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Hazardous Substance Management Update

Learn how to create a COVID-19 secure business for the long-term and the latest news in COSHH legislation



Foreword from Helen Jones

Welcome to Alcumus Sypol's latest hazardous substance eBook.

This has been a year of unprecedented change and disruption across all workplaces, in all industries. As we all start to journey back to a new normal following COVID-19, we thought that now would be a good time for us to release further practical guidance that will help you to keep your employees and business safe.

In this eBook, our COSHH scientists will share their latest expertise in a range of topics across hazardous substance management. You will learn:

- The latest updates in the COSHH and REACH regulations
- Looking forward to a new normal and operating a COVID-19 secure workplace
- Bringing your employees on the journey to recovery
- Practical hints and tips on how to manage COSHH
- Delivering COSHH expertise through technology

We hope that you find this eBook useful. We'll outline how hazardous substance management plays a vital role in protecting your employees and helping your business to thrive.

Keep a look out for our next eBook which will explore the HSE's 2019/20 work-place ill health statistics and guidance on how to adhere to the COSHH regulations.

Thanks for reading and as always, we welcome any feedback.

Helen Jones

Managing Director
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The latest updates on COSHH and REACH

For those who are not aware, COSHH stands for the **C**ontrol of **S**ubstances **H**azardous to **H**ealth (2002) regulations. It is the primary set of regulations for the UK, which requires employers to manage the risk of exposure to hazardous substances in the workplace. As with most legislation, the COSHH regulations and its supporting documentation are reviewed and updated periodically, so it's important that businesses are aligned to the latest changes.

Reminder

Despite COVID-19, the HSE are still working to make sure that businesses are protecting their employees and adhering to COSHH regulations. Site inspections re-started in June 2020, so make sure that you are prepared.



While there are 21 regulations in COSHH, there are 8 in particular that are the most relevant to its practical management:

- Have a written COSHH risk assessment in place for every anticipated workplace exposure (Regulation 6).
- Prevent exposure or implement suitable measures to control exposure to those substances through all routes of entry (Regulation 7).
- Use all control measures provided and maintain them to ensure their ongoing performance (Regulations 8 + 9).
- Where there is concern exposure is not adequately controlled, conduct monitoring and health surveillance to ensure the protection of employees (Regulations 10 + 11).
- Inform employees about all areas of the assessment (Regulation 12).
- Make plans for in the event of spillage, first-aid or fire (Regulation 13).

COSHH regulation update

A new directive for managing exposure to carcinogens and mutagens

Over-exposure to carcinogens and mutagens in the workplace is a proven cause of long-term ill health in the UK, often occurring without the user even being aware. The new directive outlines changes to the occupational exposure limits for 11 new substances and amendments to impose stricter levels for two existing substances.

From 17th January 2020, the following substances legally have new workplace exposure limits (WELs):

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ✓ 1,2-epoxypropane | ✓ Ethylene oxide |
| ✓ 1,3-butadiene | ✓ O-toluidine |
| ✓ 2-nitropropane | ✓ Bromoethylene |
| ✓ Acrylamide | ✓ Hydrazine |
| ✓ Certain chromium (VI) compounds | ✓ Refractory ceramic fibers |

Things to think about following the new directive:

- Review your SDS (Safety Data Sheet) to make sure the substance updates have been made.
- Make sure your COSHH risk assessments are updated.
- Raise awareness with your employees so they can act accordingly.

Visit the HSE website and download the latest EH40 document for more information.

Updates to chemical sunset dates under the REACH regulations

The REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) regulations aim to remove extremely hazardous substances from European workplaces. They have already successfully removed several potent substances from circulation, which has been achieved by imposing chemical sunset dates on identified substances of very high concern. These dates outline when hazardous substances are legally no longer able to be used without having authorisation. It is advised that these substances are replaced with a safer substitute, with the sunset date allowing industry the time to source an alternative. After the chemical sunset date has passed, workplaces must either seek authorisation to use these substances, or they need to cease use of the substance completely.

Chemical sunset dates that you need to know about

4th July 2020 –

8 substances of very high concern will pass their chemical sunset date.

