# How to complete the WCC COSHH risk assessment form

## Outline the procedure

1. A competent manager, supervisor or delegate completes part 1 of the COSHH risk assessment form.
2. The manager of the task check's part 1 and then completes part 2 of the COSHH risk assessment form, ensuring they have signed and dated the assessment.
3. The manager stores and distributes copies of the COSHH risk assessment form as appropriate.
4. The COSHH risk assessments should be updated if there is a significant change in the process such as a new product being used, after an accident, near miss, incident or annually as a minimum.

## Completing Part 1 of the COSHH risk assessment

Part 1 of the COSHH risk assessment records the way the chemical product(s) are used in the workplace and other basic information like hazards, risks & local control measures.

Risk assessments should be completed using Word, however, if this is not possible, you can print them out and complete them by hand.

The person completing part 1 must have sufficient knowledge of the activity / process, or cooperatively complete it with someone who does.

The COSHH risk assessment should contain information on the specific and localised hazards, risks and control measures for the activity being assessed. You should not copy and paste information from the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) into your COSHH risk assessment unless this guidance states this is required for a certain section. The information in the SDS is insufficient to achieve the aim of the COSHH risk assessment and is already available in the SDS itself. The SDS should act as a guide to ensure that you are focusing on the most significant and relevant risks when storing, using and handling the substance in your workplace.

The following table will guide you through Part 1 of the risk assessment form:

| **Section Number** | **Guidance**<br>**If possible, please complete the forms electronically (using Word)** |
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| 1 | A descriptive name of the task, e.g., "Polishing floor with solvent based polish" or "cutting wood using a bench mounted circular saw" |
| 2 | The name of the products and suppliers (e.g., "Smiths Floor Polish, Smiths Ltd") is on the SDS and on the product label. If you are using a number of different products for a task, for two or three different solvent floor polishes, and they all have the same hazard class, you can include them all on one risk assessment. |

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| | Please also detail in this section any hazardous substances being produced by a work activity. For example, wood dust, fumes and dusts etc. |
| 3 | Preventing exposure at source is an important step in the assessment. COSHH regulations require us to use the least hazardous substances we can in the workplace. Where a hazardous substance is used, the regulations ask us to consider replacing it with a non-hazardous or less hazardous alternative. Tick the boxes that apply. There is also space to include other steps you may have taken to reduce the risk through the procurement stages. |
| 4 | How much of the substance is used in one working day? This means how much is used, when it is used, not an average over a week. If a task uses about a litre and is done twice a day, the answer is two litres. The aim is to get an approximate scale of the maximum exposure in one day, not an exact figure. Are you using a few drops, half a litre, ten litres or hundreds of litres? |
| 5 | Stock levels will vary with time, but the question is asking for the maximum amount that could be on site at a time. Again, an approximate amount is required, is it a 5-litre petrol can or a 500-litre storage tank? One bottle of toilet cleaner or a dozen bottles? |
| 6 | Tick the box to indicate the exposure time to the product when doing the task during the working day. If the task is performed occasionally, it means the exposure time when it is used, not an average over a week. For example, if floor cleaning is an hour in the morning and evening, then the exposure time is 2 hours. |
| 7 | Tick the box that applies. Most offices and indoor workplaces are well ventilated, but basements and cupboards may not be. |
| 8 | This should be a description of the task. The more complex the task, the more information you will need to record. The description should concentrate on the parts of the task that involve the hazardous substance and what you do with it at the different stages. For example, when purchasing, using, storing & disposing of the substance etc. |
| 9 | This section asks how frequently the task takes place, e.g., daily, weekly or monthly and who performs the task, cleaners, technicians or caretakers. It is useful to give numbers of people as well. You should not write employee names. |
| 10 | Some substances can present an increased risk to certain individuals, for example, those with specific health conditions or vulnerable workers. This section is not asking for names of staff or others, but if the substance could provoke asthma, or an allergic skin reaction in those with sensitive skin, these facts are recorded so those individuals are made aware of any potential increased risk and suitable controls put in place to protect them.<br><br>In a wider sense, this can be applied to visitors to the building who would not be familiar with the substance if it were being used near them. It can also be applied to children in schools and nurseries, and those who have learning difficulties.<br><br>Vulnerable workers include young people and new starters / inexperienced of any age and new and expectant mothers. |

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| 11 | List the hazard phrases (H-phrases) found in section 2 of the SDS. |
| 12 | List the precautionary phrases (P-phrases) found in section 2 of the SDS. |
| 13 | Tick each box that applies. Information can be found in section 2 of the SDS and on the product label itself. |
| 14 | Tick the box if there is a Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL) listed on the SDS and record the value(s) from the SDS. The WEL can be found in section 8 of the SDS, the value will be given in $mg/m^3$. For further information, check EH40 for specific substance WEL's or process related exposure limits such as for limits on dusts. |
| | Tick those that could apply when carrying out the task **without** control measures or PPE like gloves being worn. Absorption means that a substance can pass through healthy, intact skin. Substances that can do this will have this property listed in the SDS. |
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| 15 | Tick the boxes that apply and then add the type of PPE selected. For example: Eye protection – goggles or safety spectacles? What type of glove, Nitrile, PVC, disposable, domestic marigold type? Does it meet a British standard? Information on suitable types of compatible PPE can be found on the SDS, but only list the type you are actually using. |
| 16 | List only what your local first aid measures are, considering how substances could injure employees. For example, substances that can cause eye irritation may require an eye wash station nearby that personnel are aware of and know how to use. Other controls to consider may include suitable first aid equipment located near substances, emergency first aid procedures, washing hands or affected areas immediately after skin contact etc. |
| 17 | List only what your local fire precautions are. Consider the hazards posed by the substance or activity and how you can practically reduce the risk. For example, flammable substances may need to be kept away from ignition or heat sources through suitable storage in a temperature-controlled room. Other controls to consider, could include suitable types of fire extinguishers located near the area, emergency fire procedures, fire warden trained staff, etc. |
| 18 | Control Measures do **not** include personal protective equipment. They do include any training, secure storage of supplies etc. If safe systems of work / operating procedures exist, then these should be mentioned. Many control measures are basic, such as routine hygiene measures, but they still need to be recorded in this section. Existing health surveillance or atmospheric monitoring procedures should also be listed here.<br><br>Focus on the nature of the hazards identified and how the substance could cause harm when it is used at your site. |
| 19 | List here any control measures or equipment used to protect the environment, like spill kits, drip trays, bunding and containment.<br><br>Consider how clean up and disposal would occur, especially for substances stored in large quantities. (Where a spill has been identified, what actions will be |

