

SR24

COSHH Essentials for
service and retail

Storing chemical products (small scale)

Control approach 1 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 when storing chemical products.

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

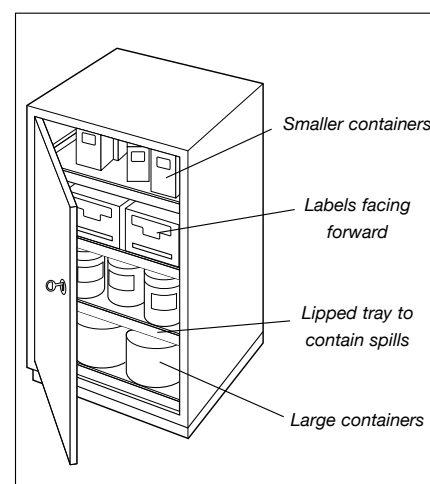
- ✓ Contact with many chemicals can lead to dermatitis, skin irritation, dryness and soreness.
- ✓ Breathing in vapours from some chemicals can lead to respiratory irritation, asthma or cancer.
- ✓ Some chemicals can also damage the eyes or may be flammable – check the Safety Data Sheet (SDS).
- ✓ Check the SDS for each chemical stored for a full list of hazards.

Access to chemical store

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

Equipment and procedures

- ✓ Minimise the range of chemicals that need to be stored.
- ✓ Segregate chemicals that might react together.
- ✓ Store products safely in a cool, dry, dark, ventilated place in such a way as to retain any spills. Only store the amount you need.
- ✓ Keep apart:
 - solid and liquid products;
 - flammable and non-flammable liquids;
 - acids and alkalis;
 - wastes.
- ✓ 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 workers read the instructions on labels and the SDS carefully, following them for safe storage and use.



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- ✓ Keep chemicals off skin – wash off any splashes immediately.
 - ✓ Provide eye-wash dispensing system and ensure it is in date and replenished regularly.
 - ✓ Put caps back on any containers immediately after use and wipe the outside clean.
 - ✓ Clean up spills promptly – practise how to do this. Further detail is provided under Cleaning and housekeeping.
 - ✓ Store containers so their labels cannot be damaged and are facing forwards.
 - ✓ Store heavier items and corrosive chemicals on lower shelves.
 - ✓ Ensure that containers are easy to pour from, don't trap liquid in the rim, and can be resealed effectively.
 - ✓ Buy solid chemicals in tablet form, or in a wide-necked container so that it is easy to scoop out granules.
 - ✓ Keep a spill clean-up kit nearby. Ask your supplier for advice.

Caution: Never decant concentrate into an unlabelled container. Never store chemicals in open containers.

Respiratory protective equipment (RPE)

- ✓ RPE is not normally needed.
- ✓ RPE may be needed for maintenance and cleaning. In such cases, as a minimum, provide tight-fitting RPE with a filter cartridge capable of protecting against the chemical vapour. See the chemical supplier's SDS and sheet R3 in Essential information. Seek advice from a protective equipment supplier.
- ✓ Fit testing is required for RPE with a tight-fitting face seal (see INDG479 in Further information).
- ✓ Workers wearing tight-fitting RPE must be clean shaven.
- ✓ Ensure RPE is compatible with other PPE worn.
- ✓ Workers should be trained how to check that RPE is working properly before every use and record this, how to fit it properly, and how to look after it.
- ✓ Change the filters on respirators in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and if:
 - the shelf-life expiry date has passed;
 - they are damaged or visibly contaminated;
 - they become harder to breathe through;
 - they have reached their break-through time for vapours or gases.
- ✓ Keep RPE clean and store it in a clean place.
- ✓ For reusable RPE, a thorough maintenance, examination and test should be carried out at least once a month. However, if the RPE is used only occasionally, an examination and test should be carried out before use and, in any event, the interval should not exceed three months.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Follow the PPE advice on the product label and SDS.
- ✓ Provide and ensure that workers use suitable protective gloves. Single-use nitrile gloves are acceptable.

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- ✓ If single-use gloves are selected then dispose of them safely every time you take them off.
 - ✓ Provide waterproof, slip-resistant boots and protective goggles.
 - ✓ Provide eye protection when working with solvents.
 - ✓ Ensure that all items of PPE are compatible.
 - ✓ Consult workers to ensure that the PPE will be suitable for them.
 - ✓ Use a contract laundry or a suitable equivalent to wash work clothing. Don't allow workers to wash work clothing at home.
 - ✓ Make suitable arrangements for the correct maintenance, storage and replacement of PPE.

Personal decontamination and skin care

- ✓ Keep chemicals off 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.

Cleaning and housekeeping

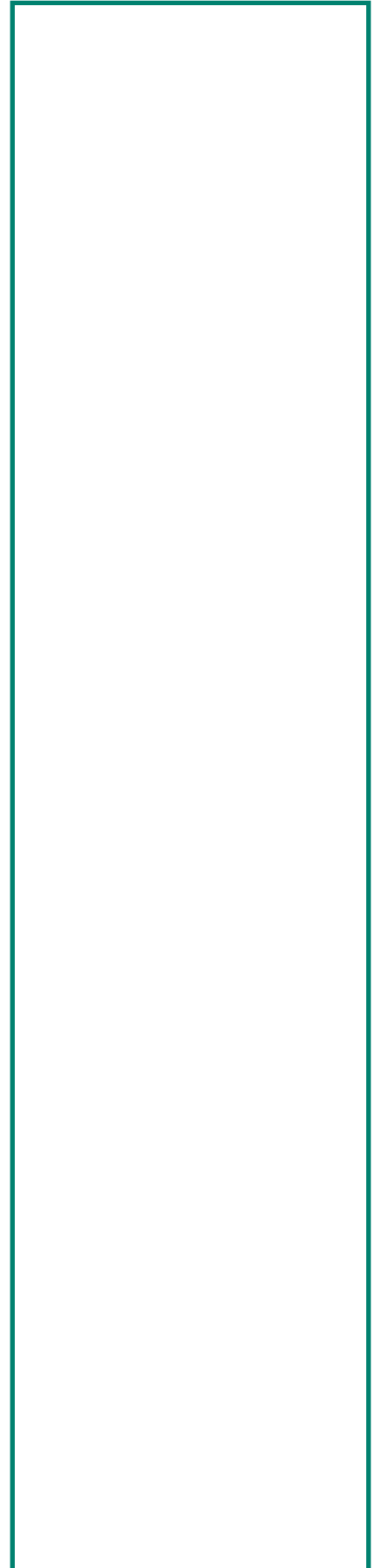
- ✓ Clean work equipment and the work area daily. Clean other equipment and the workroom regularly – at least once a week.
- ✓ Special care is needed to decontaminate dispensing systems. Seek advice or use a specialist contractor.
- ✓ Deal with spills immediately – absorb liquid spills with granules and decontaminate the area (ask your product supplier or follow the 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.

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.
- ✓ 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

- ✓ Provide supervision – ensure that safe work procedures are followed.
- ✓ 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;
 - when and how to use PPE;
 - how to check their PPE remains effective;
 - what to do if something goes wrong.
- ✓ 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

R3 – UK Standard Assigned Protection Factor 20 (APF 20)

Further information

Skin at work web pages: www.hse.gov.uk/skin

Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register 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

INDG479 – Guidance on respiratory protective equipment (RPE) fit testing

You can find the full COSHH Essentials series at 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

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.
- Use, maintain and store your PPE in accordance with instructions.
- 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.