

AG9

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.

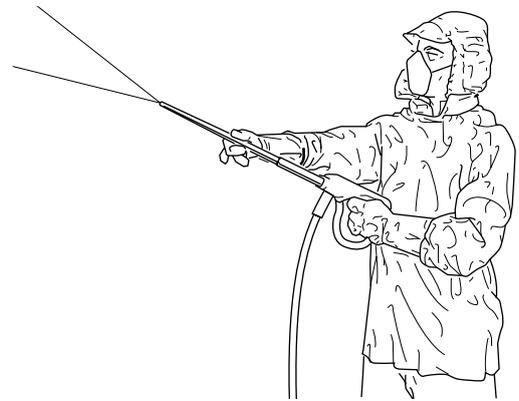
Cleaning grain and animal feed stores, sheds and silos (small scale)

Control approach R Respiratory protective equipment (RPE)

What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good control practice during the cleaning of grain and animal feed stores, sheds and silos.

It covers the key points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level. Follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.



Hazards

- ✓ High dust levels can be produced in cleaning stores, sheds and silos.
- ✓ Dust and/or aerosol are produced in cleaning grain and animal feed stores, sheds and silos. These can cause lung diseases such as asthma.
- ✓ Some chemical products used for cleaning can cause asthma and dermatitis. Check the supplier's safety data sheet.
- ✓ If an individual develops occupational asthma, avoid further exposure and seek urgent medical advice.
- ✓ Grain dust has a workplace exposure limit (WEL) of 10 mg/m³ (based on an 8-hour time-weighted average). You need to keep exposures as low as is reasonably practicable below this limit.
- ✓ Control exposure to stop occupational asthma developing – this means short-term as well as long-term exposure.

Caution: Some dusts (eg from barley) are very irritating to skin, eyes and the respiratory tract. Wet work (having your skin frequently in contact with water) can cause dermatitis. You will need to consider this and appropriate controls of exposure as part of managing the risks.

Access to work area

- ✓ Allow access to authorised and appropriately trained people only.
- ✓ Consider safe access for working at height.

Equipment and procedures

- ✓ Check safety data sheets for chemicals and consider substituting with safer products.

- ✓ Remove as much dust as possible by mechanical means and vacuum cleaning.
- ✓ Avoid dry brushing and compressed air whenever possible.
- ✓ Follow instructions on product labels.
- ✓ Avoid products labelled 'may cause sensitisation by inhalation' or 'may cause sensitisation by skin contact'.

Respiratory protective equipment (RPE)

- ✓ Provide RPE with a UK Standard Assigned Protection Factor (APF) of at least 20.
- ✓ Depending on the products used, you may need a combination filter to cope with dust and vapour.
- ✓ You may need to provide air-fed breathing apparatus for work in confined spaces (eg closed silos, conveyor boots) or if using compressed air for cleaning.
- ✓ Workers should put their RPE on before entering the area.
- ✓ Fit testing is required for RPE with a tight fitting face seal.
- ✓ Workers wearing tight fitting RPE should be clean shaven, trained how to fit it properly and how to look after it.
- ✓ Tell workers to discard disposable RPE at the end of the shift.
- ✓ Change the filters on respirators in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations and if:
 - the shelf-life expiry date has passed;
 - they are damaged or visibly contaminated; or
 - they become harder to breathe through.
- ✓ Examine and test non-disposable RPE thoroughly at least once every month.
- ✓ Tell workers to check RPE is working properly before every use and record this.
- ✓ If RPE is required for extended periods, eg longer than 1 hour, use powered respirators.
- ✓ Make suitable arrangements for maintenance, storage and replacement of RPE.

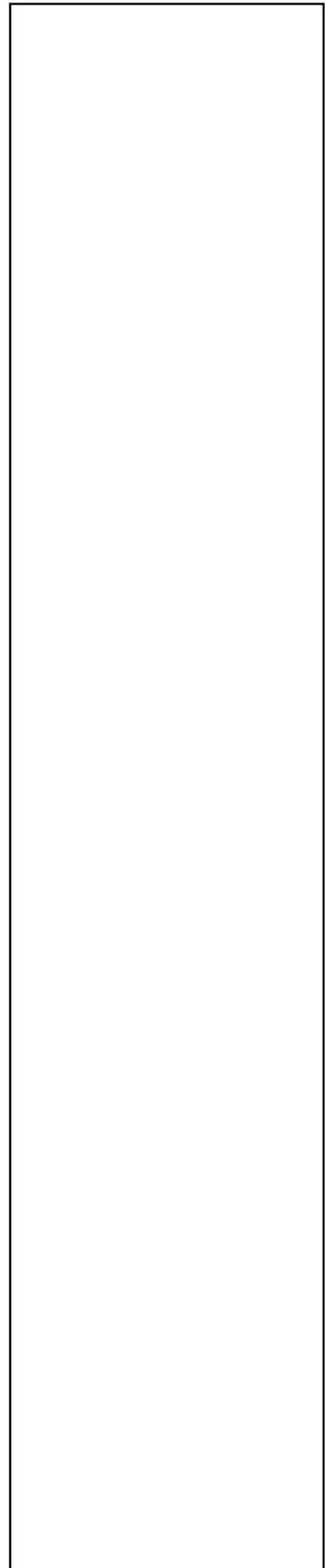
Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Provide PPE to minimise skin contact with chemicals.
- ✓ Check labels on any cleaners for advice on gloves to use, otherwise nitrile gloves are typically acceptable.
- ✓ Ask your supplier to help you select the right PPE.
- ✓ Make suitable arrangements for maintenance, storage and replacement of PPE.

