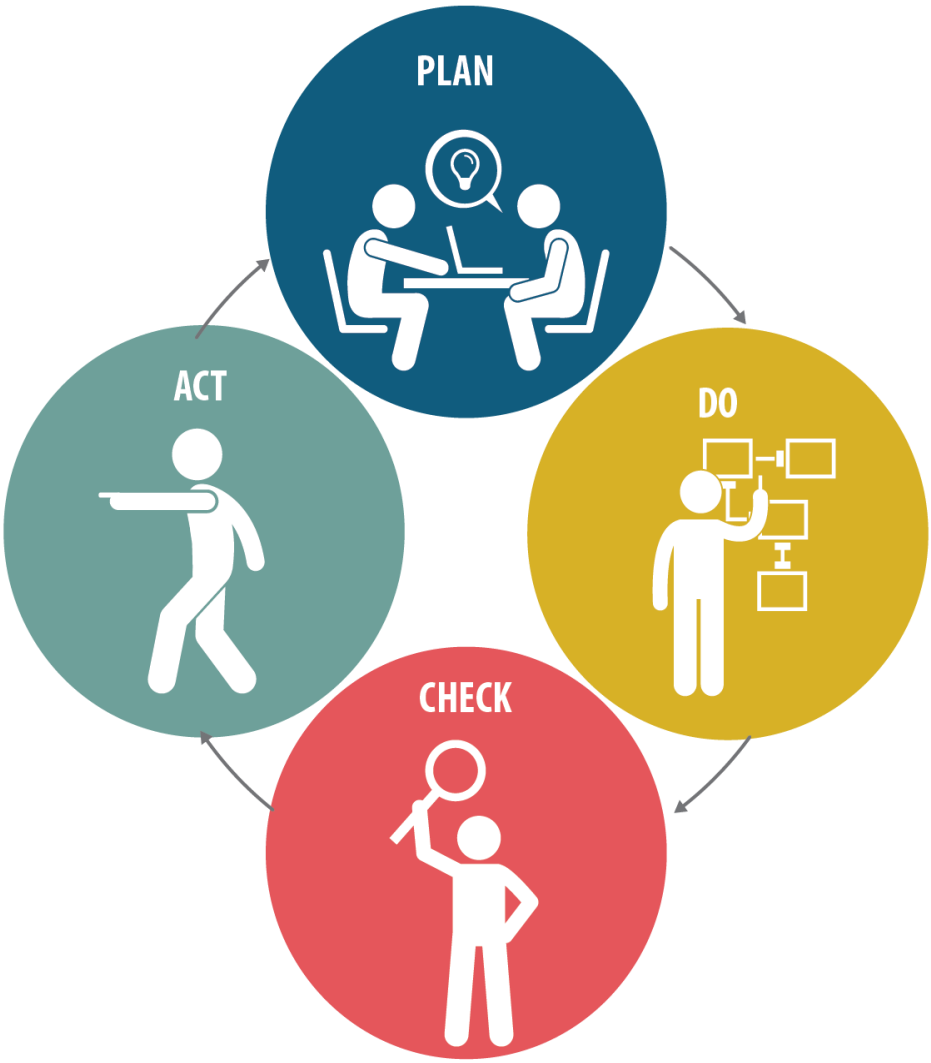


Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Standard

Incorporating Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR)

Warwickshire County Council

Warwickshire County Council

This standard has been produced in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's (WCC) Health and Safety Policy and outlines the minimum requirements that must be met.

Who is this Standard for?

The requirements of this document apply to any type of work activity with hazardous or dangerous substances, including activities that generate hazardous substances, such as woodworking, welding or cleaning activities etc. that are undertaken within WCC. It will assist managers and Head teachers in fulfilling their responsibilities and legal obligations in relation to the COSHH and DSEAR regulations.

It is applicable to anyone where hazardous, flammable and other dangerous substances are part of their work activities or to anyone who manages them. This ensures that as far as is reasonably practicable, working with chemical products is risk assessed, planned and carried out safely.

