Advice for managers

COSHHA essentials for machining with metalworking fluids

Introduction
HSE have produced these advice sheets to help employers assess and control common health risks from hazardous substances in the workplace. For some common tasks the sheets take into account the health hazards (and exposure potential) of substances used or produced to identify an approach appropriate to control the risks.

What the sheets cover
The MW series of sheets (listed below) describes good practice for controlling exposure to metalworking fluids (also known as coolant) during use and maintenance activities.

Follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

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Reducing exposure to an adequate level always involves a mixture of equipment and ways of working. This means employers should:

- choose the most effective and reliable control measures;
- ensure they are used properly by instructing, training and supervising workers;
- ensure regular maintenance to make sure control measures keep on working;
- check and review all elements of control measures regularly for their continued effectiveness.

Each sheet gives advice on how to achieve this.

Hazards

✓ Inhalation of metalworking fluid mist can cause lung diseases, such as occupational asthma and occupational hypersensitivity pneumonitis.
✓ Skin contact with metalworking fluids can cause dermatitis.

How to use the sheets
Consider the processes/tasks and hazardous substances in your workplace.

- Look for opportunities to substitute with less hazardous materials.
- Examine all the advice sheets.
- Examine the essential information sheets listed on each advice sheet.
- Compare operations in your workplace with recommendations in the advice sheets.
Record your findings (this forms part of your risk assessment).

Record any actions you need to take covering: issues identified, planned actions, target completion date, person responsible, status of any issues, and a review of effectiveness.

You may need to carry out health surveillance for your employees (See sheets G402 Health surveillance for occupational asthma and G403 Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis).

Keep a record of your actions to prevent exposure of workers to hazardous materials.

You may have to change old working practices or spend money on new controls. Decide how best to make any changes required 'across the board'. If you are in doubt, seek expert help. Ask your trade association or trade union, or contact a competent consultant (see Further information).

**Essential information**

You can find the full metalworking fluids COSHH essentials series at www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/essentials/direct-advice/metalworking-fluids.htm

G402 Health surveillance for occupational asthma

G403 Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis

**Further information**


See www.hse.gov.uk/metalworking/index.htm


*Controlling airborne contaminants at work: A guide to local exhaust ventilation (LEV)* HSG258 (Third edition) HSE 2017 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg258.htm

British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) www.bohs.org/find-expertise/find-an-occupational-hygienist/

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

For information about health and safety visit https://books.hse.gov.uk or http://www.hse.gov.uk.

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