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Control of Substances Hazardous to Health **Policy**



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy statement has been produced in response to the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH).
- 1.2 These regulations elaborate and re-enforce the general legislation.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1 All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure that the exposure of employees to substances hazardous to health is prevented or at least controlled to within statutory limits.
- 2.2 Where exposure cannot be adequately controlled by engineering means, appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided free of charge after consultation with employees or their representatives.
- 2.3 All Employees will be provided with comprehensive information and instruction on the nature and likelihood of their exposure to substances hazardous to health.
- 2.4 Specific guidance dealing with the use of hazardous substances is attached to this Policy statement.
- 2.5 The responsibility for implementing the requirements of this policy and the preparation of an implementation strategy rests with each Director or Head of Service.

GUIDANCE FOR DEALING WITH COSHH

1. WHAT ARE HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES?

- 1.1 Hazardous substances are anything that can harm Employees whilst working, if the substances are not properly controlled. They can be found in nearly all workplaces and can include:
- substances used directly in work activities, e.g. glues, paints and cleaning agents
 - substances generated during work activities, e.g. fumes from soldering and welding
 - naturally occurring substances, e.g. blood, bacteria and wood dust.
- 1.2 For the vast majority of commercial chemicals, the presence (or not) of a warning label will indicate whether COSHH is relevant.
- 1.3 Asbestos and lead are covered by separate legislation and not by COSHH.

2. COSHH ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 This is the Cornerstone of the COSHH Regulations and this requirement is mirrored in the wording of the risk assessment requirements of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

It is in two parts:

Firstly, work should not be carried out which is liable to expose Employees to any substance, which is hazardous to health, unless a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks created by the work has been made.

Secondly, the action taken to comply with the remainder of the COSHH regulations has to be identified.

- 2.2 The steps to be followed will include:
- identifying jobs, working processes and procedures which involve the use of or generation of substances that are hazardous to health
 - identifying all the hazardous substances involved
 - identifying how the hazardous substances are stored and used
 - identifying the route by which the hazardous substances might enter the body if very toxic, harmful or irritant

- identifying the likely degree of exposure
- identifying the resultant harmful effects or ill-health problems
- identifying the people who will be at risk, e.g., employees, sub contractors, visitors
- identifying the effectiveness of existing control measures
- identifying the risk to personnel if control measures deteriorate or fail or if an emergency occurs
- deciding whether the exposure represents a health risk or not
- finally, apart from simple assessments, which can be easily explained as and when required, all assessments should be in writing and kept readily available.

2.3 Competent persons must be appointed to carry out a COSHH assessment. Those appointed must have the expertise commensurate with the risk.

3. PREVENTION OR CONTROL MEASURES

3.1 The measures that can be taken to prevent or control the risks are:

- question the need to use a substance which is identified as being a serious hazard to health i.e. If possible eliminate
- where the hazardous substance cannot be eliminated, substitute in a less hazardous form, or less hazardous substance, if available
- use of plant, or systems of work to minimise, suppress or contain the generation of the hazardous substance
- removal of air-borne contaminants by either:
 - a) partial enclosure with local exhaust ventilation
 - b) local exhaust ventilation
 - c) sufficient general ventilation
- removal and prevention of contamination by:
 - a) safe storage and disposal of substances
 - b) safe disposal of contaminated clothing
 - c) provision of adequate washing facilities
- exclusion of non-essential personnel from contaminated areas, including members of the public
- reduction of the period of exposure by employees
- prohibit eating, drinking and smoking, in contaminated areas
- provision and maintenance of adequate welfare facilities
- provision of suitable personal protective equipment as a last resort.

4. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- When "control measures" fail to provide adequate control, suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) must be used.
- The equipment should adequately control the exposure of the wearer to the hazardous substance
- Personal protective equipment includes:
 - a) respiratory protective equipment
 - b) protective clothing
 - c) protective footwear
 - d) eye protection.
- Selection of the equipment should take the following points into consideration:
 - a) ability of material to resist penetration by the hazardous substance
 - b) design adequacy and suitability
 - c) environment in which it is to be used
 - d) any dust-release characteristics

5. EMERGENCIES

If accidental releases or leakages of a hazardous substance are possible despite control measures, an emergency plan for achieving control and safeguarding the health of personnel must be available.

6. MONITORING

- 6.1 So far as reasonably practicable a competent person in each division should monitor the exposure of employees to hazardous substances.
- 6.2 Monitoring, for example, is required in the following circumstances:
- where a serious health hazard could arise because of failure or deterioration of the control measures
 - where it is necessary to ensure that a maximum exposure limit (MEL), or occupational exposure limit (OES), or employer imposed working standard is not exceeded
 - when it is necessary to carry out an additional check on the effectiveness of any control measure
 - where work involves the use of any carcinogen and any work with substances or processes listed in Schedule 4 of the COSHH regulations.

7. HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

- 7.1 The main purpose of health surveillance is to detect problems with the health of employees at the earliest possible stage. The purpose of control measures is to prevent damage to the health of employees which health surveillance cannot do. However, it can indicate that control measures are not working properly. Health Surveillance should be undertaken when:
- an employee is exposed to one of the substances and is engaged in a process listed in Schedule 5 of the COSHH regulations
 - an employee is exposed to a substance hazardous to health and there is an identifiable disease or adverse health effect related to the exposure (which may occur because of the conditions of the work) and there are valid techniques for detecting indications of the disease or the effect.
- 7.2 Suitable health surveillance can range from surveillance under the supervision of an employment medical adviser, an appointed doctor or a registered medical practitioner, to enquiries about symptoms, inspection or examination by the Council's Occupational Health Adviser. At the bottom end of the scale an inspection (e.g. for dermatitis of the hands or forearms of an employee) by a designated first-aider.
- 7.3 Health surveillance records must be kept at least 40 years from the date of the last entry.