The extent of planning and controls required will depend upon the type of work and the risks involved. For example, a school cleaner would require fewer controls and procedures than for a motor vehicle technician. In addition to this standard, some services will need to refer to industry specific guidance and practice, for example, grounds maintenance teams who use herbicides or schools with swimming pools.

Some substances are excluded from the COSHH Regulations because they are subject to their own specific regulations, for example:

- Radioactive materials and substances, including naturally occurring Ionising Radiation (*Radon gas)
- Lead and lead products
- Water hygiene / legionella (separate WCC policy and procedure available)
- Asbestos (separate WCC policy and procedure available)

**Radon is a naturally occurring colourless, odourless, radioactive gas that occurs in rocks and soils, some building materials and water. Where high levels have been identified in WCC properties through regular monitoring the levels are managed in accordance with the Ionising Radiations Regulations 2017.*

What about Schools/curriculum activities ?

Curriculum specific activities in schools including Science and Design and Technology where hazardous substances are used or generated as part of a activity or lesson, have their own standard and or guidance from CLEAPSS. More advice can be found in the health and safety standards for schools document. Links can be found in the further information section.

What is COSHH?

The control of substances hazardous to health regulations 2002 or COSHH is the regulation that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health. Within WCC, COSHH will apply to almost all workplaces, although in some offices, for example, it may only be the cleaning staff who use hazardous substances.

Where substances that are hazardous to health are used in the workplace, the COSHH Regulations require the employer to:

- Assess the risk of injury and ill health to employees and others who may be affected.
- Decide what control measures are needed to prevent injury & ill health.
- Put the control measures into practice.
- Ensure that control measures are used and maintained.
- Monitor exposure to hazardous substances, if required.
- Carry out appropriate health surveillance, if required.
- Plan for accidents, incidents, and emergencies.
- Ensure employees are properly informed, trained and supervised.

What is DSEAR?

DSEAR stands for the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002.

Dangerous substances are any substances used or present at work that could, if not properly controlled, cause harm to people as a result of a fire or explosion or corrosion of metal. They can be found in nearly all workplaces and include such things as solvents, paints, varnishes, flammable gases, such as liquid petroleum gas (LPG), dusts from machining and sanding operations, dusts from foodstuffs, pressurised gases and substances corrosive to metal.

The substance supplier's Safety Data Sheet should provide key information on the properties and hazards of the dangerous substance to assist managers in identifying extremely highly flammable and flammable liquids and other dangerous substances. It should also provide information on the safe methods for the storage, use and handling of the dangerous substance, or make reference to where information can be found.

As a general rule, no more than 50 litres for extremely, highly flammable and flammable liquids with a flashpoint below the maximum ambient temperature of the workroom/working area should be stored and no more than 250 litres for other flammable liquids with a higher flashpoint of up to 60°C. These are only recommended maximum storage quantities representing good industry safe practice, rather than be taken as absolute limits.

The appointed site responsible person is responsible for ensuring quantities of dangerous substances are reduced to safer quantities, however this may not always be possible and a DSEAR specific risk assessment must be completed by a competent person and held in the Council AtlasWeb database. They can be found under property information and the fire risk tab.

Property Services maintain a live register of DSEAR workplaces across the Council with the name and contact details of the designated site responsible person. If a DSEAR assessment is required, the designated site responsible person or manager should contact property services. The live register is available to the Council's Health and Safety service for legal compliance requirements. If there are any doubts as to whether DSEAR applies in your workplace, discuss with your designated site responsible person, property

services or the Health and Safety Service.

Where the DSEAR regulations apply the Council must:

- Find out what dangerous substances are in their workplace and what the risks are.
- Put measures in place to either remove or if not possible, control the risks sufficiently.
- Put controls in place to reduce the effects of any incidents involving dangerous substances.
- Prepare plans and procedures to deal with accidents, incidents and emergencies.
- Ensure employees are properly informed and trained to control or deal with the risks.
- Identify and classify areas of the workplace where explosive atmospheres may occur and avoid ignition sources (from unprotected equipment, for example) in those areas.

