

SR17

COSHH essentials for service and retail



This information will help employers, the self-employed and franchisees to comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), as amended, to control exposure and protect workers' health.

It is also useful for trade union and employee safety representatives.

This sheet describes good practice using general ventilation.

It covers the points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It is important to follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

Some chemicals can be flammable, so your controls must suit those hazards too. Look at the safety data sheet for more information.

Caution: aerosol propellants are often flammable.

Main points

- Solvents and solvent-based products produce vapours that can cause headaches, dizziness and nausea.
- Check that all controls are being used properly.
- Consider substituting with safer products.

Also see sheet SR0.

Valeting etc with solvent-based products

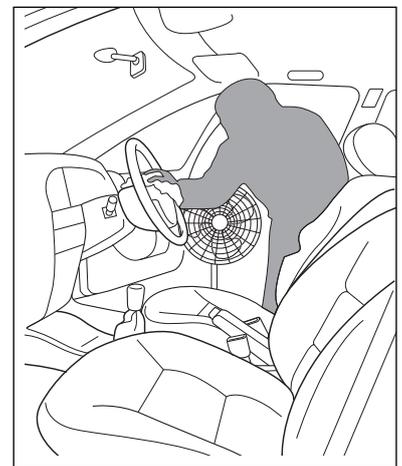
General ventilation

Access and premises

- ✓ Restrict access to those people who need to be there.
- ✓ Provide good washing facilities.

Equipment

- ✓ Check to see if you can substitute with solvent-free cleaning products, adhesives, etc.
- ✓ Make sure there is a good enough through draught for work done inside a vehicle, eg by using an industrial fan with the windows open. Solvents used inside cars have led to workers falling unconscious.
- ✓ Keep the workplace well ventilated with a through draught.



Caution: Never decant treatment fluid into an unlabelled container. Don't store more than 50 litres of flammable liquid indoors. Use a flammables store.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Follow the instructions on product labels.
- ✓ Respiratory protective equipment (RPE) may be needed. Seek advice from your RPE supplier.
- ✓ Provide coveralls or work clothing to protect skin from contamination.
- ✓ Provide protective gloves - single-use gloves are acceptable. If you must use latex gloves, use only 'low-protein, powder-free' gloves.
- ✓ Throw away single-use gloves every time they are taken off.
- ✓ Skin creams are important for skin condition. They help in washing contamination from the skin. After work creams help to replace skin oils.

Caution: 'barrier creams' do not make a full barrier.

Procedures

- ✓ Store products securely in a cool, dry, dark place, capable of keeping in spills. Don't store far more than you need.
- ✓ Read the instructions on the label carefully - follow the instructions for use.
- ✓ Put the cap back on the container immediately.
- ✓ Dispose of all unused products safely.

Special Care

- ✓ Contact with many chemicals can lead to dermatitis. Some can also damage your eyes.
- ✓ Solvent vapours in some cleaners can cause dizziness and headaches.
- ✓ Avoid products containing dichloromethane (methylene chloride).
- ✓ Blood residues, etc may be infected.

Health monitoring

- ✓ Ask your workers to check their skin for dryness or soreness every month. If these effects appear, check the proper use of skin creams and PPE.
- ✓ If you use a product labelled 'may cause sensitisation by skin contact' or 'may cause sensitisation by inhalation', seek specialist advice. See 'Further information'.

Cleaning and housekeeping

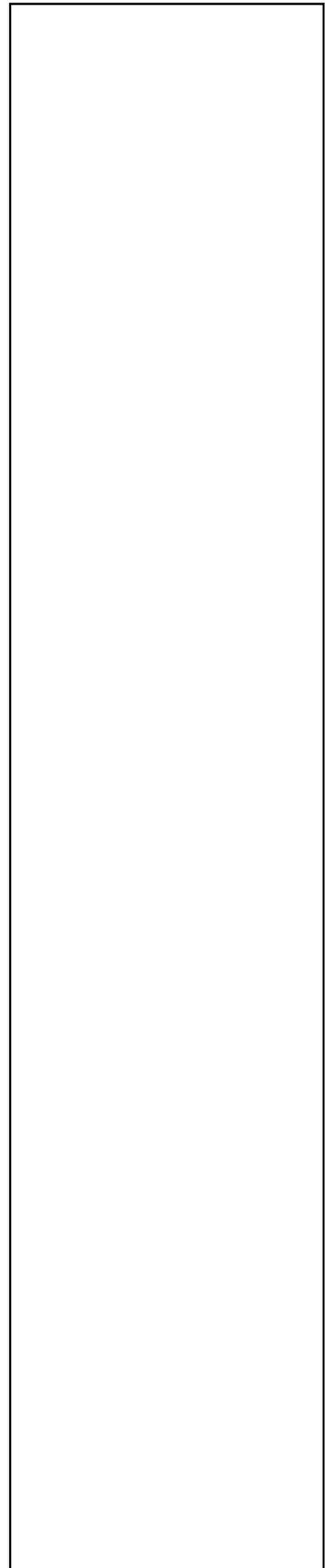
- ✓ Keep the work area clean.
 - ✓ Clean up spills promptly - practise how to do this.
 - ✓ Dispose of empty containers and waste safely.
- Caution: Workers must not take work clothing home for washing. Use a contract laundry.**

Training and supervision

- ✓ Tell workers about the risks of using the product - see products labels or Section 15 of the safety data sheet.
- ✓ Warn workers about blood-borne diseases, eg hepatitis.
- ✓ Working in the right way and using the controls correctly is important for exposure control. Train and supervise workers. See sheet SR0.

Further information

- *Assessing and managing risks at work from skin exposure to chemical agents: Guidance for employers and health and safety specialists* HSG205 HSE Books 2001 ISBN 978 0 7176 1826 2
- *Preventing contact dermatitis at work* Leaflet INDG233(rev1) HSE Books 2007 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 ISBN 978 0 7176 6183 1) www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg233.pdf
- Posters on protective gloves and skin care - see www.hse.gov.uk/skin/information.htm



Useful links

- For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit 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.
- Contact the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) on 01332 298101 or at www.bohs.org for lists of qualified hygienists who can help you.
- Look in the Yellow Pages under 'Health and safety consultants' and 'Health authorities and services' for 'occupational health'.
- Also see www.nhsplus.nhs.uk.

This document is available at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/ and www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/essentials/

This document contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

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Employee checklist

- Look for signs of leaks, wear and damage.
- If you find any problems, tell your supervisor. Don't just carry on working.
- Throw away single-use gloves every time you take them off.
- Clear up spills promptly. Absorb liquid spills in granules and dispose of them safely.
- Wash your hands after each job.
- Never clean your hands with concentrated cleaning products or solvents.
- Check your skin regularly for dryness or soreness - tell your supervisor if these symptoms appear.
- Use skin creams provided as instructed.