

# OCM<sup>3</sup>

## Offshore COSHH essentials



This information will help offshore dutyholders (owners, operators and contractors) to comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), as amended, to protect workers' health.

This guidance consolidates good control practice and reinforces existing knowledge with additional information. It will help you carry out COSHH assessments, review existing assessments, deliver training and in supervising activities involving substances hazardous to health.

It is aimed at staff whose responsibilities include the management of substances hazardous to health on offshore installations (eg occupational health specialists, COSHH assessors, supervisors etc). It is also useful for trade union and employee safety representatives.

Following the guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow this 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 as illustrating good practice.

If you need a service provider (eg consultant), OCM sheets describe what they should deliver. You may need help from a RPE supplier or manufacturer, or from an occupational hygienist.

Also see essential information on the back of the sheet.

# Personal protective equipment (PPE)

## Control approach 4 Special advice

### What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice for selecting protective gloves, clothing and other equipment

### Managing PPE

- ✓ No material offers protection against all chemicals.
- ✓ Get safety data sheets for all chemical products.
- ✓ Put in place a management system for the correct selection, use and maintenance of PPE.
- ✓ Make sure all PPE you require can be worn and used together.
- ✓ Control the provision and timely replacement of PPE.

**Caution:** PPE can reduce mobility, limit communication and increase heat stress.

### Protective gloves

- ✓ Fill in the glove selection table below. Show it to your PPE supplier.
- ✓ Only purchase protective gloves that are CE marked as 'complex' (category III) PPE.
- ✓ Involve employees in glove selection. Get a range of sizes – gloves must fit!
- ✓ Check if gloves might increase the risk of entanglement with machinery.
- ✓ Check if wearers have any skin conditions that might affect their wearing protective gloves. If so, consult an occupational health professional – see [www.oshcr.org/](http://www.oshcr.org/).
- ✓ If you must select latex gloves, use only 'low protein, powder free' gloves.
- ✓ Avoid dipped gloves with knitted liners: chemicals can wick through and onto the skin in seconds.



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- ✓ Gloves should not be used for more than one shift (12 hours).

**Caution:** No glove is tested to give more than 8 hours' protection against chemicals, and many will not achieve this. Wear, tear and stretching are not included in any glove tests. Determine a safe use period in consultation with the glove manufacturer.

#### *Coveralls and aprons*

- ✓ Provide coveralls of fire retardant fabric. This includes disposable coveralls. Where dual layers are worn, both should be fire retardant, with the inner layer having a FR Index of 2 or more.
- ✓ Clothing should be worn under coveralls to reduce skin contamination. Use FR or natural fibre garments instead of synthetic materials.
- ✓ Select the right type of coverall for your work: Type 3 for heavy splashes, Type 4 for light spray, Type 5 for dusts, or Type 6 for light accidental contact.
- ✓ Follow the manufacturers' instructions for laundry and cleaning, if they indicate that such cleaning is possible. If not, dispose.
- ✓ Discard disposable coveralls at the end of the shift or job.
- ✓ Avoid laundering work wear at home.
- ✓ Tell workers to empty the pockets.
- ✓ Minimise compromising the fire retardance by following washing instructions.

**Caution:** Never use compressed air to remove dust from clothing, use vacuuming instead.

#### *Eye and face protection*

- ✓ Select the right equipment depending on the hazard, eg impact, dust, mist, splash, fume, gas, vapour or optical radiation.
- ✓ A full-face respirator also intended to provide eye and face protection must have the right aspects of performance (eg visor impact resistance level) included in its manufacturing specification.

#### *Footwear*

- ✓ Select the right equipment: in addition to chemical resistance, necessary properties may include antistatic soles, resistance to crushing, heat or sharp spikes.