8. TRAINING

- 8.1 Sufficient information instruction and training must be provided to ensure a full understanding of the hazards to health posed by substances in the workplace and the importance of the control measures provided. Information must also be provided to others who may be affected, such as contractors, temporary employees and visitors.
- 8.2 Managers of employees that use substances hazardous to health should be given additional training to ensure the proper management of the risks.

9. RECORDS TO BE KEPT

9.1 Under the provisions of COSHH, the following records must be kept:

- inventory of hazardous substances
- assessment of risks of exposure
- control measures provided
- methods of use of control measures and defect/fault reporting
- examination, testing and repair of control measures. Either the record itself, or a summary, must be kept for a minimum of five years
- exposure monitoring for five years. if a record of background exposure or control proving record, and for 40 years if a record of exposure of an identifiable employee
- individual health record of exposure or potential exposure for 40 years from date of last entry
- training given to staff.

10. CHECKLIST

10.1 The seven most important steps to consider under COSHH are:

- identify the hazard
- assess the risk
- eliminate, prevent or control the risk
- maintain and monitor the controls
- monitor the health of the workforce
- ensure assessments and controls are up to date
- inform and train employees.

11. PURCHASING

A list of approved substances assessed under the COSHH regulations and where these products can be obtained must be maintained. This must be made available to those employees who purchase products for use in the Council's work activities.

12. ADVICE

Advice on the implementation of the policy can be obtained from the Health & Safety Team, Human Resources, Tŷ Elai, Dinas Isaf Industrial Estate, Williamstown, CF40 1NY.

CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH REGULATIONS 2002
A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES

THE CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS to HEALTH Regulations are designed to protect you from risks associated with hazardous substances at work. They were introduced under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and came into force on 1 October 1989. These have now been superseded by **COSHH 2002**.

WHAT ARE THE HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES UNDER COSHH?

Substances, for example, with the following labels:



TOXIC

A substance, which if it is inhaled or ingested or it penetrates the skin, may involve serious acute or chronic health risks and even death



HARMFUL

A substance, which if it is inhaled or ingested or it penetrates the skin, may involve limited health risks.



IRRITANT

A non-corrosive substance, which, through immediate, prolonged or repeated contact with the skin or mucous membrane, can cause inflammation



CORROSIVE

A substance, which may on contact with living tissues destroy them.

Other examples would be:

- Pesticides
- Products or by-products (e.g. dust, fumes)
- Micro-organisms (viruses, bacteria)
- Carcinogens (agents causing cancer)
- Biological agents

WHY IS COSHH IMPORTANT?

To provide information on hazardous substances at work and how to guard against them and to protect employees from harm.

WHAT DOES COSHH REQUIRE?

The Council as an employer must:

- find out what substances are present at the workplace
- find out how each substance is used and who uses it
- identify if any hazards to health are present
- assess the risk to health arising from the use and decide what

- precautions are necessary
- record the assessment and make the information available to employees
- ensure that control measures are used, properly maintain the equipment and ensure procedures are followed
- provide information, instruction and training for employees.

Employees must:

- read the information before using the product
- take part in training programmes and ask questions if you do not understand something
- remove personal protective equipment, likely to cause contamination, before eating, drinking or smoking
- maintain a high standard of personal hygiene, and make proper use of welfare facilities
- report defects in anything concerned with prevention, or control of exposure to substances hazardous to health
- only use the protective equipment provided
- store equipment safely
- practice safe working habits
- report any hazards or defects to your manager/supervisor
- take part in any health screening/monitoring programmes
- use control measures properly
- read the label before you move, handle, or open a product and follow its instructions
- not ignore warning labels
- not mix chemical substances nor transfer chemicals into other containers e.g. milk bottles; fizzy drink bottles etc
- promptly report any damaged labels or unlabelled products to your manager/ supervisor
- not use any unlabelled products

Remember

- before using any product and before carrying out a work activity which produces a by-product such as dust or fumes, read the assessment
- read and note the information on labels and hazard data sheets
- follow warnings and instructions
- follow safety procedures
- use the protective clothing provided
- learn the emergency procedures
- ask your manager/supervisor for help if required.

If no assessment has been made of the substance you are using or there is no information sheet on the substance available, do not use the product. Contact your manager or supervisor who will arrange for an assessment to be carried out.

MANAGERS CHECKLIST

		✓ As Appropriate		
		N/A	Yes	No
•	Has an inventory been prepared of all hazardous substances used or stored in the workplace?			
•	Has a COSHH assessment been carried out at all premises where hazardous substances are being used?			
•	Are there procedures in place to ensure new substances are assessed prior to being used?			
•	Has action been taken as a result of the assessment to prevent or control the risk?			
•	Is all necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) available to all employees who use or come into contact with hazardous substances?			
•	Has information been given to employees on hazardous substances they use or come into contact with and the risks that are associated with them?			
•	Where appropriate, is health surveillance being carried out?			
•	Has information, instruction and training been provided for employees who may be exposed to hazardous substances?			
•	Is health surveillance being carried out, as appropriate?			

		✓ As Appropriate		
		N/A	Yes	No
•	Are there procedures in place where necessary, for the safe removal of used hazardous substances?			
•	Are plans in place for the phased changes or removal of environmentally harmful substances that may be in-situ (eg. halon, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) etc)?			
•	Are all vessels, bags, and wrappings etc. that contain hazardous substances clearly marked?			
•	Where appropriate, are monitoring procedures in place to monitor exposure of employees to hazardous substances?			
•	Are appropriate records being kept?			
•	Are there monitoring procedures in place to ensure that the requirements of the Policy are being met?			

Completed by: _____

Confirmed by: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

Designation: _____

Designation: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____