

SR12

COSHH Essentials for
service and retail

Electrolysis, piercing, tattooing and micropigmentation

Control approach 1 General ventilation

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) require employers to ensure that exposure is prevented or, where this is not reasonably practicable, adequately controlled. This guidance gives practical advice on how this can be achieved by applying the principles of good practice for the control of exposure to substances hazardous to health, as required by COSHH.

It is aimed at people whose responsibilities include the management of substances hazardous to health at work (eg occupational health specialists, anyone undertaking COSHH assessments, and supervisors). It is also useful for trade union and employee safety representatives. It will help you carry out COSHH assessments, review existing assessments, deliver training, and supervise activities involving substances hazardous to health.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance, you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance.

See Essential information near the end of the sheet.

What this sheet covers

Electrolysis, piercing, tattooing and micropigmentation can involve the use of substances that are hazardous to health, such as solvents and biocidal products, as well as the transfer of biologically hazardous materials through injection.

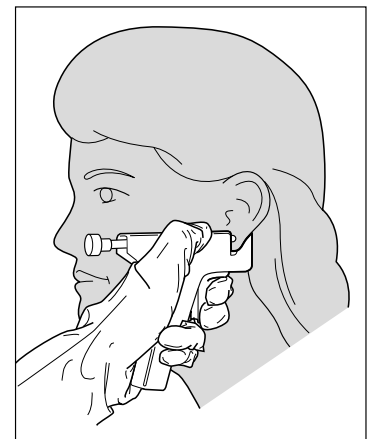
This sheet is limited to describing good control practice for the safe use of chemical substances that are hazardous to health, such as solvents and biocidal products. It covers the key points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level. This is achieved by following good control practice, ie follow all the points described in this sheet or use equally effective measures.

Hazards

- ✓ Contact with many chemical products can lead to dermatitis. Some can also damage the eyes.
- ✓ Try to avoid chloroethane (ethyl chloride) as a skin anaesthetic. This chemical may cause cancer.
- ✓ Solvent-based products may produce harmful vapours and may be flammable, as well as damage healthy skin.
- ✓ Blood-borne viruses (BBVs), such as Hepatitis B and HIV, can be transmitted if an infected person's blood is able to enter another person's bloodstream. This could occur through ear piercing and tattooing if equipment is not properly sterilised.
- ✓ Adding chemicals to concentrates that contain bleach (sodium hypochlorite solution) can cause a dangerous gas (chlorine) to be given off.

Equipment and procedures

- ✓ Provide a good standard of general ventilation. This can be natural ventilation from doors, windows etc, or controlled, where air is supplied or removed by a powered fan.
- ✓ Ensure that supplied or make-up air comes from an uncontaminated area.
- ✓ Discharge extracted air to a safe place outside the building away from doors, windows, air inlets and other premises.
- ✓ Ensure, where possible, that air comes from a fresh source, flows past the worker and then past the work activity to the extraction point.



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- ✓ Use sterile single-use instruments wherever possible.
 - ✓ Sterilise all reusable equipment that can be contaminated with blood etc. Avoid contact with blood and tissue residues. These can be infected.
 - ✓ If there is a risk of hepatitis B or C, ensure workers have been vaccinated.
 - ✓ Check that tattoo and micropigmentation inks are sterile – see the Safety Data Sheet (SDS).
 - ✓ Work surfaces (eg floors, tables, couches) must be smooth and impermeable to aid cleaning.
 - ✓ Blood contamination means that swabs, gloves etc. should be treated as clinical waste. Put these in a clinical waste container and use a licensed waste contractor for removal.
 - ✓ Check that product containers are easy to pour from.
 - ✓ If possible, buy products in a ready-for-use solution.
 - ✓ Where possible, purchase chemicals in tablet or granular form and use a scoop to transfer them.
 - ✓ Store products safely in a cool, dry, dark, ventilated place, in a way capable of retaining any spills. Only store the amount you need.
 - ✓ Ensure that workers follow instructions for use by reading the product label and SDS, and make up solutions for immediate use only.
 - ✓ Put caps back on containers immediately after use and wipe the outside clean.
 - ✓ Write down your procedures for dealing with clinical waste.

Respiratory protective equipment (RPE)

- ✓ RPE is not normally needed.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Provide a disposable plastic apron.
- ✓ Provide protective goggles to protect eyes from potential blood sprays and when using products that can cause chemical burns (eg acids, caustics).
- ✓ Provide and ensure that workers use suitable protective gloves. Single-use nitrile gloves are acceptable.
- ✓ If single-use gloves are selected then dispose of them safely every time you take them off.
- ✓ Latex gloves are sometimes required for tattooing and body piercing because of their tactile sensitivity, barrier property against viruses, and elasticity. If they are to be worn, then powder-free, low-protein content materials must be chosen to prevent latex allergies.
- ✓ Provide waterproof, slip-resistant footwear.
- ✓ Consult workers to ensure PPE will be suitable for them.
- ✓ Ensure that all items of PPE are compatible.
- ✓ Follow the instructions on product labels.
- ✓ Make suitable arrangements for maintenance, storage and replacement of PPE.

Personal decontamination and skin care

- ✓ Keep chemicals off your skin – wash off any splashes immediately.
- ✓ Provide warm water, mild skin cleansers, and soft paper or fabric towels for drying. Avoid abrasive cleansers.

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- ✓ Provide pre-work skin creams, which make it easier to wash contaminants from the skin.
 - ✓ Moisturisers should then be used after hand washing.
 - ✓ Provide after-work creams to replenish skin oils.

Caution: These creams are not a substitute for gloves and do not provide a full barrier.

