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HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TOXIC SUBSTANCES

Publicity strategy for electronic COSHH Essentials

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Cleared by John Thompson on 17 February 2003

Issue

1. To inform ACTS about HSE's continuing strategy for promoting Electronic COSHH Essentials (e-CE) throughout the UK & Europe

Timing

2. There will be a 2-Phase strategy for the promotion of e-CE for the coming year. Phase 1 will consist of promoting the present form of e-CE. Subject to resources, Phase 2 will see the promotion strategy of e-CE broaden out to encompass newly developed sheets for:
 - Local Authority enforced premises;
 - Asthmagens;
 - Process generated dusts and fumes;

We plan to launch these new sheets during European Week of Health & Safety 2003, which has as its theme dangerous substances.

Background

3. COSHH Essentials provides employers with simple practical advice on how to control hazardous substances tailored to the tasks they carry out and the chemicals they use. It is at the heart of the chemical strategy agreed by the HSC last November, which recognises the need to provide compliance aids that will enable employers to control exposure better and so reduce occupational ill health from chemicals.
4. Evaluation of the paper version of COSHH Essentials shows that most purchasers found it easy to use and many made improvements to the controls they have in place to protect workers.

5. The Internet version of COSHH Essentials was launched at a high profile event on 30 April 2002. It is located in the free portion of the HSE direct website and has been successful. There have been nearly 89,000 visits to the site and 37,565 COSHH assessments completed. The number of users in the first 6 months exceeds the number of paper copies sold over 3 years. HSE intends to continue promoting this tool during the coming year.
6. Phase 1 of e-CE focused on the use of supplied chemicals in manufacturing. Phase 2 will bring on-line new guidance sheets for:
 - the top three asthma-causing agents;
 - process generated dusts and fumes;
 - chemicals/tasks associated with the Local Authority enforced sector;The work to prepare control guidance sheets for substances in these areas is well underway. In subsequent years, further control guidance sheets will be developed and added to the site.

Argument

7. HSE has adopted a 2-strand promotional approach, consisting of UK promotion and overseas promotion.

UK Promotion

8. We will continue to identify proactively opportunities to demonstrate e-CE. For example, we have seized an opportunity to demonstrate e-CE at the Southern Manufacturing Show on 19-20th February 2003. The organisers anticipate approximately 3600 visitors from sectors such as Adhesives, Fume & Dust Extraction, Coatings and Electronic Assembly
9. We are also seeking opportunities to promote e-CE through local and national media. We plan to do this by drafting a standard article for Government News Networks (GNN) throughout England, Scotland and Wales. These networks will then use this standard article to advertise e-CE in the local media. GNN also have contacts with local businesses and we are therefore encouraging them to let us know of other ways that they can spread the word about e-CE to local business.
10. An important way of increasing access to e-CE is by increasing the number of websites that have hypertext links with e-CE. So far, we have set up hypertext links between e-CE and Local Business Partnerships, accessed through DTIs Small Business Scheme. We are also negotiating with the Chemical Industries Association to set up a similar link and we will continue to seek fresh opportunities to develop links with suitable sites. We would welcome ideas from members on other sites with which we could create links.
11. We have considered whether – and how – graduates entering industry know about e-CE: our research has opened up new avenues for promotion with the Royal Society of Chemistry journal, “Chemistry in Britain”. The University of Surrey Chemistry Department performs COSHH assessments of all experiments performed in their laboratories by using e-

CE. To encourage more Universities to use e-CE we will approach their H&S representatives via hyperlinks from the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), the Chemistry Society (Chemsoc) and the University Safety & Health representatives Association (USHA) websites.

12. We will plan and organise workshops on e-CE for SME intermediaries e.g. through Local Business Partnerships in Great Britain. We are also investigating developing partnerships with other HSE initiatives e.g. Healthy Workplace Initiative, "SignUp" campaign (HSE/Dept of Health), which has around 30,000 large/SMEs and various health professionals "signed up" to keeping their workplaces and their workers healthy. We have also been invited to give presentations at a number of Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) branches, namely Merseyside, Teeside, Wales, Ireland and Du Pont.

Local Authority (LA) enforced premises

13. Now that we have plans to develop control guidance sheets for LA enforced premises, we are considering how we can raise awareness of e-CE among Local Authorities. We are arranging for the new sheets to be presented to the Health and Safety Executive/ Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA) at its conference in the autumn. We are also working with HSE's Local Authority Unit to promote e-CE through a newsletter which is sent to Local Authorities regularly.

Euro week 2003 – Launch of e/CE Phase 2

14. This year Euro Week 2003 focuses on the theme of Dangerous substances. This provides HSC/E with an excellent opportunity to promote e-CE. In order to take advantage of the additional publicity that will result, HSE is proposing a high profile Ministerial launch for e-CE Phase 2 during Euro week. We plan to invite journalists and other stakeholders (including ACTS members) to the launch. We hope that regional promotion activities through intermediaries will accompany the launch.

Overseas Promotion

15. We will be demonstrating e-CE at the International Symposium on Chemical Risks in Athens during May 2003. An original eye-catching poster with multi-lingual text has been designed to advertise e-CE.
16. We are actively seeking other opportunities to demonstrate e-CE in the EU. We have already approached contacts in Italy to promote e-CE during the Italian presidency event on chemicals, to be held during Euroweek 2003.
17. Members will be aware that the European Commission's Ad Hoc Group on Chemical Policies in the Workplace has responsibility for developing guidance under article 12 of the Chemical Agents Directive. The INSHT (Instituto Nacional de Seguridad E Higiene en el Trabajo) has been charged

with developing this guidance. HSE has sent to the Institute a description of e-CE in Spanish and has offered to demonstrate the system. We will be following this up through HSE's membership of the Ad Hoc Group (AHG). We are very grateful for the support that ACTS members who attend AHG meetings in Luxembourg have already given to HSE's promotion of e-CE in the EU. We are also grateful to the other ACTS members who are also helping to promote e-CE in the EU.

How else can ACTS members help to promote e-CE?

18. ACTS 3/2003, "first steps in progressing the workplan" proposes that members promote e-CE to other HSC IACs and SACs. We would welcome any promotion that members can take forward through this means. To help ACTS members do this, HSE is gathering relevant documents to provide Information Packs for their use.
19. HSE would also welcome ideas from ACTS Members on other ways to promote this innovative and free tool.

Action

20. ACTS Members are asked to note the strategy for promoting e-CE.

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