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## **COSHH Policy**

CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH (COSHH) REGULATIONS 2002 (as amended)

### **Introduction**

These Regulations are designed to protect employees and others from exposure to substances likely to damage their health. The Regulations initially came into force on 1st January 1990 and have been revised since, the latest revision being in 2002.

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) 2002 put into law the obligation to control hazardous substances and to protect people from the harmful effects of such substances. The regulations require employers to:

- Assess the risks from substances hazardous to health.
- Decide how to control these risks and to provide those control measures.
- Maintain the control measures and ensure that they are used.
- Provide monitoring of the substances and/or health surveillance.
- Provide information, instruction and training to all employees.
- Put in procedures for emergencies and spillages

COSHH is designed to be flexible, to cater for many various working environments. Broadly, the Regulations fall under the following headings:

### **What is a Substance Hazardous to Health?**

A substance hazardous to health is broadly defined as:

- A substance that has been assigned either a Maximum Exposure Limit (MEL) or Occupational Exposure Standard (OES) in the HSE Guidance Note EH40 - Occupational Exposure Limits.
- Substances classified as dangerous to health in the Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply Regulations 2002 (known as CHIP). This will generally mean that the substance will have black/orange label on the container, classifying it as very toxic, toxic, harmful corrosive or irritant.
- Biological agents such as bacteria and viruses.
- Dusts present in substantial quantities.
- Any substances having similar properties to the above.

### **Exposure levels - Defined and explained:**

The Regulations lay down exposure limits for certain substances and these limits, OELs and MELs have the following meanings:

Maximum Exposure Limit (MEL) is reserved for the most dangerous of substances capable of causing cancer or occupational asthma. The MEL is the maximum concentration to which employees may be exposed, by inhalation, under any circumstances. It is typically averaged over a reference period of 8 hours although shorter periods may be used. The legal requirement is to reduce exposure to the lowest reasonably practicable level. (NB The MEL only refers to inhalation unless it is designated that the exposure refers to skin contact) Occupational Exposure Standard (OES) is the maximum concentration, averaged over a reference period, at which according to current knowledge there is no evidence of harm from inhalation day after day. It is acceptable to reduce exposures to the level of the OES although it is desirable to reduce levels as much as possible.



## **Assessment**

A competent person needs to identify such dangerous substances (whether natural or artificial, or in solid, liquid, gas or vapour form) and to assess its potential to damage the workforce. The employer will also need to keep a written record of the assessment to enable it to be reviewed at least every 5 years.

## **Prevention/Control**

Prevention and control measures should either eliminate the risk to persons, or to reduce exposures to acceptable levels. Engineering controls such as local exhaust ventilation must be inspected and tested on a regular basis and periods are specified in the Regulations e.g. at least every fourteen months for local exhaust ventilation but every 6 months for equipment used in connection with dry grinding, polishing etc.

## **Monitoring Exposure**

The employer must have a suitable system to continually check, record and monitor employee exposure to any substances present in the workplace or to which his employees are exposed.

## **Health Surveillance**

Where an employee works with specific substances, some of which have a known deleterious effect, then the employee must have a health check at least once every twelve months.

## **Information, Instruction and Training**

Employees must be told how to handle the substance they use at work and of any danger associated with use. Monitoring and health check reports must be available to them to inspect.

## **Special Provisions:**

COSHH does not apply to

- Lead or Asbestos where other, more specific legislation is in force
- Radioactive, explosive or flammable properties of a substance
- Temperature or pressure of a substance
- Anything used in medical treatment

## **Policy**

Our Business will take all reasonably practical steps to meet its obligations under the COSHH regulations, paying in particular attention to the provision and maintenance of:

1. Sufficient information, instruction, training and supervision to enable all employees to avoid hazards to health.
2. Assessment of hazards to be an ongoing feature of management's responsibility, with regular reviews being carried out by our established standards committee.

It is our policy to exercise the fullest co-operation with our clients to secure the health and safety of all our employees.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Martin Smith'.

Martin Smith  
Chief Executive  
4<sup>th</sup> January 2011