

# **The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Guidance**



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Version	Date	Detail	Author
1.0	July 2024	This guidance supersedes all other departmental and Council documents on the same subject	H Williamson – HSW Consultant
1.1	Sept 2024	Minor changes	H Williamson – HSW Consultant

## Purpose

Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations the Council has a duty to protect employees, clients, contractors, volunteers, members of the public etc., who could be exposed to hazardous substances because of our activities.

This guidance provides information on the hazardous substances, the hierarchy of control, COSHH assessments, the COSHH product directory and the procedure for ensuring that hazardous substances are assessed and who carries this out.

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## Scope

This document applies to all employees of the Council, contractors working for them and volunteers using or producing a substance which has the potential to be hazardous to health as covered by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations.

This guidance has been produced as part of the Council's health and safety arrangements. Whilst recognising that some departments/services will have specialist requirements over and above this guidance which necessitate additional specialist arrangements, it sets out the minimum health and safety requirements required across all departments to ensure the Council can implement the stated aims of its Safety Policy and comply with its Statutory Requirements. All managers and employees should therefore make themselves familiar with the requirements of this guidance and ensure they are followed.



# Introduction

Every year, thousands of workers are made ill at work by hazardous substances, contracting lung disease, asthma, cancer and skin disease such as dermatitis. These diseases can cost millions of pounds each year to industry to replace the trained workers; society with disability allowances and medicines; and individuals who may lose their jobs.

Hazardous substances come in the form of solids, dusts, liquids, vapours, gases, biological agents (bacteria/ infectious micro-organisms such as flu), powders, fumes, and aerosols. One could be a single chemical, a product (mixture of chemicals / substances), a mixture of products, a biproduct of a work process such as the dust produced by machining wood, etc., or a naturally occurring substance such as mould, fungi, or bodily fluids.

As a Council, we have a statutory duty to take effective measures to control exposure to hazardous substances and to protect health.

Asbestos, lead, radioactive materials, and substances in mines are not covered by this guidance because their use is under other specific regulations.

Substances that are only hazardous because they are at high pressure, extreme temperatures or have explosive or flammable properties are also not covered by this guidance.

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# Roles and Responsibilities

## **Corporate Management Team (CMT)**

- Will ensure that sufficient resources are provided to ensure compliance with this document regarding COSHH.

## **Departmental Senior Management Team (SMT)**

- Will ensure that sufficient resources are provided to ensure compliance with this document, tailored to the specific requirements of their department.

## **Head of Services (HoS)**

- Will ensure suitable and sufficient resources are provided to comply with the requirements of this document.
- Where requested, provide local Union Safety Representatives with a full set of COSHH assessments.
- Follow disciplinary procedures for workers who consistently fail to comply with safe working practices in line with Council procedures.

## **Line Manager**

- Have knowledge of the [COSHH Product Directory](#)
- Compile an [Inventory of Hazardous Substance Products](#) of all hazardous substances used and keep it up to date.
- Follow the Arrangements section of this guidance to obtain existing COSHH risk assessments and / or procurement of hazardous substances.
- File completed inventory, safety data sheets and COSHH assessments in a readily accessible file.
- Ensure that parts 2 and 3 of the assessment are reviewed at regular intervals to maintain their validity (at least annually).
- Ensure that identified control measures are implemented and effective.
- Maintain and retain records of assessments, control measures, training, monitoring and health surveillance.
- Seek to implement the safest working practices.



- Arrange for improvements to working practices, that have been identified by the assessment process, that you are able to authorise.
- Advise your Head of Service / Section Head of changes needed to be made to working practices which you cannot authorise (e.g., due to financial considerations).
- Must ensure that employees have access to the COSHH assessments relevant to their role.
- Employees must have suitable and sufficient training in the use of the hazardous substances where necessary and fully understand and comply with the control measures.
- Ensure that employees are provided with suitable and sufficient personal protective equipment identified by the assessment process.
- Ensure that all containers and pipes containing hazardous substances are clearly marked and stored correctly.
- Ensure that maintenance, examination and testing of extraction equipment and other control measures is undertaken (LEV at least once every 14 months) and maintain records for at least 5 years.
- Ensure that exposure is monitored by a competent person where necessary.
- Ensure that employees are provided with health surveillance where necessary.
- Ensure emergency procedures are in place where the risk from uncontrolled exposure to a substance is high.
- Review COSHH Assessments following changes in working practices, or in light of new information that would affect the use of the product. Line Managers should regularly check that they have the most up to date version of the COSHH Assessment by using the [COSHH Product Directory](#).
- For those employees unable to access this document electronically, print off a hard copy of this guidance and any relevant hyperlinks.
- Seek assistance from Health, Safety and Wellbeing as necessary.

