

SR6

COSHH Essentials for
service and retail

Dry cleaning – spot cleaning

Control approach 2 Engineering control

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 chemicals when spot 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).

Hazards

- ✓ Contact with many chemicals used in spot cleaning can irritate the skin or cause an allergic reaction (dermatitis). Some can also damage the eyes.
- ✓ Some products may cause asthma or may be flammable – check the Safety Data Sheet (SDS).
- ✓ Avoid products that contain HF (hydrofluoric acid). HF can cause serious burns and blindness.

Access to work area

- ✓ Only allow access to authorised and appropriately trained people.
- ✓ Keep the workplace well organised, with clear exit routes.

Equipment and procedures

- ✓ Provide local exhaust ventilation (LEV) in the form of a downdraught table or a movable hood.
- ✓ Airflow must be sufficient to control airborne contaminants effectively. This will depend on the design, size of opening and the type of process and substance being controlled.
- ✓ Seek advice from a competent LEV designer if you are uncertain (see G406 in Essential information).
- ✓ 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 fresh air drawn in comes 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.
- ✓ Use spotting bottles with the smallest practical hole size in the nozzle.
- ✓ If possible, buy products in a ready-for-use solution.
- ✓ Spotting bottles should never be more than two thirds full, to avoid squirting fluid into eyes.
- ✓ 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.

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- ✓ Read the instructions on labels carefully – follow the instructions for use.
 - ✓ Keep chemicals off your skin – wash off any splashes immediately.
 - ✓ Put caps back on containers immediately after use and wipe the surface clean.
 - ✓ 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).
 - ✓ Allow the spotting substance to dry before putting the treated garment into the dry cleaning machine.

Respiratory protective equipment (RPE)

- ✓ RPE is not normally needed.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Use protective gloves and eye protection for topping up bottles. Single-use nitrile gloves are acceptable.
- ✓ If single-use gloves are selected then dispose of them safely every time you take them off.
- ✓ Provide protective goggles to protect eyes when using products that can cause burns (eg acids, caustics).
- ✓ Provide waterproof, slip-resistant footwear.
- ✓ Consult workers to ensure PPE will be suitable for them.
- ✓ Make suitable arrangements for maintenance, storage and replacement of PPE.

Personal decontamination and skin care

- ✓ Keep chemicals off your skin – wash off any splashes immediately.
- ✓ Provide warm water, mild skin cleansers, and soft paper or fabric towels for drying. Avoid abrasive cleansers.
- ✓ Provide pre-work skin creams, which make it easier to wash contaminants from the skin.
- ✓ Moisturisers should then be used after hand washing.
- ✓ Provide after-work creams to replenish skin oils.

Caution: These creams are not a substitute for 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 for signs of damage to control equipment before starting work.
- ✓ Have equipment thoroughly examined and tested against its performance standard, at suitable intervals.
- ✓ For LEV, a user manual or log book is helpful in setting out the frequency of checking, maintenance or parts replacement.
- ✓ For LEV with no user manual or log book, you may need the help of a competent person. They can determine the performance needed for adequate control.
- ✓ LEV systems require a statutory 'thorough examination and test' (TExT).
- ✓ Get a competent person to perform the TExT at least once every 14 months.
- ✓ Carry out all actions arising from the TExT.

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- ✓ Keep an employer record for at least five years of TEXT information such as target extraction rates, which show the LEV is performing as originally intended.
 - ✓ Several measures are available to check effectiveness of controls ranging from simple qualitative (eg use of a dust lamp) to complex quantitative techniques (eg air sampling) usually for higher-risk scenarios. See G409 in Essential information.
 - ✓ HSG258 provides more detailed information on LEV systems and legal and competence requirements. See HSG258 in Further information.

Cleaning and housekeeping

- ✓ Clean work equipment and the work area daily.
- ✓ 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).
- ✓ 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

- ✓ If you use a product labelled ‘May cause sensitisation by skin contact’ or ‘May cause sensitisation by inhalation’, consult an occupational health professional.
- ✓ Provide health surveillance for asthma where there is a reasonable likelihood that this may occur in your workplace. See sheet G402 in Essential information.
- ✓ Provide health surveillance for dermatitis where there is a reasonable likelihood that this may occur in your workplace. See sheet G403 in Essential information.
- ✓ Consult an occupational health professional on the level of health surveillance required.

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.

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

G403 – Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis

G406 – New and existing engineering control systems

G409 – Exposure measurement: Air sampling

Further information

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>

Clearing the air: A simple guide to buying and using local exhaust ventilation (LEV) INDG408 (rev1), HSE Books 2016. www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg408.pdf

Controlling airborne contaminants at work: A guide to local exhaust ventilation (LEV) HSG258 (third edition), HSE Books 2017, ISBN 978 0 7176 6613 3. www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg258.htm

Managing risks from skin exposure at work HSG262 (second edition), HSE Books 2015. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg262.htm>

Preventing contact dermatitis and urticaria at work INDG233(rev2), HSE Books 2015. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg233.htm>

Respiratory sensitisers and COSHH: An employer's leaflet on preventing occupational asthma INDG95, HSE Books 2005. www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg95.pdf

Posters on protective gloves and skin care
www.hse.gov.uk/skin/information.htm

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

You can find the full COSHH Essentials series at
www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/index.htm

Respiratory protective equipment at work: A practical guide HSG53 (fourth edition), HSE Books 2013. <https://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

Employee checklist

- Do you understand the health hazards associated with your work?
- Are you sure about safe working procedures?
- Do you know how to use controls?
- 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.
- Check LEV is working prior to every use.
- 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.