Maintenance, examination and testing

- ✓ Keep all equipment used for the task in effective working order. Maintain it as advised by the manufacturer, supplier or installer.

Cleaning and housekeeping

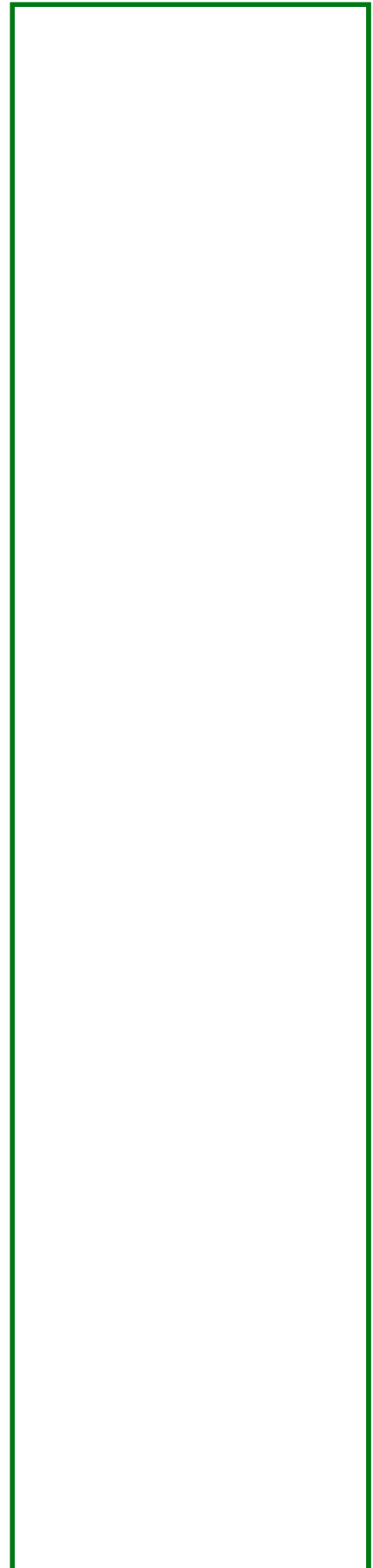
- ✓ Clean work equipment and the work area daily. Clean other equipment and the workroom regularly – at least once a week.
- ✓ Wash out mixing equipment after use.
- ✓ Deal with spills immediately – absorb liquid spills with granules and decontaminate the area (ask your product supplier or follow the instructions provided on the SDS).
- ✓ Sterilise reusable equipment immediately after use.
- ✓ Write down your sterilisation procedures and make sure these are followed.
- ✓ Provide washing facilities for decontamination after handling products.
- ✓ Dispose of hazardous waste safely in a labelled, lidded bin.

Health surveillance

- ✓ Employers are required to carry out health surveillance if workers use a product labelled ‘May cause sensitisation by skin contact’ or ‘May cause sensitisation by inhalation’, and in such cases should consult an occupational health professional.
- ✓ Provide health surveillance for asthma where there is a reasonable likelihood that this may occur in your workplace. See sheet G402 in Essential information.
- ✓ Provide health surveillance for dermatitis where there is a reasonable likelihood that this may occur in your workplace. See sheet G403 in Essential information.
- ✓ Consult an occupational health professional on the level of health surveillance required.

Training and supervision

- ✓ Tell workers about the hazards associated with their work and how to recognise early signs of asthma and dermatitis. Provide supervision – ensure that safe work procedures are followed.
- ✓ Provide workers with training on:
 - working safely with hazardous substances;
 - when and how to use controls;
 - what to do if something goes wrong.
- ✓ Provide supervision – ensure that safe work procedures are followed.
- ✓ Involve managers and supervisors in health and safety training.



Essential information

S100 – General advice on chemicals causing harm via skin or eye contact

S102 – Selecting personal protective equipment

G402 – Health surveillance for occupational asthma

G403 – Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis

Further information

Posters on protective gloves and skin care
www.hse.gov.uk/skin/information.htm

Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register www.oshcr.org/

You can find the full COSHH Essentials series at
www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/index.htm

Control of substances hazardous to health: The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. Approved Code of Practice and guidance L5 (sixth edition) HSE 2013.
<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l5.htm>

Infections at work <https://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/infection.htm>

Tattooing and body piercing guidance toolkit, Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH), ISBN 9781906989729.
<https://www.cieh.org/media/2004/tattooing-and-body-piercing-guidance-toolkit-july-2013.pdf>

Managing risks from skin exposure at work HSG262 (second edition), HSE Books 2015. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg262.htm>

Preventing contact dermatitis and urticaria at work INDG233(rev2), HSE Books 2015. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg233.htm>

Latex allergies www.hse.gov.uk/skin/employ/latex.htm

For information about health and safety, visit <https://books.hse.gov.uk> or <http://www.hse.gov.uk>

You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

To report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, email: commissioning@tso.co.uk

Employee checklist

- Do you understand the health hazards associated with your work?
- Are you sure about safe working procedures?
- Do you know how to use controls?
- Clear up blood spills immediately. Mop up with swabs or tissues, put these in the clinical waste bin, and then disinfect the surface.
- Dispose of single-use gloves every time you take them off.
- Wash hands before eating and drinking, after smoking and using the lavatory, and after work.
- Never clean your hands with concentrated cleaning products or solvents.
- Check your skin regularly for dryness or soreness – make sure you know the procedure on reporting if such symptoms occur. Early intervention means it will be less likely that you develop permanent symptoms.
- Use skin creams provided as instructed.
- Co-operate with health surveillance.