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CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH)

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Document ID: SOP-007

**Document Approval History**

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| **Document Revision No.** | **Effective Date** | **Created**  **by:** | **Reviewed & Approved**  **by:** |
| Revision 0 | DD.MM.YYYY | HSE Advisor | HSE Manager |
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**Document Revision History**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Document Revision No.** | **Sections Revised** | **Description of Changes** |
| 00 | N/a | Published |
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# Purpose

This procedure explains the essential requirements for controlling substances hazardous to health (COSHH). It will help to identify hazards and control risks by explaining how to plan, organize, control, monitor and review work involving substances hazardous to health.

The intention of the document is to outline the requirements associated with this activity and to specify the hazards and mitigations required to ensure that the risks arising from the work are reduced as low as reasonably practicable. Associated risk assessments and safe systems of work (SSoW) must be used in conjunction with this document.

# Definitions

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| Concept | Definition |
| Accident | An incident which results in death, injury loss, or damage |
| Competent person | person who has acquired through training, qualification or experience the knowledge and skills to carry out the task. |
| Exclusion zone | means an area from which all persons are excluded during excavation work. |
| Hazard | A potential source of harm. |
| PPE | Personal Protective Equipment |
| Risk | Combination of the probability of occurrence of harm and the severity of that harm |
| Safe System of Work | A method of working that eliminates or reduces the risk of injury |
| COSHH | Control of Substances Hazardous to Health |
| MSDS | Material Safety Data Sheet |
| WEL | Workplace Exposure Limit – The maximum exposure of a substance to a person over and 8-hour period per day |
| STEL | Short Term Exposure Limit – The average airborne concentration over a 15 minute period which must not be exceeded in an 8-hour period per day |
| TWA | Time Weighted Average – The average airborne concentration of a particular substance calculated over an 9-hour period per day |

# Roles & Responsibilities

**Employer:** The employer is responsible for thehealth, safety and welfare at work of all his employees, and other people who might be affected by their activities, The employer shall do whatever is reasonably practicable to achieve this. It is also its responsibilities:

* The provision and maintenance of plant and systems of work that are, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe and without risks to health
* The arrangements for ensuring the safety and absence of risks to health in connection with the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances
* To provide information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health and safety at work of his employees;
* To provide any place of work under the employer’s control, the maintenance of it in a condition that is safe and without risks to health and the provision and maintenance of means of access to and egress from it that are safe and without such risks;
* The provision and maintenance of a working environment for his employees that is, so far as is reasonably practicable, safe, without risks to health, and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work.

It’s employer’s responsibilities to assess risks in the workplace. Risk assessments should be carried out that address all risks that might cause harm in your workplace. It must also:

* give you information about the risks in your workplace and how you are protected, also instruct and train you on how to deal with the risks.
* consult employees on health and safety issues. Consultation must be either direct or through a safety representative that is either elected by the workforce or appointed by a trade union.

**Employees**: Workers must take care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your actions at work. Workers must co-operate with employers and co-workers to help everyone meet their legal requirements. As a worker, if you have specific queries or concerns relating to health and safety in your workplace, talk to your employer, manager/supervisor or a health and safety representative.

**Contractors**: Contractors shall make sure they plan, manage and monitor the work under their control. They also must comply with directions given to them by either the principal contractor or the employer.

**Supervisor:** Ensure that before any operation commences, information is obtained on any material, substance, or process to be used or likely to be encountered which could be a hazard to the health of operatives, and which is not covered by the Risk Assessment or is covered but requires a more detailed assessment. Ensure, if possible, arrangements are made for an alternative, less hazardous material to be specified. Arrange for any necessary equipment, enclosures, extraction equipment, hygiene facilities, monitoring, and medical examinations, protective clothing etc. to be planned before work commences.

**HSE Advisor:** Arrange a written Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Assessment, for substances, processes, health hazards etc. normally used or encountered on the site and this information will be made available to all Company Personnel and Sub-contractors etc. who may be affected.

# Training & Competence

All operatives engaged in any process involving the use or handling of any hazardous substance will be given full instructions and any necessary training in the health hazards and precautions, use of protective clothing, equipment, hygiene measures, etc. as required.

Where necessary, HSE Advisors are to be engaged to provide written assessments and advice on precautions required with any substance where any risk to health is known or suspected and will carry out any sampling, analysis, monitoring, etc. as required. The details of assessments will be kept in a suitable COSHH Register. A copy of the COSHH register will be kept in the COSHH store and with the HSE Advisors in case of medical emergencies.

