

# SR5

COSHH Essentials for  
service and retail

## Dry cleaning using chlorinated solvent

### Control approach 3 Containment and 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

This sheet describes good control practice for the control of exposure to chlorinated solvents when dry cleaning.

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 by following all the points described in this sheet or using equally effective measures) to reduce exposures to below relevant workplace exposure limits (WELs).

This sheet applies to chlorinated solvents only. It does not apply to hydrocarbon solvents.

#### Hazards

- ✓ The dry cleaning solvent tetrachloroethylene (perchloroethylene) may cause cancer and other harmful health effects – check the Safety Data Sheet (SDS).
- ✓ Dry cleaning can lead to exposure by breathing in solvent vapour.
- ✓ Solvent vapours can cause headaches, dizziness and nausea. Some are capable of causing asthma or may be flammable.

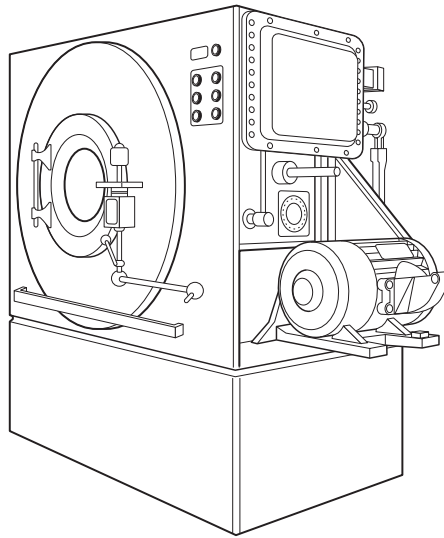
#### Access to work area

- ✓ Only allow access to authorised and appropriately trained people.
- ✓ Keep the workplace well organised, with clear exit routes.
- ✓ Get a 'solvent precaution notice' from your solvent supplier and display it for workers.
- ✓ Prohibit eating, drinking and smoking in the workroom.

#### Equipment and procedures

- ✓ Use well-maintained closed-circuit machines.
- ✓ Provide a good standard of general ventilation. This can be natural ventilation through open doors and windows, or powered where air is supplied and extracted by motorised fans.
- ✓ Ensure that fresh air supplied is drawn from an uncontaminated area.
- ✓ Discharge extracted air to a safe place outside the premises away from doors, windows and air inlets. Have a supply of clean air coming into the workroom to replace extracted air.
- ✓ Follow the specified procedures for adding solvent to the machine.
- ✓ Store products safely in a cool, dry, ventilated, dark place in such a way as to be capable of retaining any spills. Only store the amount you need.
- ✓ Keep chemicals off your skin – wash off any splashes immediately.
- ✓ Put caps back on containers immediately after use and wipe the surface clean.
- ✓ Check that authorised staff understand how to empty button traps and clean lint filters.
- ✓ Do not overload the machine.

- ✓ Ensure there is a time delay on the machine before the door can be opened to allow time for solvent vapour in the drum to dissipate.
- ✓ 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), including any requirement for PPE.
- ✓ Evacuate the premises and call the fire brigade if you have a large spill of solvent or a leak of hot solvent.



### Respiratory protective equipment (RPE)

- ✓ RPE is not normally needed.

### Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ PPE is not normally needed.

### 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 for signs of damage to control equipment before starting work.

### Cleaning and housekeeping

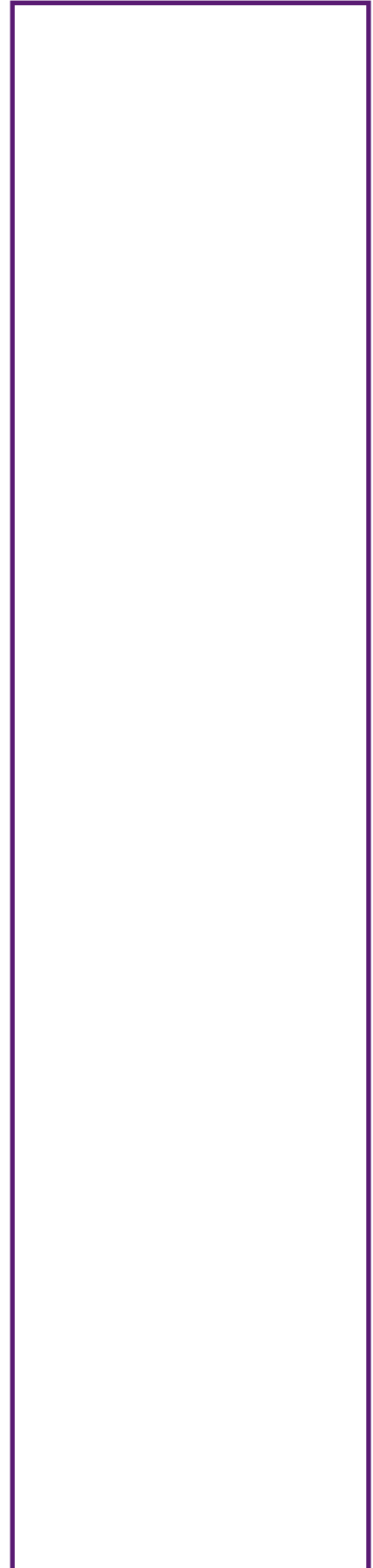
- ✓ Clean work equipment and the work area daily. Clean other equipment and the workroom regularly – at least once a week.
- ✓ Never pour waste or still residues down the drain. Collect it for recycling.
- ✓ Dispose of waste through a specialist contractor and follow local authority waste management guidance.

### Health surveillance

- ✓ Provide health surveillance for asthma where there is a reasonable likelihood that this may occur in your workplace. See sheet G402 in Essential information.

### Training and supervision

- ✓ Tell workers about the hazards associated with their work and how to recognise early signs of asthma and dermatitis.
- ✓ Provide workers with training on working safely with hazardous substances, incorporating when and how to use controls, how to check controls are working, and 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.
- ✓ The keeping of records can be helpful to demonstrate what information, instruction and training has been provided.



## 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

## Further information

*Health, safety and environment management guidelines*, Textile Services Association 1999, available from TSA on 020 8863 7755 or via [www.tsa-uk.org](http://www.tsa-uk.org)

*A clean bill of health: Health and safety in the dry cleaning industry*, Video, HSE Books 2003, ISBN 0 7176 2166 9.

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

*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>

*Respiratory protective equipment at work: A practical guide HSG53* (fourth edition), HSE Books 2013, ISBN 978 0 7176 6454 2. [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg53.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg53.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](mailto:commissioning@tso.co.uk)

## Employee checklist

- 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.
- 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.