

HS10 Control of Exposure to Specific Hazards and Substances Hazardous to Health | Standard Operating Procedure

1. Background information

1.1. Introduction/Purpose

1.1.1. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) details processes for the control of exposure to specific hazards and substances hazardous to health at SOAS University of London.

1.2. Definitions

1.2.1. Forms of Hazardous Substances – Hazardous substances can come in a variety of forms: dusts, fumes, gases, vapours smoke and liquids. It is important to know the form of the substance for control measures.

1.2.2. Routes of Entry - Hazardous substances can only do harm if they enter the body through inhalation, absorption (through the skin), ingestion and other orifices.

1.2.3. Classification of Dangerous Substances – Below, are the definitions of the different classifications of hazardous substances.

- Explosive Substances – have the ability to release rapid energy and cause an explosion.
- Flammable or Highly Flammable Substances – may become hot or ignite when in contact with ambient temperature or a source of ignition e.g. an electric or static spark.
 - An example of a flammable substance is anything kept in flammable stores.
- Harmful Substances – enter the body and have a limited risk to health.
- Irritant Substances – affect the skin or respiratory system.

- Once someone is sensitised to an irritant it can cause an allergic reaction or bring on an asthma attack.
- An example of an irritant is isocyanates.
- Corrosive Substances – will chemically attack other materials or people.
- Toxic or Very Toxic Substances – prevent or interfere with bodily functions by various means.
- Carcinogenic Substances – cause cancer.
- Mutagenic Substances – alter cell development and cause changes in future generations.
- Teratogenic Substances – can cause the abnormal development of an embryo.
- Narcotic Substances – produce a dependency upon the substance and interfere with the brain.
- Oxidising Substances – cause an exothermic reaction when in contact with other substances, particularly flammable substances.
- Anoxia Agents – reduce the amount of oxygen available in the air.

1.3. Roles and Responsibilities

1.3.1. Management

- Where needed, Risk Assessments and all Material Safety Data Sheets of substances used will be kept at the Business' office.
- From the Risk Assessments the Management will instigate the principles of good practice for the control of exposure as detailed in Schedule 2A Regulation 7(7).
- No employee will introduce any substance without the specific consent of their manager.

2. Main Content

2.1. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

2.1.1. This guidance is written in compliance with Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH 2002), The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002, and UK registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH).

2.1.2. COSHH is the law that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health. You can prevent or reduce workers' exposure to hazardous substances by:

- Finding out what the health hazards are.
- Deciding how to prevent harm to health (risk assessment).
- Providing control measures to reduce harm to health.
- Keeping all control measures in good working order.
- Providing information, instruction and training for employees and others.
- Providing monitoring and health surveillance in appropriate cases.
- Planning for emergencies.

2.1.3. Most businesses use substances or products that are mixtures of substances. Some processes create substances. These could cause harm to employees, contractors and other people.

2.1.4. Sometimes substances are easily recognised as harmful. Common substances such as paint, bleach or dust from natural materials may also be harmful.

2.1.5. COSHH covers substances that are hazardous to health. Substances can take many forms and include:

- chemicals
- products containing chemicals
- fumes
- dusts
- vapours
- mists
- nanotechnology
- gases and asphyxiating gases

- biological agents (germs). If the packaging has any of the hazard symbols then it is classed as a hazardous substance.
- Germs that cause diseases such as leptospirosis or legionnaires disease and germs used in laboratories.

2.1.6. Because each of the following has its own specific regulations, COSHH does not cover:

- lead
- asbestos
- radioactive substances

3. Appendices

Appendix A: COSHH Labels

The new symbols, called pictograms, show similar images, they just have slightly different shapes and colours.

- You'll see that the harmful symbol is missing. This has been replaced by the exclamation mark pictogram:
 - This pictogram will refer to less serious health hazards such as skin irritancy/sensitisation.