# Procedure

**Health hazards from substances can be divided into the following categories:**

* External contact - corrosive, skin absorption, dermatitis, etc., e.g. cement, acids, epoxy resins, etc.
* Inhalation - gases, fumes, dusts, vapors, vehicle exhaust fumes etc.
* Ingestion - swallowing.
* Hazards may be classified as toxic, harmful, irritant, corrosive, biological, and flammable or a combination of these.

## Risk Assessment Process

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Probability** | **Consequence** | | | | |
| **Insignificant (1)** | **Minor (2)** | **Moderate (3)** | **Major (4)** | **Catastrophic (5)** |
| **Rare (1)** | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| **Possible (2)** | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| **Likely (3)** | 3 | 6 | 9 | 12 | 15 |
| **Often (4)** | 4 | 8 | 12 | 16 | 20 |
| **Frequent (Almost certain)** | 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 25 |
| **15-25** | **Extreme Risk** | **Activity or industry should not proceed in current form** | | | |
| **8-12** | **High Risk** | **Activity or industry should be modified to include remedial planning and action and be subject to detailed HSE assessment** | | | |
| **4-6** | **Moderate Risk** | **Activity or industry can operate subject to management and or modification** | | | |
| **1-3** | **Low Risk** | **No action required, unless escalation of risk is possible** | | | |

### Record Significant Findings and Classify risks according to significance.

* Record all identified aspects and hazards on the HSE Risk Assessment Worksheet (ANC-QHSE-F-08.01)
* Record conclusions.
* Inform employees of the relevant findings.

### Evaluating & Classification of HSE Aspects/Hazards (Qualitative)

* After identifying all HSE hazards/aspects, HSE Manager will determine whether such hazards/aspects are Extreme Risk, High Risk, Moderate Risk, and Low Risk using Risk Assessment Scoring Table mentioned above.
* The risk matrix is divided into four risk categories as defined below:

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| **Extreme Risk** | Activity or industry should not proceed in current form. **ACTION MUST BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY TO LOWER THE RISK.** |
| **High Risk** | Activity or industry should be modified to include remedial planning. Must be subject to a detailed assessment for the purposes of risk reduction. Measures must be planned and documented. |
| **Moderate Risk** | Activity or industry can operate subject to management or modification |
| **Low Risk** | No action required, unless escalation of risk is possible |

### Review the Assessment and Revise If Necessary

* COSHH Assessments will be reviewed on a yearly basis, preferably during management review meetings and amended as required.
* COSHH Assessments will be reviewed when new equipment, machinery, substances and procedures are brought in which may reflect the control measures.
* Any significant changes, which introduce new hazards, will lead to amendments being made to the assessments to ensure effective control measures are implemented.
* Manage and Control the Risk to Acceptable Levels After the risk has been identified and analysed as per above, management decides what measures (if any) is necessary to manage the hazard / aspect at an acceptable risk level. Depending on the nature of the specific hazard(s) / aspect(s), management decides what controls (if any) should be applied to reduce the risks according to the following hierarchy:
* Elimination
* Substitution
* Appling engineering controls
* Using signage/warning and/or administrative controls
* Using Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

## General Precautions:

* The following general precautions apply to the handling, transporting and use of all substances. Special precautions relating to specific products are given in the specific written assessments. Almost all chemical materials are potentially dangerous. Although they may find their way into day to day use, it is usually a very diluted or otherwise modified form. The following general rules should always apply:
* Chemical products must never be allowed to come into eye contact. Contact with skin and mucous membrane must likewise be avoided. Wear protective equipment and clothing supplied.
* Always observe good industrial hygiene practice.
* Do not swallow materials or use in areas where food is being consumed. Smoking is also prohibited during application and curing.
* Inhalation of chemical vapours or dust should be avoided. Adequate ventilation must be provided with suitable respiratory protection provided.
* Facilities for the washing and cleansing of the skin must be made available with the necessary cleansers and barrier creams.
* Store all products in ventilated areas away from extremes of temperatures and environment.
* Clean all spillages instantly and dispose of waste and used containers properly.
* Except for transport in closed packages, materials must be handled only by authorised personnel.
* Ensure the correct equipment for handling the products is available.
* If any person handling the materials shows the symptoms which may possibly have been caused by exposure to chemical products, they should be removed from the area and medical advice sought without delay.