

# SR8a

COSHH Essentials for  
service and retail

## Eradicating vermin using baits/traps

### 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 for the safe use of rodenticides in baits and traps to control vermin.

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.

This sheet does not apply to space fumigation (eg warehouses, containers).

#### Hazards

- ✓ Rodenticides etc. are very poisonous products that can cause serious ill health if breathed in, swallowed, or come into contact with the skin. For example, warfarin in rat poisons normally causes bleeding several days after ingestion. Visible bleeding may occur from the nose and gums and causes large bruises all over the body. Visible blood may be seen in the urine and stools and may also be vomited. Rodenticides may also be flammable.
- ✓ Bait residues and dead vermin should be treated as poisonous.
- ✓ Contact with rat urine can lead to Leptospirosis (Weil's disease). Cover cuts and broken skin.

#### Access to work area

- ✓ Keep people and pets away while applying rodenticides etc. and when retrieving bait or dead animals.
- ✓ Place bait to prevent access by children, pets and non-target animals.
- ✓ Display warning signs.

#### 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 or removed by a powered fan.
- ✓ Ensure that supplied or make-up air comes from an uncontaminated area.
- ✓ Discharge extracted air to a safe place away from doors, windows and other air inlets.



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- ✓ Ensure, where possible, that air comes from a fresh source, flows past the worker and then past the work activity to the extraction point.
  - ✓ Ensure the equipment provided for applying the product works properly, without leaks.
  - ✓ Dispose of the rodenticide container safely and follow local authority waste management guidance or return it to your supplier.
  - ✓ Contractors using professional pesticides should have a British Pest Control Association (BPCA) qualification.
  - ✓ Store products safely in a cool, dry, ventilated, dark place, in a way capable of retaining any spills. Only store the amount you need.
  - ✓ Read instructions on labels carefully – follow the instructions for use.
  - ✓ Keep chemicals and mix bait on a lipped tray, to retain spills.
  - ✓ Put caps back on the containers immediately after use.
  - ✓ Make a plan for the treatment – don't over-bait.
  - ✓ Keep baits away from watercourses.
  - ✓ Scoop residues and leftover baits into a marked secure container. Double bag the remains of dead vermin into marked polythene bags and seal for disposal by burning if possible or to landfill as with standard waste.
  - ✓ Consider what information you need to give to clients.
  - ✓ **Caution: Before carrying out any work in a confined space, refer to the specific guidance in HSE publication L101 *Safe work in confined spaces*.**

### Respiratory protective equipment (RPE)

- ✓ RPE is not normally needed.

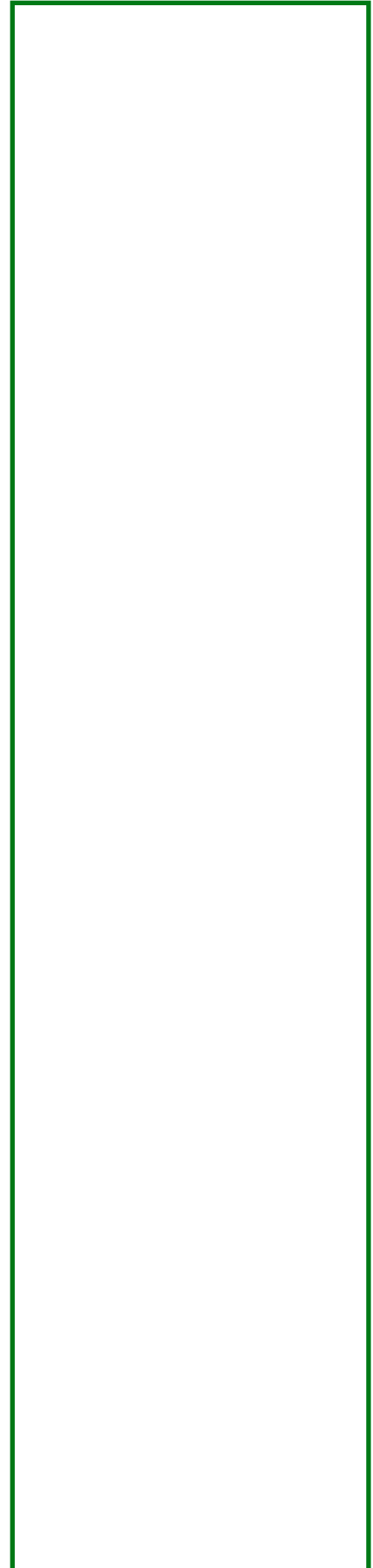
### Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ 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 waterproof, slip-resistant boots and protective goggles.
- ✓ You may need to provide a waterproof suit with head and face protection.
- ✓ Consult workers to ensure PPE will be suitable for them.
- ✓ Ensure that all items of PPE are compatible.
- ✓ Make suitable arrangements for maintenance, storage and replacement of PPE.
- ✓ Workers must not take work clothing home for washing. Use a contract laundry.