Plan – consider activities, risks, competency/ refer to WCC/service/industry standards

How do I know what chemical products I have?

- Carry out a thorough audit of your workplace.
- Make a list of the chemical products that you find. Include the exact product name, manufacturer and quantity.
- Check all areas where chemical products might be found, including outside storage sheds, plant rooms and garages.
- Check for activities that may generate COSHH substances. This could include woodwork producing wood dust or the mixing of chemicals producing fumes.

How do I know what to record?

- For each chemical product you have, you need to obtain the Safety Data Sheet (SDS). These should be available from the manufacturer or the supplier from their websites, by email or by telephone, or by using a search engine. The Health and Safety Team may also be able to help locate a SDS if required. consider how the chemical products are being used at your workplace.
- Consider the activities that chemical products are being used for.
- Consider any hazardous products that are being produced during a work process, such as dust, waste, fumes (e.g. dust while using a band saw).
- Consider if any products you find are no longer required, then See disposal section.

How do I know if the chemical products are hazardous?

- In section 2 of the SDS, if it has one or more hazard phrases (H-number), often with a hazard symbol, then the product is classed as hazardous under COSHH, and a risk assessment is required: (COSHH risk assessment)
- For any produced hazardous substances that do not have a SDS, such as sawdust or flour dust, there may be specific guidance available online, for example in the woodwork and catering industries. Schools should check CLEAPSS guidance.

- If the SDS shows that the product is not classed as hazardous (no hazard phrases) and the substance is not associated with a known disease or the method of use does not give rise to the possibility of exposure, just retain the SDS in your COSHH folder as a record. You should also mark on your COSHH register that a COSHH assessment was not required and why it was not required in each instance.
- Further advice can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team.

Where do I keep SDS and COSHH risk assessments?

- COSHH risk assessments and SDS' should be kept together in a COSHH folder, where a COSHH risk assessment is not required, just the SDS can be kept in the folder and a note made on the index that a COSHH assessment is not required and why it is not required.
- The COSHH folder should have an up-to-date index page, listing the substances / activities that produce substances, if a COSHH risk assessment is needed, the date the assessment was carried out and the date of review.
- The law requires that the SDS' and risk assessments be accessible to employees whenever work is being done, and it is good practice to keep them close to where the products are being stored or used.
- In small workplaces, a single, centrally held COSHH folder should be sufficient.
- In large workplaces, or workplaces with multiple buildings / departments, multiple copies may be required, for example a secondary school could have one in every cleaner's cupboard.
- In some workplaces it can be appropriate to keep the COSHH folder electronically, as long as the information is accessible as required above, taking into consideration potential network and power problems.

What about potential accidents or incidents?

You will need to have an emergency plan and procedure in place for foreseeable accidents and incidents involving hazardous chemicals at work so that an immediate and correct response can be made. This should include:

- The right equipment to deal with the emergency, e.g., spillage kit, the right protective equipment and clean-up procedure, such as a spillage action plan with role named responsibilities. The amount of detail will depend on the level of risk of a spillage, for example large spillages will require a fully detailed plan. Please contact the Energy and Environment team energyandenvironmentteam@warwickshire.gov.uk as they will be able to aid in the creation of emergency and pollution response plans for those sites classed as high risk.
- Spillages can be contained, and the severity greatly reduced with the use of bunding. The bund capacity should be 110% of the volume of the largest container or 25% of the total volume stored – whichever is the larger. A method for dealing with a spillage into bunding should still be considered, for example it may be too heavy or awkward to move when a spill has occurred and may need to be absorbed or drained before re-use.

- The right first aid response. First aiders should be aware of the hazards and the location of information such as the safety data sheets and COSHH risk assessments, this is because they may not be the people handling the substances.
- The right arrangements to deal with any waste, taking into account the type of waste being produced.
- The right training for employees so they know the correct response, including when to contact emergency services.
- Report the incident as soon as possible using the WCC incident reporting system.

