

**Control of Substances
Hazardous to Health
Regulations 2002 (COSHH)**

What is a substance hazardous to health under COSHH?

- *Substances or mixtures of substances, classified as dangerous to health under the Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations 2002 (CHIP)*
- *These can be identified by their warning label and the supplier must provide a 'safety data sheet' for them.*

Many commonly used dangerous substances are listed in the HSE publication “Approved Supply List”

Suppliers must decide if preparations and substances that are not on the list are dangerous, and if so, label them accordingly.

Substances with occupational exposure limits.

- *Biological agents (bacteria and other micro-organisms) if they are directly connected with the work such as health / personal care, farming sewage work etc.*
- *Any kind of dust if it's average concentration in the air exceeds the levels specified in COSHH.*
- *Certain asphyxiant gases, paints, pesticides etc.*

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)

- **What is not a substance hazardous to health under COSHH?**
- *COSHH applies to virtually all substances hazardous to health except:*
- *Asbestos and lead which have their own regulations.*

- *Radioactive substances (other regulations apply)*
- *Biological agents that are outside the employers control eg. catching an infection from a workmate.*
- *For the vast majority of commercial chemicals the presence (or not) of a **warning label** will indicate whether COSHH is relevant.*

- *Examples:*
- *Washing up liquid has no label so you do not have to worry about COSHH.*
- *Bleach does have a label so COSHH does apply.*

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)

- **Step 1:** Assess the risks
- *Identify hazardous substances in the workplace. Consider the risks to people's health.*
- **Step 2:** Decide what precautions are needed

- **Step 3:** Prevent or adequately control exposure
- *Eliminate / substitute hazardous substances for less hazardous ones.*
- *Reduce exposure to hazardous substances.*
- *Isolate work processes eg prevent access to pupils etc.*

- *Control exposure at source eg ventilation.*
- *Provide personal protective clothing.*
- **Step 4:** Ensure control measures are used and maintained.
- **Step 5:** Monitor and review.

- **Step 6:** Arrange appropriate health surveillance where required (exposure limits set)
- **Step 7:** Prepare plans and procedures to deal with accidents, incidents and emergencies
- **Step 8:** Ensure that employees involved in the work or affected by it are informed / trained and supervised

COSHH

COSHH

INTRODUCTION

COSHH

The **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations** (COSHH) (as amended) restrict the presence and use of substances in the workplace that are 'hazardous to health'.

Employees must be given information, instruction and training on the use of such substances.



COSHH

What should you know?

If you work with hazardous substances then you should be familiar with:

- the risks to health caused by exposure
- precautions which need to be taken
- use and purpose of control measures
- use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- emergency procedures
- results of any workplace monitoring
- your occupational health record.



COSHH

Action to take

Both employers and employees have responsibilities under **COSHH**.
Employees must:

- co-operate with their employer eg, by attending training courses
- participate in the risk assessment process
- wear the **PPE** provided
- report any problems with **PPE** or other equipment
- report non-compliance with safe systems of work
- attend occupational health checks
- always use control measures designed to reduce exposure.



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How to identify a substance that is hazardous to health

- read the product label - hazardous substances are (generally) marked with one or more hazard symbols
- refer to information (safety data sheets) provided by suppliers
- ask for advice.



Irritant



Flammable



Toxic



Corrosive

If you have any questions or concerns about substances in use at work, then you should speak to your supervisor or safety representative.

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Legislation and resources

- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 (as amended)
- INDG136(rev4): Working with Substances Hazardous to Health. What You Need to Know About COSHH.

COSHH

Questions and **Answers**

Q: What is PPE?

A: Personal Protective Equipment.

Q: What is the information sheet called that holds information from suppliers?

A: Safety Data Sheet (SDS).

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Reference

RMBC COSHH guidance available from
RMBC Intranet / RGFL.

Model COSHH risk assessment.

Product data sheets.