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| | taken to restore the area to its original state. For example, an emergency disaster plan.) |

Once Part 1 has been completed, the risk assessment form should be sent to the manager of the task.

Part 2 of the COSHH risk assessment form is filled in by the manager responsible for the task by checking and using the information provided in Part 1 of the assessment.

| **COSHH Risk Assessment part 2** | |
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| Risk type | Tick the relevant risk type for the activity being carried out. For example, a flammable chemical in liquid form may have a risk of eye contact and be a risk for fire, in which case both boxes should be ticked. |
| Who could be harmed and how | Provide details regarding the specific category of personnel who could be harmed by each relevant risk type. For example, cleaners may be at risk of eye contact from a substance that is irritant to eyes, whereas cleaners and members of the public both be at risk from a fire resulting from a flammable substance. |
| Risk level **without** control measures | Use the risk matrix to identify the severity, likelihood, and the overall risk level, **without** any of your control measures in place. Only complete for the relevant risk types identified.<br><br>The severity of exposure both chronic and acute, should be assessed and calculated together with the likelihood, to provide an overall risk level. |
| Risk level **with** control measures | Use the risk matrix to identify the severity, likelihood, and the overall risk level **with** your control measures in place. Only complete for the relevant risk types identified.<br><br>The severity of exposure both chronic and acute, should be assessed and calculated together with the likelihood, to provide an overall risk level. |
| **Additional Requirements** | |
| Additional requirements may be needed to ensure employees are not exposed to hazardous substances above the workplace exposure limit. It may also help to identify if employee's health is affected from interacting with hazardous substances.<br><br>The information gathered in part 1, together with the SDS should provide sufficient details to assess if there is a need for, and if so, the extent of any exposure monitoring and possibly health surveillance. | |

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| Is workplace monitoring required | If the substance is known to cause or exacerbate known health conditions (Confirmation can be found in the SDS under section 4.2 or section 11) and the work conditions allow for this type of exposure (for example dust inhalation, liquid absorption, gas/ fume inhalation), then workplace monitoring and possibly health surveillance may be required.<br><br>Workplace monitoring can be used to identify if the work conditions allow for the illness to develop such as biological monitoring (blood and urine tests) and air monitoring (workplace or personal testing).<br><br>Workplace monitoring should be carried out by a competent person.<br><br>If workplace monitoring is required, detail the type and frequency in the box below on the risk assessment. |
| Is the exposure to the hazardous substances below the WEL | A workplace exposure limit (WEL) is the maximum amount of exposure to a substance, that employers must not expose their employees to.<br><br>WEL's are concentrations of hazardous substances in the air, averaged over a specified period, referred to as a time-weighted average (TWA). Two time periods are generally used:<br>• long-term exposure limit (LTEL) (8 hours); and<br>• short-term exposure limit (STEL) (15 minutes)<br><br>The WEL for a substance can be found in section 8 of the SDS. It will provide a number in either parts per million (ppm) or milligrams per cubic metre of air ($mg.m^3$). |
| Is health surveillance required | Health surveillance is required if employees are exposed to a hazardous substance where:<br>• There is an identifiable disease or adverse health effect which may be related to the exposure.<br>• There is a reasonable likelihood that the disease or effect may occur under the conditions of their work. (I.e., exposure and how you are carrying out the task.)<br>• And there are valid techniques (skin checks for conditions such as dermatitis, lung function, grip test, audiometry testing for noise induced hearing loss) for detecting indications of the disease or effect, and the technique of investigation is of low risk to the employee.<br><br>Health surveillance is available from WCC's occupational health provider.<br><br>If health surveillance is required detail the type and frequency in the box below on the risk assessment. |
| **Further Action & Sign Off** | |

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| Further action to be taken to control the risk | List any actions you are researching or considering implementing in the future.<br><br>Any further actions to be taken, should be assigned to a person who is capable of implementing the change. This person should be identified in the assigned to column and a realistic date should be set for completion.<br><br>Once actions have been introduced, they should be moved to the existing control measures in part 1, section 18. This should also trigger a review of the entire risk assessment as it would be a change to the process. |
| Name of assessor and manager of the task | The risk assessment should be finalised by the assessor and the manager responsible for the task by signing and dating the assessment. |
| Review log | If there have been no changes to the SDS, chemical or task, no changes in employees' circumstances and no accidents, incidents or near misses, then the review log can be used to sign off periodically as detailed to reflect this. This will also act as a demonstration of the annual review. |

After completing Part 2 of the risk assessment, the manager of the task will then store / distribute the assessment as necessary. If there are any questions during the process, please contact the Health and Safety team.

If the task is complex, high risk, uses particularly hazardous chemicals, or you have any concerns you should contact the Health and Safety team for advice, support and guidance. The Health and Safety team may contact you for further information and for very complex tasks and operations, a member of the Health and Safety team may wish to visit and observe the process to understand it better.

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