

SECTION 3(4)

CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH

CONTENTS

Introduction 1
What is a Substance Hazardous to Health?..... 1
What does COSHH Require?..... 1
 Assessment.....2
 Control2
 Monitoring Exposure3
 Health Surveillance.....4
 Informing Employees4
 Material Safety Data Sheets4
Appendix 1..... 5
 COSHH Assessment.....5
 CONCLUSIONS5
FURTHER ACTION 5
Appendix 2..... 6

Introduction

There is a wide range of substances capable of damaging the health of people at work. Many substances are used directly in industrial processes, others arise naturally (eg: fungal spores in agriculture), some are used in service functions (eg: cleaning or decorating), and some are given off as by products of processes.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) lay down the essential requirements and a sensible step by step approach for the control of hazardous substances and for protecting people exposed to them.

Information about the legislation can be found here:
CoSHH

What is a Substance Hazardous to Health?

Substances hazardous to health as defined by the COSHH regulations cover virtually all materials capable of causing ill health in a work situation, including: -

- Substances defined as very toxic, toxic, harmful, corrosive or irritant under the Chemicals (Hazard, Information and Packaging for Supply) (Amendment) Regulations 1996.
- Substances allocated a Maximum Exposure Limit (MEL) or Occupational Exposure Standard (OES).
- Biological agents which are hazardous to health.
- Substantial concentrations of dust.

Substances, which are hazardous due to their explosive or flammable properties, extreme temperatures or contained under high pressure, are not covered by the COSHH Regulations.

Substances should be regarded as hazardous to health if it is hazardous in the form in which it occurs in the work activity.

What does COSHH Require?

COSHH requires the identification and control of hazardous substances and the requirement not to carry out any work, which is liable to expose persons to any substance hazardous to health unless a suitable and sufficient assessment has been made, and appropriate control measures implemented.

A COSHH register should be developed containing material safety data sheets obtained from the manufacturers of all substances.

The basic principles of occupational hygiene underlie the COSHH Regulations. They are:

- Assess the risk to health arising from work and decide what precautions are needed.
- Introduce appropriate control measures to prevent or control the risk.
- Ensure that control measures are used and that equipment is properly maintained and procedures observed.

- Inform, instruct and train employees about the risks and the precautions to be taken.
- Where necessary, monitor the exposure of the workers and carry out an appropriate form of surveillance of their health.

Assessment

This is an ESSENTIAL requirement, this identifies what the problem is, and the extent of the problem before deciding what needs to be done about it.

The assessment must be a systematic review:

- What substances are present and in what form?
- What harmful effects are possible?
- Where and how are the substances actually used or handled?
- What harmful substances are given off as a by-product of use?
- Who could be affected, to what extent and for how long?
- Under what circumstances?
- How likely is it that exposure will occur?
- What precautions must be taken?

All these factors must be compared against what happens in practice.

No work, which is liable to expose anyone to hazardous substances, shall be undertaken unless an assessment has been made.

The flow chart in Appendix 1 provides more guidance for managers when undertaking an assessment. The assessment form in Appendix 2 may be used for all substances currently in use or purchased for use by employees.

Employees should be informed of the assessments. They should be reviewed regularly and in any case whenever there is evidence to suspect that it is no longer valid or where there has been significant change in the work to which the assessment relates.

Control

The key word in COSHH is control. Assessment and monitoring enable attention to be focused on control.

Managers have to ensure that the exposure of employees to hazardous substances is prevented. Where this is not reasonably practicable, options must be considered to control exposure.

On the basis of the assessment, managers must decide which control measures are appropriate to the work situation in order to deal effectively with any hazardous substances that may be present. This may mean preventing exposure by:

- Removing the hazardous substance, by changing the process.

- Substituting with a safe or safer substance.
- Using it in a safer form e.g. pellets instead of powder.

Or where this is not reasonably practicable, controlling exposure by:

- Totally enclosing the process.
- Using partial enclosure, with local exhaust ventilation.
- Sufficient general ventilation.
- Using safe systems of work and handling procedures.
- Reducing the number of persons exposed and/or the duration of exposure.

