



Health & Safety COSHH

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Reviewed

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COSHH

Introduction

Chemicals or other hazardous substances can put people's health at risk. The law requires employers to control exposure to hazardous substances to protect both employees and others, e.g. pupils, who may be exposed from the activities.

Hazardous Substances Include: -

- substances used directly in work activities, e.g. adhesives, paints, cleaning agents.
- substances generated during work activities, e.g. fumes from soldering and welding, wood dust from sanding.
- naturally occurring substances, e.g. grain dust.
- biological agents such as bacteria and other micro-organisms, e.g. blood, bacteria.

In terms of the Regulations, a substance hazardous to health is one that has already been classified as being: -

1. very toxic(T+)
2. toxic (T)
3. harmful (X)
4. corrosive(C)
5. irritant (Xi)

under the Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging) Regulations (CHIP). See symbols at Appendix 3.

- or a substance that has been assigned a workplace exposure limit.
- or a substance that is carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic to reproduction
- or a biological agent
- or dust in substantial concentrations in air
- any substance not mentioned above but which creates a hazard to health comparable to those mentioned above.

For the vast majority of commercial chemicals, the presence (or not) of a warning label will indicate whether COSHH is relevant e.g. household washing up liquid doesn't have a warning label but bleach does – so COSHH applies to bleach but not washing up liquid when used at work.

No work should be carried out that is liable to expose anyone to substances hazardous to health unless an assessment of the risks has been carried out.

Lilly Brook Pre- School will seek help and advice from professionals in the industry to ensure the cleaning products used within the Pre-school comply with Health and Safety COSHH regulations.

This is to ensure no product used in Pre-school is deemed hazardous to the health of any child or member of staff. If a preparation contains hazardous component chemical it is the duty of the employer to take account of the risk and monitor the workplace and the proficient use of the product, ensuring safe practice and good housekeeping.



Once monitoring has been undertaken and if the levels exceed the limits stated on the Safety Data Sheet, it is the responsibility of every employer to either provide suitable protective clothing or equipment to prevent and or eliminate contact to the skin, or provide adequate ventilation, or alternatively convert to a safer product or convert the environment. To eliminate the necessity of the above we will only purchase products that have been COSHH checked and have the paperwork to support this.

This will be kept in the COSHH folder in the office.

Substance identification & use

The cleaning of the Pre-school will adhere to the policies of the setting.

- Identify which substances are hazardous and create an inventory.
- Decide who is at risk?
- Assess the risks. The process of assessing the risks of substances can include information from a variety of sources these could be:
 - safety data sheets
 - supplier information
 - even staff knowledge.

The following questions should be considered for each substance as part of this risk assessment process:

- What is the nature of the substance, e.g. is it corrosive?
- How much of the substance is used/handled
- Form of substance, e.g. gas, liquid
- How can people be affected? Inhalation, splash on the skin, puncture wound etc.
- Are they trained in handling the substance?



Implement measures to protect employees Where there are significant risks, it is important to implement procedures to protect your employees. The recommended approach is to follow a hierarchal methodology:

- Eliminate the risk: Does the substance have to be used at all? Can the work practice be changed?
- Reduce the risk: Substitute – can you use a less hazardous product?
- Engineering methods: Handling processes e.g. use a fume cupboard.
- Other controls could be minimising number of people on each job.
- Provide training, information, instruction and supervision.
- Regularly inspect, test and undertake thorough examination of scavenging/ extraction equipment.

Once the COSHH assessment is completed, it is especially important for the employer to communicate the processes that should be used from that point forward. Also, suitable safe procedures for handling hazardous substances or in situations where they may be released, e.g. anaesthetic gases, adequate emergency plans and procedures should be developed to deal with accidents and incidents.

- Recording, monitoring and reviewing COSHH Assessments
 - Product and substance name
 - Where the product is used and for what purpose
 - Hazardous properties including WELs
 - How the substance can enter the body and who is at risk
 - Control measures in place

Ensure employees are properly informed, trained and supervised. This should include:

- the names of the substances they will work with or could be exposed to
- the risks created by such exposure, and access to any safety data sheets that apply to those substances.
- the main findings of the COSHH assessments.
- the precautions that need to be taken to protect themselves and others.
- how to use personal protective equipment and clothing provided.
- results of any exposure monitoring and health surveillance.
- emergency procedures that need to be followed where necessary.

You must ensure that employees and pupils understand the risks from the hazardous substances to which they could be exposed. Your control measures will not be fully effective if your employees do not know their purpose, how to use them properly, or the importance of reporting hazards. The COSHH assessments should be communicated to and readily available at all times to the employees affected.

Recording and Reviewing the Assessment

A record should be kept of the main findings of the assessment. The record should be made as soon as practicable after the assessment and contain enough information to explain the decisions taken about whether the risks are significant and the need for any control measures. Record the actions your employees and others need to take to ensure hazardous substances are adequately controlled. (See Appendix 3)

Who Should Do the Assessment?



Employers are legally responsible for the assessment, but others can do the assessment on behalf of the employer.

Whoever carries out the assessment should:

- have adequate knowledge, training and expertise in understanding hazard and risk.
- know how the work activity uses or produces substances hazardous to health.
- have the ability and the authority to collate all the necessary relevant information.
- have the knowledge, skills and experience to make the right decisions about the risks and the precautions that are needed.