Personal decontamination and skincare

- ✓ Provide warm water, mild skin cleansers, and soft paper or fabric towels for drying. Avoid abrasive cleansers.
- ✓ Provide pre-work skin creams, which will make it easier to wash dirt from the skin.
- ✓ Provide after-work creams to replenish skin oils.

Caution: 'Barrier creams' are not 'liquid 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 supplier or installer.
- ✓ Check all equipment at least once a week for signs of damage or faults.
- ✓ Keep records of all examinations for at least 5 years.

Cleaning and housekeeping

- ✓ Clean work equipment regularly – at least once a week.
- ✓ Deal with spills immediately – use suitable protective gloves.

Caution: Never allow the use of brushes or compressed air for removing dust from skin and clothing. Avoid the use of brushes or compressed air for removing dust from surfaces or from inside machinery.

Health surveillance

- ✓ Provide health surveillance for asthma where there is a reasonable likelihood that asthma may occur in your workplace. See G402.
- ✓ Provide health surveillance for dermatitis where there is a reasonable likelihood that dermatitis may occur in your workplace. See G403.

Training and supervision

- ✓ Tell workers about the hazards associated with their work and how to recognise the 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;
 - how to check they are working;
 - what to do if something goes wrong.
- ✓ Training records are helpful to demonstrate training has taken place.

Essential Information

You can find the full COSHH essentials series at www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/essentials/

Health surveillance for occupational asthma COSHH Guidance Sheet G402 HSE 2011 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

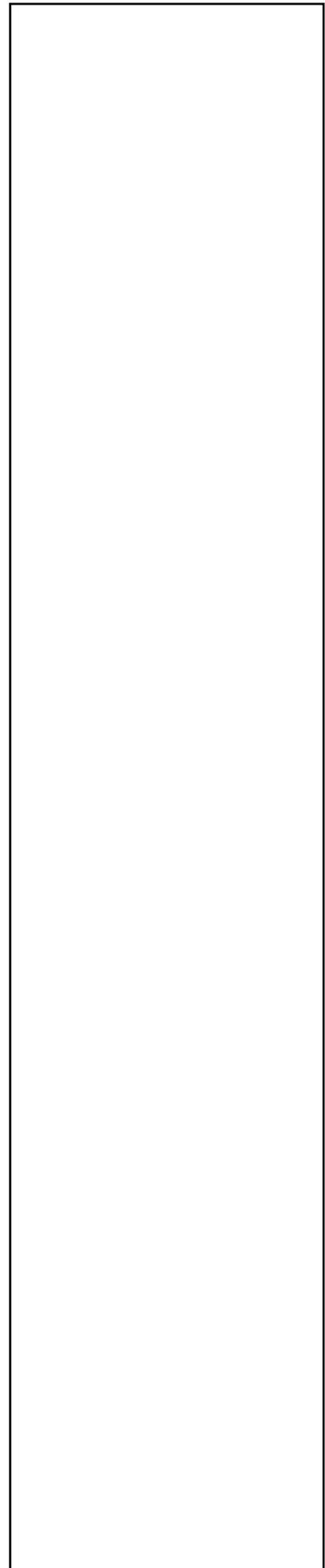
Advice for managers COSHH Guidance Sheet AG0 HSE 2016 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/ag0.pdf

RPE with a UK Standard Assigned Protection Factor 20 (APF20) COSHH Guidance Sheet R3 HSE 2016 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/rpe3.pdf

Further Information

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

For other advice on health and safety risks in agriculture see www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/



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

Controlling exposure to poultry dust Guidance for employers
Agriculture Information Sheet AIS39HSE 2012
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/ais39.htm

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit 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.

Employee checklist

- Do you know how to use the control equipment properly?
- Look for signs of leaks, wear and damage before every job.
- If you find any problems, tell your supervisor. Don't just carry on working.
- Is your respirator working properly? Check it every time you use it.
- Discard single-use gloves every time you take them off. Discard other gloves at the end of the shift.
- Use, maintain and store your PPE and RPE in accordance with instructions.
- Co-operate with health surveillance.
- If you develop any symptoms that may be related to work, inform your supervisor.
- Wash hands before eating, drinking, smoking or using the lavatory and after work.

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