

INSTRUCTION 10

CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH)

References:

- A. Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- B. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations (as amended)
- C. EH 40 Workplace Exposure Limits
- D. Annex E to this policy – COSHH assessment template
- E. Instruction 27 to this policy – Occupational Health Surveillance
- F. Instruction 16 to this policy – Personal Protective Equipment

Introduction

10.1 People in the workplace are often exposed to substances which have the potential to damage their health. These substances can be man made or occur naturally in the environment. For this reason, a high level of control must be exercised to minimise the hazards to those employees who come into contact with them.

10.2 The COSHH regulations require the employer to assess the risk to health of those employees who come into contact with these substances. It is vital that these hazards are identified and brought to the attention of employees by means of assessment by managers and supervisors.

10.3 Employees should therefore familiarise themselves with the COSHH assessments and adhere to instructions contained within the assessment.

10.4 It should be noted that even the most seemingly harmless of substances, e.g. motor oil, will induce an injury hazard over a certain period and that individuals should be encouraged to seek guidance if they feel that a hazard exists no matter what the level of potential.

Responsibility

10.5 Each manager/supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the department has a working COSHH system in operation. This should include:

- Arranging suitable training for staff in COSHH assessment, competency being recorded.
- COSHH assessments are undertaken and reviewed at least annually.
- COSHH Registers are in use and updated regularly.
- Substances are being correctly stored.
- Supplying and maintaining relevant Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as per current PPE regulations see Reference E above.

Hazardous Substances

10.6 Hazardous substances may be identified by:

- Classification -Very Toxic, Toxic, Harmful, Corrosive or irritant.
- Being listed as a Health & Safety Executive Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL).
- A substantial amount of dust.
- A micro organism causing illness.
- Any other substance, which cause similar potential effects.

Assessments

10.7 It is the Council's policy that COSHH assessments are reviewed at least annually or at the introduction of a new substance.

10.8 COSHH assessments are to be carried out in accordance with Reference B and are to be documented on Reference D, with copies being held by the head of department and at the point of use.

10.9 COSHH assessments are completed by extracting the relevant information from the Safety Data Sheets of the hazardous substance. Safety Data Sheets are to be kept clean, readily available and checked for validity at regular intervals by managers/supervisors.

Safety

10.10 The Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) or Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE) should only be considered as a last resort or ideally as an interim measure until a permanent solution or control measure can be introduced.

10.11 It should be noted that COSHH regulations also cover the provision, maintenance and inspection of all Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV) systems.

Health surveillance

10.12 COSHH regulations require the Council to ensure that employees at risk are under suitable health surveillance, see Reference E.

10.13 The under mentioned topics are subject to their own regulations. If in doubt contact the Health & Safety Manager.

- Lead.
- Asbestos
- Substances that are only hazardous when extreme conditions are reached i.e., high temperature.
- Medical research or treatment substances.
- Substances found in mines or quarries.
- Micro organisms, which do not arise in connection with work, i.e. the common cold.
- Asphyxiates.
- Any requirement imposed by food or hygiene legislation.