

Legal Stuff

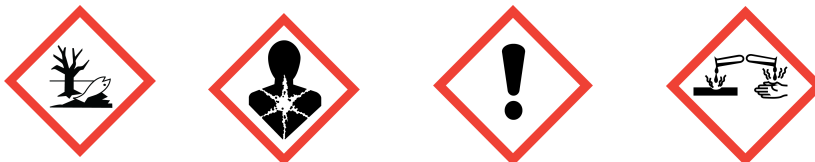
Regulations covering the control of substances hazardous to health, (known as COSHH in the UK), require us to assess the potential health issues from hazardous substances and chemicals that you might come into contact with in the course of work. We then have to make sure that your health will not be at risk from the way we use these substances. You have to work with us and use the control measures, including personal protective equipment, that we provide. You must also follow any safe systems of work or procedures that we implement.

Information

You could be exposed to hazardous substances through direct use of proprietary chemicals that we use or by a hazardous substance created in the course of work, for example silica dust whilst cutting stone or wood dust in a woodworking shop.

There are 4 ways that hazardous substances can enter your body – inhalation, ingestion (through the mouth, nose eyes), absorption (through the skin) and injection. The effects of exposure whether short term to high levels or long term to low levels can range from dermatitis, asthma burns and respiratory problems through to cancer.

The first step is to identify any substances that are potentially hazardous. It's easy with substances we buy in because our suppliers are required to put hazard warning labels on the containers and to give us Safety Data Sheets which give detailed information about their hazards and risks and appropriate control measures. Safety Data Sheets explain the hazards with reference to maximum safe exposure levels - worked out to recognised international standards. Some don't need to carry a warning label because they pose no risk, some are of low risk because we use so little or because they are almost harmless and general ventilation is all that is needed. Others may require specific local ventilation or to be used in an enclosed process and the most hazardous will need very specific controls and maybe also personal protective equipment.



It can be a little harder where the hazardous substance is a by-product of a process. We have to recognise that it has been created and is in a form that might be a cause of ill-health.

We have put together an inventory of the hazardous substances that we have identified as in use in this business *(offer a copy and ask if there any substances that have been missed)*.

Control Measures. How we have controlled and reduced risk.

(The person leading the talk will need to make each of the points outlined here specific to the measures adopted to protect their staff)

- Using Safety Data Sheets and guidance we have assessed the way we use them and the hazards and risks you face from using them.
- Where appropriate we have monitored your exposure levels through an occupational hygiene survey, to ensure that your exposure is less than the maximum Workplace Exposure Level (WEL).
- Provided occupational health surveillance where required in law and also where surveillance can detect the early onset of symptoms before they become a long term illness. *(Explain what the surveillance is for, who is in scope and general outcomes.)*
- Developed safe working procedures and work instructions. *(Explain and give examples where these are in place)*.
- Identified and put in place the precautions required to prevent or control exposure. *(Explain and give examples from your workplace e.g. local exhaust ventilation, replaced a hazardous substance with less hazardous, ppe where these are in place)*.
- Provided safe and suitable storage for hazardous substances.
- Provided Personal Protective and Respiratory Equipment. Users of respiratory protection are face-fit tested.

- Trained and instructed you in these arrangements.
- We check out that these controls measures are maintained *(e.g. local exhaust ventilation checked by insures on routine basis, protective clothing laundered, ppe checked and replaced)*
- Supervisors make sure you follow our procedures.
- We have specific procedures for maintenance of these control measures.
- Exposure levels, controls and procedures are routinely reviewed.

How you can help, what you should do

- ✓ Follow safe working procedures and instructions.
- ✓ Understand warning symbols; know how to act.
- ✓ Attend for health surveillance and cooperate with the health professional.
- ✓ Use the PPE equipment we have provided. Wear it correctly and for the tasks instructed.
- ✓ Keep your PPE clean, store it correctly; ask for a replacement should it become damaged.
- ✗ Do not decant chemicals into unsuitable or unlabelled bottles. Nobody wants to mistake a chemical for something else. The results could be disastrous.
- ✗ Don't use a chemical unless you have been instructed to do so.
- ✗ Don't leave hazardous substances lying around; store them when not in use.
- ✓ Practice good housekeeping; don't sweep dusty substances - use a filtered vacuum.
- ✓ Know the emergency procedures.
- ✓ Report all accidents and spillages.
- ✓ Practice good hygiene; wash your hands regularly, particularly before eating.
- ✓ Change your overalls and work wear regularly - keep them clean.
- ✓ Know our emergency procedures in the event of a spillage or large scale release.
- ✓ Be aware of first aid requirements and procedures for specific substances

Questions to be answered:-

- 1 What is a substance hazardous to health?
Placeholder - A substance hazardous to health is a substance or preparation (mixture) with the potential to cause harm if they are inhaled, ingested, or has come into contact with the skin and been absorbed.
- 2 Do the cleaning chemicals we use have to be kept in a locked cupboard?
Placeholder - Not necessarily. Most cleaning materials are designed to be low hazard low risk. Nonetheless, locking up chemicals is a sensible precaution if vulnerable persons such as children or learning-impaired persons can gain access to them.
- 3 Is health surveillance required when working with hazardous chemicals?
Placeholder - Not necessarily, it depends on the result of the risk assessment and the chemicals themselves. The Safety Data Sheet will advise if it is recommended; adverse effects are not always detectable by health surveillance.
- 4 Does it matter if the local exhaust ventilation in the area we use these substances isn't working properly?
Placeholder - Yes it does. The ventilation is there to control the hazards and risks you face. If it isn't working your health is at risk. You must report failures to your line manager.

I have read and understood the above text and will practice this through my work methods.

