confirms with their command that the response was sent to the requester. In this field, indicate the preparer who confirmed the response was sent.

If the individuals who delivered the response back to the requester are not registry users, add a note in the Notes field indicating who delivered the response. For example, if your organization’s

administrative staff delivered the response, you could include “The DCPH-A administrative staff delivered or sent the request” in the Notes section.

4.3.5.3 Response Date

If a signed response letter was sent to the requester, use the date of the response letter as the Response Date. If the request was responded to informally through a phone call or email, use the date of that communication as the Response Date.

4.3.5.4 Response Method

Choose whether the response was sent by email, letter, phone call, or other. If other is chosen, provide a description of how the response was sent.

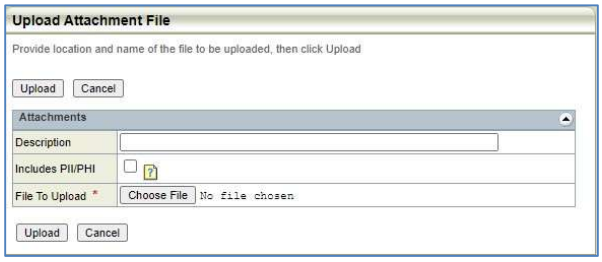
4.3.5.5 Notes

Provide any additional information regarding delivery of the response in this field.

4.3.5.6 Documented Response Attachments

Add an electronic copy of the response.

- Click the + at the right side of the Attachments portion to open the Upload Attachment File screen.



- Enter a description for the attachment and mark the PII/PHI indicator, if applicable. Browse for the file and click the “Upload” button. Click the “Save and Continue Working” button.

4.4 Attachments

The Attachments section of the request should be used to collect documents used to evaluate and prepare the response. This can include background documents, reference documents pertaining to the inquiry, and other pertinent documents.
Uploading attachments in this section follows the same process outlined in Section 4.3.2.

4.5 Closing the Request

After the past environmental exposure inquiry response is sent to the requester, the personnel who prepared the response should change the Status of the request to Closed. Closed requests will no longer appear in the registry's request list, but they are not deleted from the registry. To find Closed requests, search the DOEHRS-IH Historical Exposure Inquiries registry for requests with the Closed status (see Section 3.3.2).

4.6 Disposition

Closing the request will open an additional field asking for the disposition of the closed request.

- If a duplicate request was erroneously created, the duplicate request should be closed and marked "Discarded as Duplicate."
- If the request was a FOIA request that is managed in the registry only for visibility and tracking or if the request is otherwise not related to a historical exposure inquiry, the request should be marked "Out of Scope."
- If a response was sent to the requester, the request should be marked "Responded."
- Currently, the "Discarded as Extraneous" option is not used.

5 DOEHRS-IH DEMONSTRATION AND TRAINING ENVIRONMENT (DOEHRS DEMO)

DOEHRS-IH has a demonstration and training environment that is used to test the functionality of elements in DOEHRS-IH and does not contain actual data that all DOEHRS users can access. DOEHRS Demo is a useful tool for learning how to use the Historical Exposure Inquiry registry and testing its capabilities without the concern of making unfixable errors in the live version of DOEHRS-IH.

If users wish to test the procedures in this technical guide prior to using the Historical Exposure Inquiry registry itself, they can request access to DOEHRS Demo following the same process of gaining access to the Historical Exposure Inquiry registry noted in Section 2, except starting with the DOEHRS Demo link (https://doehrs-ih-demo.csd.disa.mil/Doehrs/login.jsp). Additional guidance can be found in *Getting a DOEHRS-IH "Demo/Train" account* at the link in Section 1.6.

Once access to DOEHRS Demo has been obtained, users are free to practice in the demo registry until they are comfortable using the live registry.

GLOSSARY

Acronyms and Abbreviations

APHC
U.S. Army Public Health Center

DCPH-A
Defense Centers for Public Health-Aberdeen

DMDC
Defense Manpower Data Center

DoD
Department of Defense

DoDI
Department of Defense Instruction

DOEHRS-IH
Defense Occupational and Environmental Health Readiness System

FOIA
Freedom of Information Act

HIPAA
Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996

PHI
personal health information

PII
personally identifiable information

POC
point of contact

SIGINT
signals intelligence

SME
subject matter expert

TG
Technical Guide

VA
Department of Veterans Affairs