Entry or Exposure Routes Injury can be caused by chemicals only if they reach sensitive parts of the body at a sufficiently high concentration and for a sufficiently long time (high enough exposure).

Major routes of exposure

Major routes are through:

- the skin (topical),
- the lungs (inhalation)
- the gastrointestinal tract (ingestion).

Skin absorption

This is the least likely route of penetration since the natural thickness of the skin plus its natural coating of grease and sweat provide some protection against chemicals. However, some materials are capable of penetrating intact, healthy skin e.g. organic mercury compounds, some steroid hormones. The natural protection of the skin may also be bypassed through cuts, abrasion or puncture wounds e.g. needle-stick injury.

Inhalation

Gases and vapours, aerosols and fumes are readily inhaled and may cause harm (including asphyxiation) anywhere in the respiratory system and may also be absorbed into the bloodstream, but inhalation of particles depends upon their size and shape – the smaller the particle, the further into the respiratory tract it can go.

Large particles are filtered off in the nose. Smaller particles, or those breathed in by the mouth, settle on the walls of the upper respiratory tract or throat and are coughed up and either ejected or swallowed. If swallowed, they may enter the gut and cause damage as if they had been ingested.

The smallest particles of dust and fibres can be inhaled down into the lungs where they can cause local damage, sometimes by interaction with the cells in the lungs which normally remove bacteria. These particles may also be absorbed into the bloodstream.

Workplace Exposure Limits



A workplace exposure limit (WEL) is the maximum concentration of an airborne substance, averaged over a reference period, to which employees may be exposed by inhalation. Substances can be swallowed after they have got on to hands which are then used to eat or smoke without being washed.

Substance can also be ingested if they have been decanted from their original containers into for example empty food containers or drink bottles. This practice is highly dangerous and must never happen. Large airborne particles can also end up being swallowed rather than ingested.



Legislation

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations of 1988, consolidated in 1994, amended in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999 and further consolidated in 2002 are the main piece of legislation covering control of the risks to employees and other people arising from exposure to harmful substances generated out of or in connection with any work activity under the employer's control.

The main objective of the regulations is to reduce occupational ill health by setting out a simple framework for controlling hazardous substances in the workplace.

Duties

As with all other regulations building on the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, legal duties under COSHH are laid primarily on employers and it is their duty to see that proper systems of work and management are in place. In education, the employer will be the Local Authority or the Governing Body. Many of the duties that employers owe to their employees extend to non-employees, such as pupils, who may be affected by the employer's activity. In particular, pupils and other non-employees need to be given information and training on how to deal with hazardous substances they may encounter in the course of their work or study.

Duties on employees include making proper use of any control measures, following safe systems of work, abiding by local rules and reporting defects in safety equipment. Nonemployees have no specific duties under COSHH but the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act do apply, forbidding the misuse of anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare.

What COSHH Requires Complying with COSHH involves:

- assessing the risks to health arising from hazardous substances at work and deciding what precautions are needed,
- preventing or adequately controlling exposure,
- ensuring that control measures are used, maintained, examined and tested,
- if necessary, monitoring exposure and carrying out health surveillance.
- ensuring employees are properly informed, trained and supervised.



The Danger Symbols and General Nature of Risk

EXPLOSIVE (may explode due to heat, shock or friction)	
OXIDISING (can release oxygen and intensify fire)	
FLAMMABLE (extremely flammable) (highly flammable) (flammable)	
TOXIC (very toxic) (serious health risks) (toxic)	
HARMFUL (may have limited health effects)	
IRRITANT (can cause inflammation)	
CORROSIVE (destroys living tissue)	
HARMFUL TO THE ENVIRONMENT (ecology affected)	



Appendix 1 - COSHH assessment Record Sheet

Company Name	
Name of substance/s	
Supplier and contact no.	
Data sheet	Attached <input type="checkbox"/> In file <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment ref.	
Process use or purpose?	
Location used?	
How often used?	
Quantities used?	
Who will be exposed?	Operator <input type="checkbox"/> Others <input type="checkbox"/>
Fire and environment - emergency no.	
First aid – emergency no.	

Hazard symbols and pictograms (as indicated on the container/packaging/safety data sheet)

 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>
Comments / Hazard statements / signal words (as per per packaging) - optional								

General work procedures

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Does the substance have a Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL)?

Yes No

What is the exposure limit?

Routes of exposure

If necessary list a specific type of PPE to be used?

Inhalation

Ingestion

Skin contact

Eye contact

Select the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required for this process

 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>
--	--	--	--	--	---	--	--

Monitoring

Type and frequency

Air

LEV



Personal	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health surveillance	<input type="checkbox"/>	

First aid treatment	
Inhalation	
Ingestion	
Eye contact	
Skin contact	

Storage, handling, spillage and disposal

Fire precautions and action

Maintenance of plant, equipment or PPE

Further information and instruction (e.g. precautionary statements)

Overall risk rating with control measures in place. High Medium Low

Recommended actions/improvements	By who?	By when?	Done
			<input type="checkbox"/>

Signature: - _____ Date: - _____

Position: - _____ Review date: - _____