

# COSHH

COSHH is the law that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health. You can prevent or reduce workers exposure to hazardous substances by:

- Finding out what the health hazards are;
- Deciding how to prevent harm to health (risk assessment);
- Providing control measures to reduce harm to health;
- Making sure they are used ;
- Keeping all control measures in good working order;
- Providing information, instruction and training for employees and others;
- Providing monitoring and health surveillance in appropriate cases;
- Planning for emergencies.

Most businesses use substances, or products that are mixtures of substances. Some processes create substances. These could cause harm to employees, contractors and other people.

Sometimes substances are easily recognised as harmful. Common substances such as paint, bleach or dust from natural materials may also be harmful.

Find out more from HSE

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/basics.htm>



## COSHH assessment

You are probably already aware of many risks in your trade or industry. A COSHH assessment concentrates on the hazards and risks from substances in your workplace.

Remember that hazards and risks are not limited to substances labelled as 'hazardous'.

Steps to making a COSHH assessment:

- Walk around your workplace. Where is there potential for exposure to substances that might be hazardous to health?

Examples include processes that emit dust, fume, vapour, mist or gas; and skin contact with liquids, pastes and dusts. Substances with workplace exposure limits (WELs) are hazardous to health.

- In what way are the substances harmful to health?

Get safety data sheets, and read your trade magazines. Some substances arise from processes and have no safety data sheet. Examples include fume from welding or soldering, mist from metalworking, dust from quarrying, gases from silage. Look at the HSE web pages for your trade or industry.



- What jobs or tasks lead to exposure?

Note these down. Note down what control measures you already use. For these jobs, how likely is any harm to workers' health?

- Are there any areas of concern, eg from the Accident Book?

Examples include burns from splashes, nausea or light headedness from solvents, etc

Find out more from HSE

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/basics/assessment.htm>

- what the hazards and risks are;
- about any workplace exposure limit;
- the results of any monitoring of exposure;
- the general results of health surveillance;
- what to do if there is an accident (eg spillage) or emergency.

Employees should have access to safety data sheets.

Keep employees informed about planned future changes in processes or substances used.

When a contractor comes on site, they need to know what the risks are and how you are controlling them. And you need to know if they are bringing hazardous substances onto your premises, and how they will prevent harm to your employees.

Find out more from HSE

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/basics/training.htm>

For more information on control measures

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/basics/control.htm>

For more information on health surveillance

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/basics/surveillance.htm>



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