The safety data sheets contain first aid and emergency information relevant to the chemical. The COSHH risk assessment should contain the local control measures in place for dealing with first aid and emergency situations, considering the specific activity.

For lower risk sites the following documents are also available, the generic response process and a spill response toolbox talk to help in raising awareness on the actions required. Please contact the Energy and Environment team for access.

What should I consider when buying new products?

The manager is responsible for ensuring that all chemical products and any substances generated by work activities that are used by employees to carry out their work are suitable, approved and of the lowest risk, where possible. A purchasing policy or system will help management to fulfil their responsibilities, especially where the purchasing is delegated to other staff.

- Only allow the purchase of management approved/authorised chemical products that will have been through a COSHH risk assessment.
- Managers are also responsible for authorising activities which generate hazardous substances such as dusts, fumes and vapours which can be generated by activities like floor stripping, mixing chemicals and woodworking.
- Prevent staff purchasing, using or bringing in their own chemical products that may bypass the COSHH risk assessment process e.g. cleaning staff who are unhappy with the performance of an authorised product using an alternative from a local store
- Having a purchasing policy can provide an official procedure for trialling and testing new products.

The personal property of employees, members of the public, visitors and pupils for example cosmetics, perfumes, and toiletries for personal use are the responsibility of the individual owner. The persons doing so are expected to keep such items safely and appropriately in their personal storage space, like lockers, bags or desks.

What about chemical products belonging to / used by other teams, contractors or third parties?

- COSHH compliance is the responsibility of the manager of employees who take part in activities that use or create hazardous chemicals in the workplace. The risk assessment should address any potential risk to other building users.
- Other WCC teams or departments who share your workplace are responsible for their own COSHH arrangements.

- Where chemicals are stored in a shared storage space, the SDS for each chemical product should be shared between all users of the storage space.
- Where chemicals are used in a shared workspace, risk assessments and SDS' should consider all users and be available to all users of the workspace. Significant findings should be shared by the third party.
- Third parties, for example contract cleaners or caterers, are responsible for their own COSHH compliance and systems, although those commissioning them, must ensure that they check the third party is complying with COSHH regulation requirements, for example make sure they have their own SDS' and COSHH risk assessments for their substances, suitable training for employees and that they are adhering to their control measures i.e., safe and suitable storage when on site, use of PPE / RPE where outlined etc.

An integral part of the planning is also to consider when, how and who will monitor, review and re-audit the products that you hold and use to check that nothing significant has changed and that the arrangements and controls in place are still effective and working.

This should include reviewing the SDS, risk assessments and any other documentation to ensure that it is still current and relevant. It should also include checking the substance, task and procedures to ensure the documentation reflects what is actually being done.

Do - implement safe working practice/control measures produce documentation/records/arrange training/ inform staff

How do I complete a COSHH risk assessment?

Once you have produced your list of chemical products and activities producing hazardous substances, you should then identify which are hazardous substances by checking section 2 of the SDS for a H-number. You will need to complete a COSHH risk assessment for the hazardous substances and activities that produce hazardous substances (those which have a H-number) using the COSHH risk assessment form and the associated guidance.

A COSHH risk assessment should not contain copy and pasted information from the SDS, it should focus on the specific and localised hazards, risks and control measures for the activity being assessed and the methodology behind its use in that particular situation.

For detailed guidance on completing this, refer to the COSHH Risk Assessment Guidance document. This can be found on the COSHH Intranet pages or Health and Safety Documents for Schools page.

- If a work activity uses a single chemical product, the risk assessment will cover that one product for that activity.
- If a work activity uses more than one chemical product, consideration should be made to the chemical compatibility of the products. You should consider how the

products interact if they are used or stored together. This information should be available in section 7 of the SDS Handling and storage.
- If a work activity uses more than one chemical product with different hazard classifications, then the use of each product within the overall task will require individual assessments.

Safe working practices and control measures

- A COSHH risk assessment may identify the need for additional (or alterations to existing) safe working practices and/or control measures. These need to be implemented effectively, e.g. purchasing better gloves or improving ventilation.
- The Health and Safety Team will advise and support the service manager/Headteacher in high-risk environments where the need to carry out worker exposure monitoring, and /or health surveillance has been identified.