## **Employee**

- Consult their Line Manager for guidance on the topic of COSHH, as required.
- Ensure they are familiar with and understand information provided in the COSHH risk assessments and safety data sheets, etc.



- Follow all the control measures outlined on the COSHH risk assessment for any hazardous substance they are using or come into contact with.
- Fully comply with all instructions provided to ensure their safety.
- Bring to the attention of their line manager any health and safety issues they have concerns about arising out of the use of hazardous substances.

### **Non-employee/Volunteer**

- Non-employees, such as volunteers, have no specific duties under COSHH regulations, but the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act do apply.

### **Contractor**

- Contractors using products they have supplied should provide a COSHH risk assessment in advance of using the products.
- Will make proper use of any control measures, follow safe systems of work, abide by local rules, and report any issues with personal protective equipment (PPE), etc.

### **Health, Safety and Wellbeing Function (HSW)**

- Will provide advice and assistance as requested.
- Will provide advice on medical aspects including health surveillance.
- Offer support, advice and guidance to Managers carrying out risk assessments by using [COSHH Essentials](#).
- Seek assistance from specialist organisations when necessary.
- Monitor the effectiveness of this document.
- Health surveillance may need to be completed by Occupational Health and is a legal requirement under COSHH if exposure is linked to an identifiable disease or adverse health effect (such as cancer or sensitisation).
- Where a COSHH risk assessment indicates a significant risk of occupational asthma, a high level of health surveillance is required. This involves the use of questionnaires and testing as necessary by Occupational Health.

### **Manufacturer/Supplier**

- Manufacturers / suppliers have a statutory duty to give relevant information about their products with regards to health and safety. Under the CLP Regulations this duty is extended for dangerous substances and requires a detailed safety data sheet to be provided by chemical suppliers. The manufacturer must also put a 'hazard symbol(s)' and 'risk phrases(s)', or 'hazard statement(s)' on the label of the container.
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# Arrangements

When implementing this guidance, you should take into consideration all of the following information and also view **Appendix 1 COSHH flowchart** which explains who is responsible for carrying out and monitoring all aspects of COSHH in relationship to the Council's requirements.

## Definitions / Terminology

- **Hazard / Hazardous** – the ability to cause harm or illness to human health.
- **Hazardous Substance** – any liquid, gas or solid that poses a risk to workers' health or safety, for example chemical and biological agents.
- **Risk**: the likelihood that a hazard will cause a specified harm to someone or something.
- **Risk Assessment** – the HSE defines a risk assessment as 'a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm'.
- **Carcinogen**: cancer-inducing agent.
- **Occupational Cancer**: cancer known (or suspected) to be caused by work activities.
- **Safety Data Sheet** – if a product you use is "dangerous for supply", then the supplier must supply a safety data sheet. Sections 2 and 16 of the sheets tell you what the dangers are, and sections 4-8 tell you about emergencies, storage and handling. There are substances hazardous to health which do not come with a Safety Data Sheet e.g., blood and body fluids, Legionella bacteria or hard woods which only pose a risk to health when they are machined, and dust is generated. These types of substances will still need assessment and control under COSHH.
- **Hazard Statement**- a phrase that describes the nature of the hazard in the substance or mixture.
- **Precautionary statement** - a phrase that describes recommended measures to minimise or prevent adverse effects resulting from exposure to a hazardous substance or mixture due to its use or disposal.

- **Hazard pictograms – (internationally known hazard symbols)**



- Health hazard (Symbol: Exclamation mark)



- Flammable (Symbol: flame)



- Corrosive (Symbol: Corrosion)



- Acute toxicity (Symbol: Skull and crossbones)



- Hazardous to the environment (Symbol: Dead tree and fish)

If the process you are carrying out requires you to use any of the following, please contact the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Team as soon as possible:-



- Explosive (Symbol: exploding bomb)



- Oxidising (Symbol: flame over circle)



- Gas under pressure (Symbol: Gas cylinder)



- Serious health hazard (Symbol: health hazard)
- **Control Equipment** - Control equipment comes in many forms. It includes ventilation to extract dust, mist and fume; glove boxes and fume cupboards; spray booths and refuges (clean rooms in dirty work areas). It also includes using water to reduce dust, and systems for disinfecting cooling water.
- **Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV)** - If you use local exhaust ventilation to control exposure, it needs regular checking and thorough examination and testing at least once every 14 months or at more frequent intervals if you are using it with one of the processes listed in Schedule 4 of COSHH.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** - Personal protective equipment is often used as part of control measures. This also needs checking and maintenance because, if it fails, it no longer provides protection and exposes the wearer to danger. The users need to know exactly what they are doing, and so do the supervisors.
- **REACH** - UK REACH is a regulation that applies to the majority of chemical substances that are manufactured in or imported into Great Britain

## COSHH

COSHH deals with occupational exposure to hazardous substances, including those which have the potential to cause cancer (carcinogens), those which have mutagenic effects (can cause heritable genetic defects), and teratogens (non-hereditary congenital malformations). Where a substance is a known or suspected carcinogen or mutagen, every effort should be made to substitute for a non-carcinogenic or non-mutagenic alternative.