Although removing the process or substitution is the ideal option, in practice, engineering controls and PPR are used.

COSHH limits the use of PPE, as the means of protection as the last resort.

Exposure should be minimised and controlled so that nearly all people would not suffer any adverse health effects even if they were exposed to a substance day after day.

For certain substances where the risk to health is thought significant, occupational exposure limits have been set (see HSE Guidance note EH40). There are two kinds of exposure limit. For substances that have been given Maximum Exposure Limits (MEL's), the level of exposure should be reduced so far as is reasonably practicable and, in any event should not exceed the MEL. For other substances with Occupational Exposure Standards (OES's), it will be sufficient to ensure the level of exposure is reduced to that standard.

COSHH places a specific obligation on Managers to ensure that all control measures are kept in efficient working order and good repair. If control measures consist of engineering controls, they should be examined and tested at suitable intervals. For example, local exhaust ventilation, which includes fume cupboards, has to be tested at least once every 14 months and a record kept. Respirators and breathing equipment also have to be examined frequently.

Monitoring Exposure

COSHH requires that the exposure of employees should be monitored in certain cases, for example:

- Where there could be serious risks to health if control measures were to fail or deteriorate.
- Where it is uncertain that exposure limits will not be exceeded.
- Where it is uncertain that a control measure is working properly.

A record must be kept of all monitoring activities. These should detail when the monitoring was done, duration, location of sampling, what the results were etc.

Health Surveillance

If an adverse health effect results from exposure from a hazardous substance under the circumstances of work and could be readily observed, some form of health surveillance is appropriate.

This could involve the services of the Occupational Health Service, but could also include trained supervisors checking employees' skin for dermatitis or asking questions about breathing difficulties if the work involves substances known to cause occupational asthma.

Where health surveillance is carried out, a simple health record, comprising mainly personal details, must be kept. The records must be retained for a period of forty years from the date of the last entry.

Informing Employees

Employees have to be informed about:

- The nature and degree of risks to health arising as a consequence of exposure.
- The precautions to be taken, including, the control measures adopted, the reasons for these and how to use them properly.

And, if carried out:

- The results of monitoring.
- The collective, anonymous results of the health surveillance.

Employees must be instructed such as to ensure that persons at work do not endanger themselves or others through exposure to hazardous substances. Employees must also be trained in the procedures to be followed in an emergency.

