

# AGO

## COSHH essentials for agriculture



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, supervisors and 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.

# Advice for managers

## Introduction

HSE have produced these advice sheets to help employers assess and control risks from hazardous substances in the workplace. For some common tasks the sheets take into account the health hazards (and exposure potential) of substances used or produced to identify an approach appropriate to control the risks.

The AG series describes good practice for controlling exposure to dusts and aerosols in Agriculture. They cover the key points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level. Follow all the points, or use equally effective measures to comply with workplace exposure limits (WELs).

This advice does not cover pesticides. Follow the instructions on pesticide product labels.

AG1	Harvesting grain and seed crops	AG6	Opening hay, haylage and silage bales
AG2	Grain and seed transfer (small scale)	AG7	Composting
AG3	Weighing, milling and mixing animal feeds (small scale)	AG8	Straw chopping and blowing
AG4	Feeding livestock housed indoors	AG9	Cleaning stores, sheds and silos
AG5	Seed cleaning (fixed and mobile plant)	AG10	On farm cleaning and grading of bulbs, roots, tubers etc

## What the sheets cover

Reducing exposure to an adequate level always involves a mixture of equipment and ways of working. This means employers should:

- choose the most effective and reliable control measures;
- make sure they are used properly by instructing, training and supervising workers;
- use regular maintenance to make sure control measures keep on working;
- check and review all elements of control measures regularly for their continued effectiveness.

Each sheet gives advice on how to achieve this for a particular task.

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## Hazards

Exposure to grain dust, poultry dust, animal dander, insect residues, plant dusts, fungi, bacteria and endotoxins can cause lung diseases such as asthma, chronic bronchitis and farmer's lung.

## How to use the sheets

- Consider the processes/tasks and hazardous substances in your workplace.
- Look for opportunities to substitute with less hazardous materials.
- Examine the advice sheets for each of the tasks.
- Examine the essential information sheets listed on each advice sheet.
- Compare operations in your workplace with recommendations in the advice sheets for all of the relevant tasks.
- Record your findings (this forms part of your risk assessment).
- Record any actions you need to take covering: issues identified, planned actions, target completion date, person responsible, status of any issues, and a review of effectiveness.
- Keep a record of your actions to prevent exposure of workers to hazardous materials.

You may have to change old working practices or spend money on new controls. Decide how best to make any changes required 'across the board'. If you are in doubt, seek expert help, don't give up! Ask your trade association, trade union or contact a consultant (see Further information).

## Essential information

You can find the full COSHH essentials series at [www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/essentials/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/essentials/)

Health surveillance, monitoring and sampling sheets are available at [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/gseries.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/gseries.htm)

*Health surveillance for occupational asthma* COSHH Guidance Sheet G402 HSE 2011 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/g402.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/g402.pdf)

*Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis* COSHH Guidance Sheet G403 HSE 2011 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/g403.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/g403.pdf)

## Further information

*Respiratory protective equipment at work: A practical guide* HSG53 (Fourth edition) HSE 2013 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/HSG53.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/HSG53.htm)

*Controlling airborne contaminants at work: A guide to local exhaust ventilation (LEV)* HSG258 HSE 2011 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg258.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg258.htm)

Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register [www.oshcr.org/](http://www.oshcr.org/)

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