#### *Hearing protection*

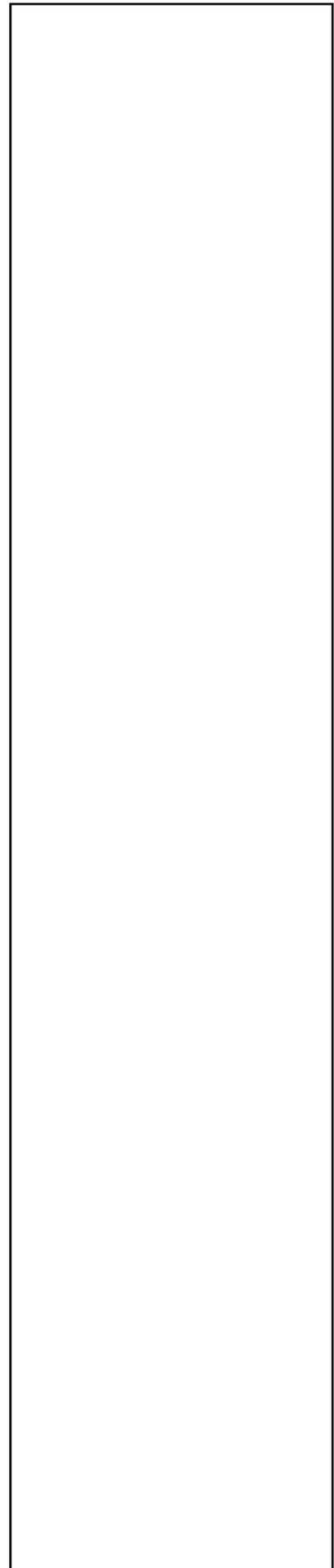
- ✓ Provide the right hearing protection, compatible with other PPE.

**Caution:** Avoid over-protection.

#### *Skin care*

- ✓ Provide pre-work creams to maintain skin condition and after-work creams to replace skin oils.
- ✓ Avoid strong skin cleaners.

**Caution:** 'Barrier creams' or 'liquid gloves' do not provide a full barrier.



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## Using PPE

- ✓ Provide facilities to keep clean clothing and dirty work clothing apart.

### *Protective equipment*

- ✓ Contamination continues to work through gloves, coveralls and footwear, even while they are not being worn.
- ✓ When taking gloves on and off, contamination can get inside the gloves.
- ✓ Dispose of single-use gloves when they are taken off.
- ✓ Dispose of chemical protective gloves at the end of their use period. After this they will be contaminated inside, even if they look clean.
- ✓ Check for deterioration of protective equipment.

### *Training*

- ✓ Training covers:
  - how to put on PPE properly, and to remove contaminated PPE;
  - how, where possible, to minimise contamination before removal;
  - use of disposable PPE only once;
  - the necessity of washing hands after taking off PPE; and
  - how to dispose of contaminated PPE safely.
- ✓ Keep training records.

## Essential information

OCM4 *Respiratory protective equipment (RPE)*

## Useful links

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

## Further information

*Managing risks from skin  
exposure at work* HSG262  
HSE Books 2009  
ISBN 978 0 7176 6309 5  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg262.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg262.htm)

Skin at work  
[www.hse.gov.uk/skin/publications.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/publications.htm)

[www.hse.gov.uk/skin/posters/reusablegloves.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/posters/reusablegloves.pdf)

[www.hse.gov.uk/skin/posters/singleusegloves.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/posters/singleusegloves.pdf)

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

**This guidance was developed by representatives from the UK offshore oil and gas industry and trade unions, with HSE.**

**Glove selection: Information to help your PPE supplier**

<b>Job or activity</b>	
Chemicals in the substance (see safety data sheet)	
Physical form	gas/fume/vapour/dust/other
If solid, dustiness	high/medium/low
If liquid, boiling point	°C
If liquid, water-based	yes/no
Temperature substance used at all	°C
Task duration	hours/minutes
Task – times done per day	
Hand contact (worst case)	dipped/splash/surface touch
How far does contamination get	hand/forearm/above elbow
Any other hazards	hot/cold/sharp/abrasive/electric shock
What range of glove sizes needed	
Task needs – eg special sensitivity or dexterity	