How should I store chemical products?

- Chemicals must be kept in appropriately secure storage to minimise the risk of unauthorised or accidental access to them.
- Level of security depends on the hazards, quantities and the people within the workplace, e.g. childproof cupboard with locks and high-level bolts for a nursery school; locked doors on store rooms and cleaner's cupboards for a secondary school.
- Chemicals must be housed safely within their storage areas. In a "general" storeroom you may need to keep them in their own locked cabinet or cupboard
- Incompatible chemicals, for example, acidic and alkaline products, need separating from each other in the storeroom.
- Chemical containers must be labelled with their contents, including hazard symbols when hazardous.
- Products should be kept in their original containers where possible. Substances can however, be decanted if; the new container is compatible with the substance i.e. does not cause the deterioration of the new container or a chemical reaction, the new container is clearly labelled with the name of the substance and the associated hazard symbol.
- Consider the type and height of shelving, working space, ventilation, quantities stored etc.
- Section 7 of the SDS will contain the manufacturers recommendations on the safe handling and storage, check for any incompatibilities.
- Products should have bunding with 110% capacity for individual substances or 25% of the total volume stored – whichever is the larger
- Further advice on storage can be obtained from the Health and Safety Team.

How do I dispose of unwanted chemicals?

Chemical products no longer used, must be disposed of in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions (see SDS for information). Chemical products classified as hazardous under COSHH are hazardous waste and must be disposed of appropriately.

- Hazardous waste produced by WCC premises must be collected by a registered waste carrier. Household waste recycling centres cannot accept this hazardous waste because WCC premises are business / commercial sites, not domestic.
- The manager is responsible for choosing a registered waste contractor and arranging with them for collection. Any waste disposal paperwork must be kept for three years at the workplace.
- Containers can be disposed of as general waste or recycled, but only if they are clean and empty.
- Clinical waste is a hazardous waste and includes all human tissue including blood, and items used to dispose of urine, faeces and other bodily excretions. Where clinical waste is routinely generated, for example in special and nursery schools, it must be disposed of using the yellow bag system using an approved carrier and records kept for three years.
- Where clinical waste is only occasionally or accidentally produced, e.g. first aid waste, it must be carefully double-bagged and disposed of as domestic waste.
- Further information is available on https://www.gov.uk/dispose-hazardous-waste/producers-and-holders , from WCC Environmental Management Facilities in the Resources Directorate, or the Health and Safety Team can be contacted for advice, see the further information section for contact details.

What training do staff need?

Employees need the appropriate training, instruction and information on the safe use of hazardous substances to enable them to do their job safely, relevant to their role and work activities.

As part of their training and induction, employees need to understand the results of any COSHH risk assessment relevant to them and what this means in practice, including:

- What the hazards and risks are.
- What the control measures are and if PPE or RPE is required, training to ensure the correct fitting, such as face fit testing, the correct application and removal process for the selected PPE.
- What to do if there is an accident/incident/emergency.
- Any workplace exposure limits.
- The results of any exposure monitoring and the general results of any health surveillance.

Some, or all of the points above may already be included in existing documented safe systems of work, risk assessments or method statements etc, but simply handing these documents to employees and asking them to sign to say they have read them may not achieve the required level of understanding. In addition to this, some employees may benefit from practical demonstrations.

Hazardous substances may fall into different risk categories depending on aspects such as the nature of the substance itself, the way substances are used, stored and controlled and the duration they are used for example. Depending on the risk category, more may need to be done to reduce the risk to employees.

Employees should have access to safety data sheets and risk assessments. A record of any training must be kept. eLearning is available for all staff who require it. Bespoke face to face sessions are also available for high risk areas.

eLearning is available on the Learning hub and for WCC Schools there is a hard copy available on the Health and Safety Documents for Schools Page.

Risk levels will vary between workplaces and substances being used however as a basic guide, please see the below for more assistance with risk levels.

