

# MWO

COSHH essentials for  
machining with metalworking  
fluids

## Advice for managers

**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.

### Introduction

HSE have produced these advice sheets to help employers assess and control common health 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.

### What the sheets cover

The MW series of sheets (listed below) describes good practice for controlling exposure to metalworking fluids (also known as coolant) during use and maintenance activities.

Follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

MW1	CNC machining
MW2	Control of skin risks during machining
MW3	Sump cleaning: water-mix fluids
MW4	Sump cleaning: neat oils
MW5	Managing fluid quality

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;
- ensure they are used properly by instructing, training and supervising workers;
- ensure 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.

### Hazards

- ✓ Inhalation of metalworking fluid mist can cause lung diseases, such as occupational asthma and occupational hypersensitivity pneumonitis.
- ✓ Skin contact with metalworking fluids can cause dermatitis.

### 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 all the advice sheets.
- Examine the essential information listed on each advice sheet.
- Compare operations in your workplace with recommendations in the advice sheets.

- 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.
- You may need to carry out health surveillance for your employees (see sheets G402 Health surveillance for occupational asthma and G403 Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis).
- 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. Ask your trade association, trade union or contact a competent consultant (see Further information).

### Essential information

You can find the full metalworking fluids COSHH essentials series at [www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/essentials/direct-advice/metalworking-fluids.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/essentials/direct-advice/metalworking-fluids.htm)

G402 Health surveillance for occupational asthma

G403 Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis

### Further information

*Good practice guide for safe handling and disposal of metalworking fluids* UKLA 2020 [www.ukla.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/UKLA-HSE-Good-Practice-Guide-for-Safe-Handling-and-Disposal-of-Metalworking-Fluids.pdf](http://www.ukla.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/UKLA-HSE-Good-Practice-Guide-for-Safe-Handling-and-Disposal-of-Metalworking-Fluids.pdf)

*Working safely with metalworking fluids: A guide for employees* INDG365 HSE 2011 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg365.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg365.pdf)

See [www.hse.gov.uk/metalworking/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/metalworking/index.htm)

*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 (Third edition) HSE 2017 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg258.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/priced/hsg258.pdf)

British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) <https://www.bohs.org/information-guidance/guidance-for-employers/>

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

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

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