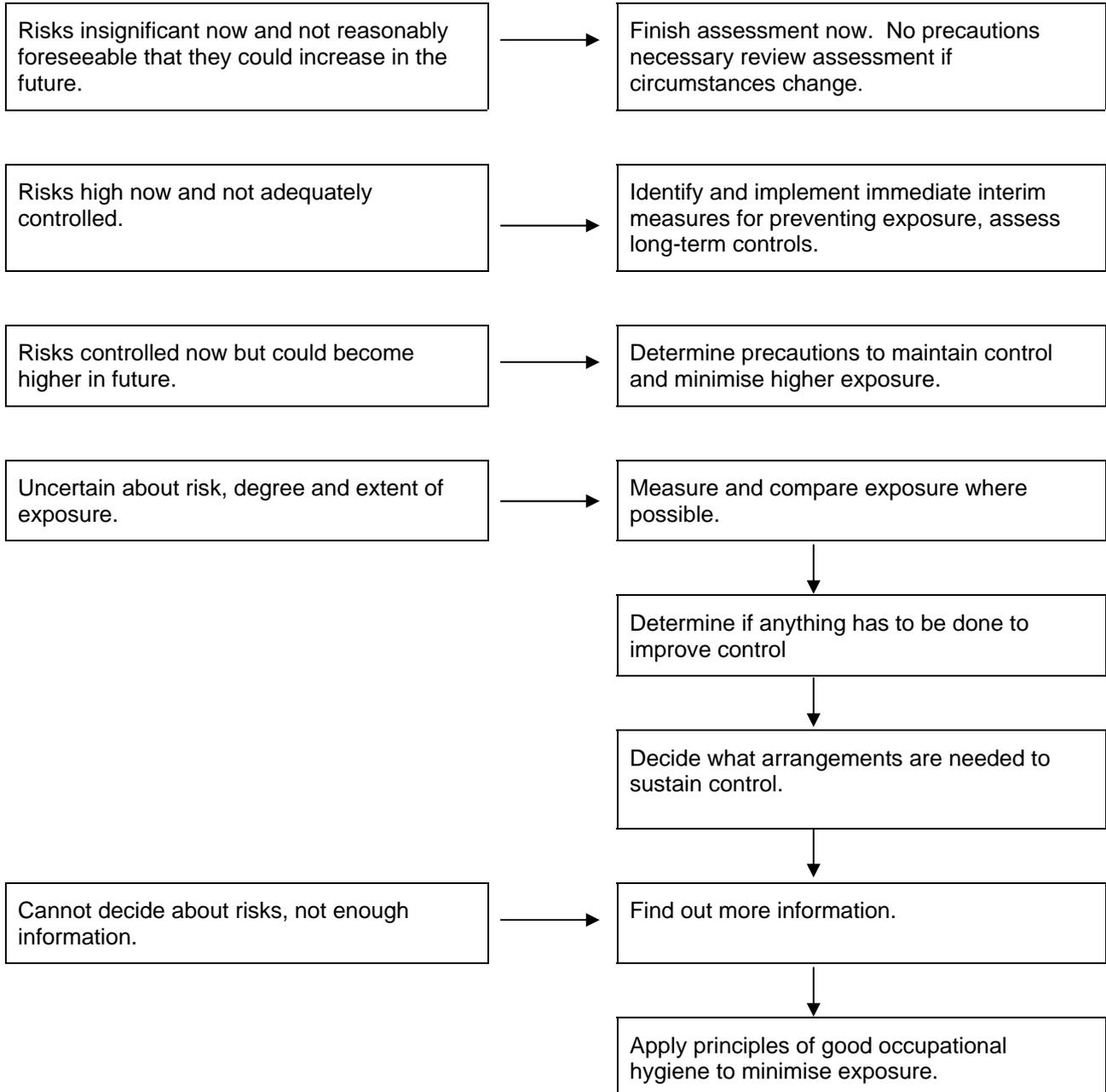
Material Safety Data Sheets

All relevant information on substances used at work should be obtained from the manufacturers or suppliers.

COSHH Assessment

CONCLUSIONS

FURTHER ACTION



**Bracknell Forest Council
Control of Substances Hazardous to Health 2012
Assessment**

Date of Assessment:

Reference Number:

1	Department / School:
2	Section:
3	Task / use:
4	Substance used: (common name, manufacturer, chemical type, active ingredients)
5	Storage: (how much, how often, where, any special arrangements)
6	Hazard and risks to health: (who to, under normal circumstances, emergency situations)
7	Safe system of work: (method statement, specific instructions, general guidance, disposal)
8	Protective clothing / equipment: (visors, gloves, aprons, helmets, boots etc)
9	Ventilation: (local exhaust ventilation, fume cupboards, open window etc)
10	Information for employees: (how is it provided?)

Section 3(4): Control of Substances Hazardous to Health

11	Information for others: (visitors, contractors, public)
12	Training for operatives: (sufficient to do the job safely, formal, professional, on-the-job)
13	Training for supervisors: (as above)
14	Monitoring exposure: (where it is necessary, when, what, results etc)
15	Medical: (is surveillance medical required? At what intervals?)
16	Records: (medical surveillance, testing of control measures, exposure monitoring)
17	Emergencies: (fire, first aid, evacuation etc)
18	Conclusions: (brief summary of the findings)
19	Action required: (corrective action needed to ensure safe system of work, by whom and when)
20	Review: (who should do it and when)

Person undertaking the assessment:

Signed: Date:

Job title:

Countersigned: Date:

Supervisor / Manager