Low Risk
This may involve working with low hazard substances, or very small amounts of moderately hazardous substances every few days or less.
Substances could include washing up liquid, hand sanitiser, floor cleaner etc.
Low risk personnel would also not be responsible for interpreting information on an SDS or completing COSHH risk assessments. They will still need to have access to relevant SDS and / or COSHH risk assessments as required.
Training may not be required or if a need for training has arisen, then eLearning may be the best option for low-risk staff members.

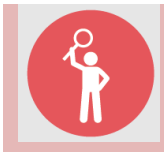
An example area could be office workers.

Medium Risk
This may involve contact with various low hazard substances every day such as a cleaner or infrequent contact with higher risk chemicals used in various manners such as spray applications.
Substances could include WD40, Bleach etc.
Personnel may have a responsibility to assess a safety data sheet in order to carry out COSHH RA's. Working with medium to higher risk substances with the need to understand the risks and control measures to safely use the substances.
Training should be carried out to ensure that staff have the required information. eLearning may be the most suitable option for training medium risk staff members.

Example areas could be waste sites and schools.

High Risk
This may involve frequent daily contact with high-risk chemicals and activities, such as vehicle maintenance, large amounts of herbicides / pesticides, storage of large quantities of fuels, pool plant operators etc.
Substances could include petrol's and oils, pesticides / herbicides etc.

Example areas could include vehicle workshops and pool plant rooms.



Check – monitor how effective arrangements & measures are/any incidents/issue

Act – take action/have a plan of action for any gaps /revisit arrangements/measures/ documentation

Review of COSHH risk assessments

COSHH risk assessments, like other types of risk assessment, need reviewing to check that they are still up to date and reflect the current workplace and activities. The manager of the activity or process should review the COSHH risk assessments as detailed below. This review will also require a check to see if the SDS for the chemical used has been updated by the manufacturer / supplier. If an updated SDS is identified, then the manager should use the updated version to re-assess the substance as required.

COSHH risk assessments should be reviewed:

- At least annually.
- If there has been a significant change in the task.
- If there has been a change in the chemical products used.
- If there has been an accident, incident, near miss or case of ill-health relating to a chemical product.
- If there has been a change in employee circumstances, for example health conditions, new and expectant mothers or disability.
- If the SDS has been updated by the manufacturer or supplier.

If the review identifies that a risk assessment needs to be updated, this must be done as soon as possible. This may range from small updates, e.g. adding a new control measure, up to a complete reassessment. These changes must be shared and discussed with all relevant staff.

COSHH Audits

The role of the Health and Safety Team includes the requirement to visit WCC workplaces and carry out Health and Safety audits. The aim of these audits is to test compliance with various regulations, including the COSHH regulations and they will consider both the practical and record keeping/risk assessment aspects of COSHH.

Managers must carry out their own COSHH audits annually. Ideally when risk assessments are due for review, to check:

- They have an accurate inventory of chemical products on site.
- They have current / up to date safety data sheets for them.
- They have risk assessments for those chemical products and activities that produce substances identified as hazardous under COSHH.
- The risk assessments have been reviewed as required.
- The storage of chemical products is safe and secure – including labelling of containers.
- Training for relevant personnel is implemented and up to date.

- That the licence is still valid for pesticides where they are used or stored (this can be found on the HSE's Pesticides Register Database by searching for the substances you have).

When a chemical product is no longer used in a workplace, the COSHH risk assessment and SDS should be removed from the COSHH folder and held in an archive for five years before disposal. The COSHH folder index should also be updated to reflect this.

Further Information

For further advice and guidance:

- The Health and Safety Team on healthsafetyandwellbeing@warwickshire.gov.uk
- Environmental Management Systems (hazardous waste) ems@warwickshire.gov.uk
- The HSE COSHH internet pages at www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/
- The Control of substances hazardous to health regulations 2002 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/2677/contents/made
- WCC COSHH Intranet Pages
- CLEAPPS Guidance
- Health and Safety Documents for Schools Pages
- The Learning Hub

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