

CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH)

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Policy Statement

This policy is one of several related to Health and Safety and subject to the Health and Safety Executive Guidance and Codes of Practice.

The Policy

Staff need to be aware of and understand their role in this organisation, adherence to the Safety at Work Act 1974 and all other subsequent legislation, including those covered by the European Commission Directives. This policy specifically relates to the requirements of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002 and to the REACH regulations, where appropriate.

Hazardous Substances

There are many hazardous substances which are considered hazardous to health. **The COSHH Regulations apply to substances which are identified as Toxic, Corrosive or Irritant.** These can include cleaning materials, pesticides, acids, disinfectants, bleach and naturally-occurring substances such as blood and bacteria.

This organisation provides and requires all staff to wear personal protective clothing (PPI), i.e. disposable gloves and aprons and, where required, protective eye goggles when working with hazardous substances as directed by the HSE Safety Data leaflet. The home provides for all employees, regardless of their position and job specifications, the required relevant PPI.

Signage

All toxins, corrosives and irritants are identified when they are considered “dangerous to supply” by a label with a specific symbol. International symbols have replaced the old European symbols, and staff need to be aware of changes.

Any product deemed to be “dangerous to supply” are supplied with a Safety Data sheet.

Please note: medicines, cosmetics and pesticides are covered by different legislation and do not have a Safety Data sheet.



Employers' Responsibilities

To comply with the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) steps for all employers to protect their

employees from Hazardous Substances, this organisation:

-  Identifies the hazardous substances that are used in the work place and the risks the substances pose to workers' health
-  Puts into place, and regularly reviews, any precautions required before any work begins that involves hazardous substances
-  Prevents people being exposed to hazardous substances, but where this is not reasonably practicable will control the exposure
-  Ensures that control measures are used and properly maintained and that safety procedure is followed and reviewed regularly
-  Monitors, if necessary, staff exposure to hazardous substances
-  Requires all accidents, incidents and emergencies associated with COSHH to be reported and recorded according to organisational policy
-  Ensures that all employees are properly informed, updated, trained and supervised as appropriate. A COSHH file is in place for staff to refer to. The file lists all the hazardous substances used in the workplace. It details:
 -  Where they are kept
 -  How they are labelled
 -  Their effects
 -  The maximum amount of time it is safe to be exposed to them
 -  How to deal with any emergency involving them.

Misuse or Harmful Practice

If workers are concerned about:

-  A substance being used in the workplace which is not in the COSHH file
-  Incorrect containers or labels being used
-  A container of one substance being used to store another substance
-  Labels being removed or changed.

It must be reported to their line manager or supervisor immediately.

Disposal of Hazardous Materials

✗ Bodily fluids: blood, urine, vomit, sputum and faeces

-  Disposable gloves and aprons must be worn.
-  Where possible the waste should be cleared and flushed down a sluice or toilet.
-  The affected area should be cleaned with a disinfectant.
-  Cloths used for cleaning must be disposed of, along with the disposable apron and gloves.
-  Hands must be thoroughly washed.
-  Any waste must be transferred in a sealed bag to the appropriate waste bin or container.
-  All waste disposal bags must be correctly sealed, as other people will have to deal with the waste after it has been placed in the bags or container.

✗ Needles, syringes, cannulas (sharps)

-  Disposable gloves must be worn.
-  A yellow sharps box will be provided by a health professional. Never put sharps in anything other than this or, in an emergency, a hard plastic box. This must be sealed and collected by an approved provider (PHS) for incineration.
-  Disposal of all other types of waste will be included in staff training.

Training Statement

All staff must be appropriately trained and regularly updated as required by legislation. All staff will be issued with clear instructions and guidance on how to deal with spillages and reporting and recording of such accidents, incidents or emergency situations