## **Hazardous Substances Include**

A hazardous substance is any liquid, gas or solid that poses a risk to workers' health or safety, for example chemical and biological agents e.g.:-

- 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.

COSHH applies to virtually all substances classified as hazardous to health **except:**

- Asbestos
- Lead
- Radio-active materials
- Substances at high pressure and/or extreme temperatures.
- Explosives

These substances are covered by other specific legislation.

## **Hierarchy of Control**

The COSHH Regulations require the prevention of exposure to hazardous substances, by not using hazardous substances, or substituting for less hazardous substances. Where this is not reasonably practicable adequate control measures must be put in place to safeguard human health.

This list shows the **hierarchy of control** in order of priority:

1. Eliminate the use of a harmful product or substance and use a safer one.
2. Use a safer form of the product, e.g., paste rather than powder.

3. Change the process to emit less of the substance. E.g., brushing a substance rather than spraying.
4. Enclose the process so that the product does not escape.
5. Extract emissions of the substance near the source.
6. Have as few workers in harm's way as possible.
7. Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, coveralls and a respirator. The PPE must fit the wearer.

If your control measures include 5, 6 and 7, make sure they all work together.

### **COSHH Assessment**

The use of any hazardous substance must be assessed and appropriate control measures to prevent exposure to the hazardous substance put in place. The COSHH assessment must reflect the actual way the hazardous substance will be used/created and the exposure routes. Within DCC we use the COSHH product directory to create and hold COSHH assessments as below.

### **COSHH Product Directory**

The [COSHH Product Directory](#) consists of COSHH risk assessments for a large range of hazardous substances that are used within the Council. Follow Appendix 1 COSHH flowchart for what to do before using a hazardous substance.

### **Procurement of Hazardous Substances**

If the product you want to use or purchase is not on the [COSHH Product Directory](#) **do not use the hazardous substance**. Please contact the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Monitoring and Compliance Team on [healthandsafety.enquiries@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety.enquiries@derbyshire.gov.uk) to check that it is suitable for use or purchase.

Obtain the Safety Data Sheet for the product and tell Health, Safety and Wellbeing Monitoring and Compliance Team how the product is to be used. Once in possession of this information, the Monitoring and Compliance Team will advise if the product can be used or purchased. If the product can be used or purchased, the Monitoring and Compliance Team will create the COSHH Risk assessment and place it on the [COSHH](#)



[Product Directory](#). You should then follow the flow chart for “existing product” on Appendix 1.

## **REACH**

A change in the EU REACH Regulations now requires specific training for substances that contain greater than 0.1% by weight of diisocyanates. Diisocyanates can induce occupational asthma. They can be found in foams, adhesives, coatings, and sealants.

[Isocyanates - Controlling hazardous substances](#)

**Other relevant documents / references which can be found on [www.HSE.gov.uk](http://www.HSE.gov.uk)**

- COSHH essentials
- GHS Regulation Summary Guide, HSE
- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 Approved Code of Practice and Guidance - Sixth Edition
- Regulation on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures

## **Appendix 1 - Process Flow**

### **For a New COSHH Product**

- Obtain a H&S safety data sheet and forward this to the HSW Compliance and Monitoring Team
- A competent person (within the HSW Compliance and Monitoring team undertakes a COSHH assessment using the COSHH essentials website
- The finished COSHH assessment is then uploaded onto Our Derbyshire - [COSHH product directory](#)

### **For an Existing Product**

- Obtain a copy of the COSHH assessment from the [COSHH product directory](#)

### **COSHH Assessments with Categories A or B**

- If the category is A or B (information on this can be found on the existing COSHH assessment), then use as instructed by the manufacturer.
- Include on the establishment inventory
- Monitor users

### **COSHH Assessments with Categories C or D**

- The Manager needs to review part 2 of the COSHH assessment (control measures) and complete part 3
- Provide appropriate information / training to users
- Include on the establishment inventory
- Monitor users

### **COSHH Assessments with Category E**

- If the category of the existing product is E, try to find an alternative less hazardous product. If a less hazardous product has been found, start the process flow again at “New COSHH Product”.
- Seek advice from the HSW Function before using a category E product

## Appendix 2 COSHH Flowchart