### 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.**



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### Maintenance, examination and testing

- ✓ Keep all equipment used for the task in effective working order. Maintain it as advised by the supplier or installer.

### Cleaning and housekeeping

- ✓ Clean work equipment and the work area daily. Clean other equipment 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 instructions on the Safety Data Sheet).
- ✓ Dispose of bait and dead vermin safely as detailed under Equipment and procedures. Follow local authority waste management guidance.

### Health surveillance

- ✓ Employers are required to carry out health surveillance if workers use a product labelled ‘May cause sensitisation by skin contact’ or ‘May cause sensitisation by inhalation’, and in such cases should 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 for further details.
- ✓ Provide health surveillance for dermatitis where there is a reasonable likelihood that this may occur in your workplace. See sheet G403 in Essential information for further details.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Train workers to clear up spills, bait and dead animals safely.
- ✓ Involve managers and supervisors in health and safety training.
- ✓ Carry with you the Leptospirosis information card entitled ‘Leptospirosis: are you at risk?’

### Essential information

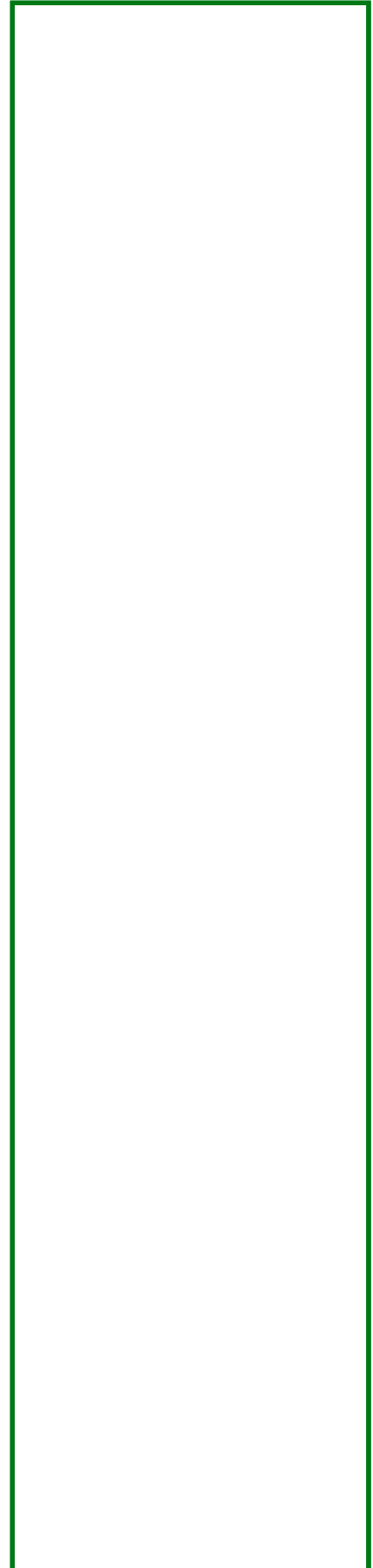
S100 – General advice on chemicals causing harm via skin or eye contact

S102 – Selecting personal protective equipment

G402 – Health surveillance for occupational asthma

G403 – Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis

L101 – Safe work in confined spaces.



## Further information

Posters on protective gloves and skin care  
[www.hse.gov.uk/skin/information.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/skin/information.htm)

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

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

*Managing skin exposure risks at work* HSG262 (second edition), HSE Books 2015. <https://books.hse.gov.uk/gempdf/hsg262.pdf>

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

*Leptospirosis: Are you at risk?* Pocket card INDG84, HSE Books 2011.

*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>

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 controls?
- 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.