

SR23

COSHH essentials for service and retail

Degreasing with solvents (low volatility, small scale work)

Harm via skin or eye contact



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.

This sheet does not apply to vapour degreasing.

Look at the safety data sheet for more information.

Main points

- Select only low-volatility, low toxicity solvents (boiling point above 150°C).
- Solvents may cause skin irritation and used oils may cause skin cancer.
- Check that all the controls in this sheet are being used properly.

Also see sheet SR0.

- Access and premises**
- ✓ Provide good washing facilities.

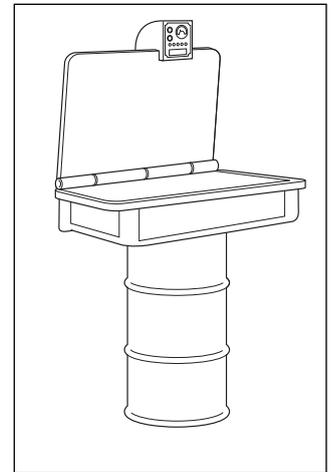
- Equipment**
- ✓ Provide protective gloves.
 - ✓ Keep the workplace well ventilated with a through draught.
 - ✓ Use a cleaning station (see illustration) that dispenses the minimum amount of low volatility solvent and stores waste solvent.
 - ✓ If cleaning on-machine, use non-spill dispensers and cleaning tools.

- Personal protective equipment (PPE)**
- ✓ Follow the instructions on product labels.
 - ✓ Ask your supplier to help you get the right PPE.
 - ✓ You may need respiratory protective equipment (RPE) for maintaining and cleaning the degreaser. Seek advice from your RPE supplier.
 - ✓ Provide coveralls to protect skin from contamination.
 - ✓ Provide chemical protective gloves for manual degreasing. Don't use gloves with a knitted liner.
 - ✓ Unless you can show that gloves are not contaminated inside, throw them away at the end of the day's work.
 - ✓ 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.

Caution: Never pour waste solvent down the drain. Collect it for recycling.



Special Care

- ✓ Contact with solvent can lead to dermatitis. Some can also damage the eyes.
- ✓ Waste engine oil may cause skin cancer. Never keep oily rags in your pocket.

Maintenance, examination and testing

- ✓ Follow instructions in maintenance manuals - keep equipment in effective and efficient working order.
- ✓ At least once a week, look for signs of damage.

Health monitoring

- ✓ Ask your workers to check their skin for dryness or soreness every six months. If these effects appear, check the proper use of skin creams and PPE.

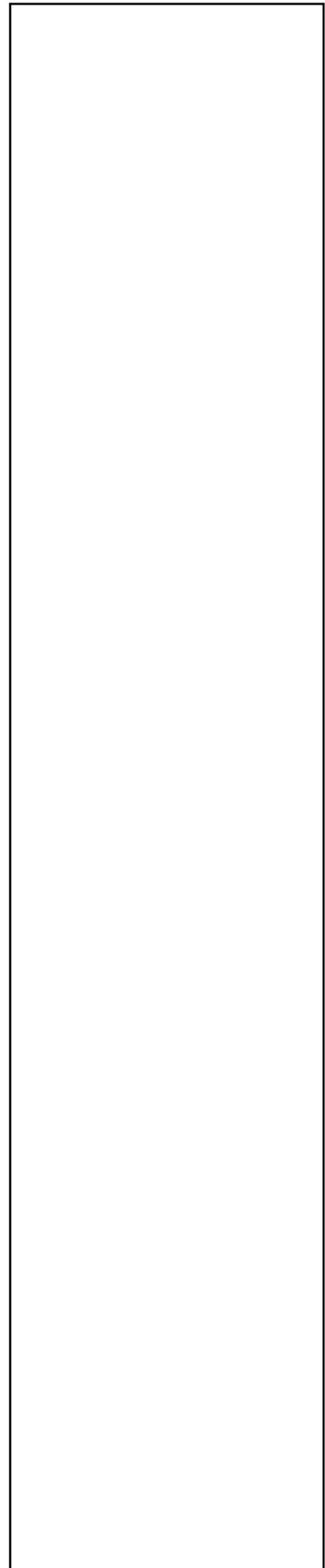
Cleaning and housekeeping

- ✓ Keep the work area clean.
- ✓ Clear up spills promptly. Provide granules to absorb spills, and a lidded bin kept outside in a secure place to store this waste for disposal.
- ✓ Dispose of hazardous waste through a specialist contractor.

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.
- ✓ Where you have to use strong hand cleansers, train workers to wash off the residues with soap and water.
- ✓ 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
- *Working safely with solvents: A guide to safe working practices* Leaflet INDG273 HSE Books 1998 (single copy free Web version available at hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg273.pdf)
- *Immersion and cold cleaning of engineering components* Engineering Information Sheet EIS21 HSE 1998 Web only version available at <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/engindex.htm>
- *Vapour degreasing bath* Control guidance sheets G227 or G321 Web versions available at www.coshh-essentials.org.uk/assets/live/G227.pdf or www.coshh-essentials.org.uk/assets/live/G321.pdf

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.
- Use and store your protective equipment according to instructions.
- Clear up spills promptly. Absorb liquid spills in granules and dispose of them safely.
- Wash your hands after use, and before and after eating, drinking, smoking and using the lavatory.
- Never clean your hands with concentrated cleaning products, solvents or fuel.
- Check your skin regularly for dryness or soreness - tell your supervisor if these symptoms appear.
- Use skin creams provided as instructed.