

# SR16

COSHH Essentials for  
service and retail

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.

## Working with motor vehicle fuel (diesel, petrol and LP gas)

### Control approach 1 General ventilation

#### What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good control practice for work involving motor vehicle fuel (diesel, petrol and liquefied petroleum (LP) gas).

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 follow all the points described in this sheet, or use equally effective measures.

#### Hazards

- ✓ Inhalation of LP gas can cause agitation, nausea, vomiting, flushing, headache and lack of balance, whilst exposure to high concentrations may cause asphyxiation, fitting, coma, heart problems and death.
- ✓ Petrol vapour may irritate the eyes and respiratory tract. Inhalation may cause dizziness, excitement and incoordination, whilst ingestion may cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. Exposure to petrol vapour in confined or poorly ventilated areas may cause rapid onset of unconsciousness.

**Caution: In the unlikely event of a requirement to carry out work in a confined space, refer to the specific guidance in HSE publication L101 *Safe work in confined spaces*.**

- ✓ Exposure to diesel fuel vapour may be irritating to the eyes and respiratory system.
- ✓ Skin contact with any liquid fuel can lead to soreness and itching, rashes and/or blistering (dermatitis), whilst skin contact with LP gas released under pressure can cause frostbite.

#### Access to work area

- ✓ Only allow access to authorised and appropriately trained people.

#### Equipment and procedures

- ✓ Provide a good standard of general ventilation. This can be natural ventilation from doors, windows etc. or controlled, where air is supplied and/or removed by powered fans. Ensure that supplied or make-up air comes from an uncontaminated area.
- ✓ Discharge extracted air to a safe place outside the building away from doors, windows, air inlets and other premises. Ensure, where possible, that air comes from a fresh source, flows past the worker and then past the work activity to the extraction point.
- ✓ Always use a fuel retriever for draining tanks (see Figure 1).

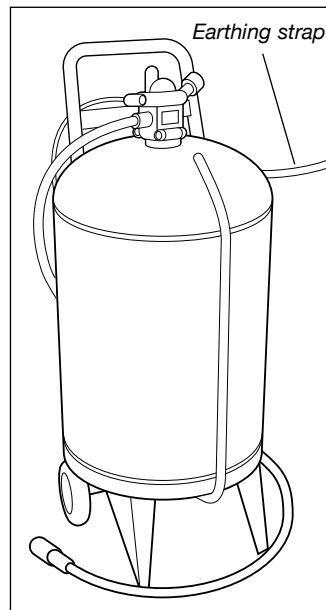
#### LP gas fuel

- ✓ Change fuel cylinders in a well-ventilated place.

### Petrol fuel (gasoline)

- ✓ Carry petrol only in a clearly labelled, and securely closed metal or plastic can.
- ✓ If you are splashed, keep well away from ignition sources and change clothes as quickly as possible.
- ✓ Put splashed clothing outdoors to dry before laundering.

**Caution: Never drain petrol from a vehicle standing over a pit because of the risk of flammable vapour accumulating to create an explosive atmosphere. Use a fuel retriever wherever possible, following the manufacturer's instructions on vapour recovery and use of earthing straps. Drain fuel outdoors or in a well-ventilated area.**



**Figure 1** Fuel retriever

### Diesel fuel

- ✓ Contain and clear up spills using absorbent granules. Scoop granules and soaked rags into lidded bins kept in a secure place outside.

### Respiratory protective equipment (RPE)

- ✓ RPE is not normally needed when a good standard of general ventilation is provided.

### Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Provide and ensure that workers use protective gloves. 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 and waterproof, slip-resistant footwear.
- ✓ Consult workers to ensure that the PPE will be suitable for them.
- ✓ Ensure that all items of PPE are compatible.
- ✓ Make suitable arrangements for the 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, which help to replenish skin oils.

**Caution: These creams are not a substitute for gloves and do not provide a full barrier.**

### Cleaning and housekeeping

- ✓ Clean work equipment and the work area daily. Clean other equipment and the workroom regularly – at least once a week.
- ✓ Deal with spills immediately – absorb liquid spills with granules and decontaminate the area (ask your product supplier or follow the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) instructions). Practise how to do this.
- ✓ Dispose of hazardous waste safely in a labelled, lidded bin and follow local authority waste management guidance.
- ✓ Provide good welfare facilities.
- ✓ Use a contract laundry or a suitable equivalent to wash work clothing. Don't allow workers to wash work clothing at home.

### 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:
  - when and how to use controls;
  - how to check they are working;
  - 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

G100 – General ventilation

G402 – Health surveillance for occupational asthma

G403 – Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis

### Further information

*Safe use of petrol in garages* INDG331(rev1), HSE Books 2013, ISBN 9780717665341. [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg331.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg331.pdf)

*Safe removal of petrol from vehicles* Local Authority Circular LAC 57/3, Health and Safety Executive/Local Authority Enforcement Liaison Committee (HELA) 2000. [www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/index.htm)

*Control of diesel engine exhaust emissions in the workplace* HSG187, HSE Books 2012, ISBN 978 0 7176 6541 9.

*Diesel Engine Exhaust Emissions* INDG 286, HSE Books 2012, ISBN 978 0 7176 1671 8.

*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>

*Safe work in confined spaces. Confined Spaces Regulations 1997. Approved Code of Practice, Regulations and guidance* L101, HSE Books 2014. <https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l101.htm>

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

Independent National Inspection and Testing Association  
[www.inita.org.uk](http://www.inita.org.uk)

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

- Do you understand the health hazards associated with your work?
- Are you sure about safe working procedures?
- Do you know how to use the controls?
- Check for signs of blue or black smoke from a diesel engine, or unusual or acrid smells from an LP gas fuelled engine.
- Look for signs of wear and damage to equipment.
- Use, maintain and store your PPE in accordance with instructions.
- If you find any problems, tell your supervisor. Don't just carry on working.
- Report any cases of ill health (eg breathing problems or coughing) that may be associated with exhaust fumes to your supervisor.
- Wash hands before eating and drinking, after smoking and using the lavatory, and after work.
- Do not use solvents to clean your skin.
- Check your skin regularly for dryness or soreness – make sure that 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.

### Other hazards

- Slips and trips.