- 1 1-bromopropane (n-propyl bromide) - used in formulation at industrial sites and in manufacturing
- 2 Diisopentyl phthalate - Used by consumers, in articles and at industrial sites
- 3 1,2-Benzenedicarboxylic acid, di-C6-8-branched alkyl esters, C7-rich
- 4 1,2-Benzenedicarboxylic acid, di-C7-11-branched and linear alkyl esters
- 5 1,2-Benzenedicarboxylic acid, dipentyl ester, branched and linear
- 6 Bis(2-methoxyethyl) phthalate
- 7 Dipentyl phthalate
- 8 n-pentyl-isopentylphthalate

4th October 2020 –

2 substances of high concern will pass their sunset dates.

- 1 Anthracene oil
- 2 Pitch, coal tar, high-temp

Important things to note:

Business are pre-warned when chemical sunset dates are being imposed, so you have time to make the necessary changes.

When using safer substitutes, make sure that your COSHH risk assessments are updated and controls are in place to use the substitutes.

Looking forward to a new normal and operating a COVID-19 secure workplace

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the UK economy and workforces. Approximately, 1.1 million employers furloughed 9.3 million employees, some which are unlikely to return to their workplace any time soon. However, slowly but surely, parts of the economy have re-opened in a bid to recover the significant loss that they have faced. To help with a safe re-opening, the UK government and HSE have been proactive in outlining guidance to minimise the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19.

What is a business's COVID-19 responsibility under COSHH?

For those who are not aware, a virus such as the coronavirus, which causes COVID-19 is classified as a biological agent and therefore it falls under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) regulations. Put simply, this means that employers have a legal duty to control and manage any foreseeable exposure to this virus as they would any other hazardous substance in their business.

COVID-19 is here for the long-term, so providing a COVID-19 secure working environment needs to become part of your future strategy. One of the most effective ways of minimising COVID-19 risk is through frequent cleaning, which in itself poses hazardous substance exposure risk. The majority of domestic and professional cleaning substances are hazardous in some way and therefore, require a COSHH risk assessment that outlines efficient control measures.

Providing a COVID-19 secure workplace for the long-term

The majority of UK businesses are now back at work or will be over the next few months. As an employer, there is a requirement for you to conduct risk assessments to make sure that you are providing a COVID-19 workplace.

Important things to think about as you journey back to your new normal

Risk assessments



- Carry out risk assessments for all risks, organisation-wide. This includes a COVID-19 risk assessment.
- Implement the necessary controls and communicate these to your employees.
- Have COSHH risk assessments for all hazardous substances in use, it's a legal requirement.

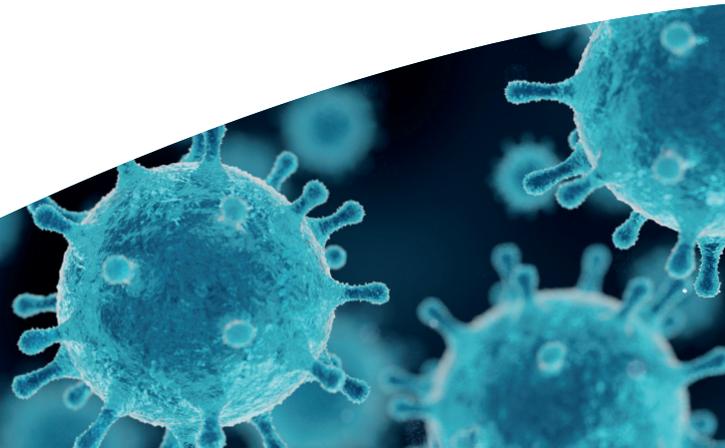
Re-training



- Health and safety is everyone's responsibility, not just your health and safety team.
- Train and educate your employees on their responsibility to maintain high standards.
- Address all concerns to make your employees feel as comfortable as possible on their return to work.

Social interaction and mental health

- Be mindful that returning to work will cause anxiety for many.
- Make sure your employees know what measures you have put in place for a safe return.
- The more your employees understand the importance of risk measures, the more likely they are to follow them.



Hints and tips on managing COSHH

Hazardous substance management and COSHH compliance is integral to a safe and successful business. It's too often seen as the forgotten area of health and safety however, the most harmful risks are the ones that we can't always see. As businesses develop health and safety strategies to future proof their business, hazardous substance management should be top of the agenda.

We've spoken to Mike Harris, our in-house COSHH specialist who has shared hints and tips on COSHH best practice for the long-term:

Be proactive

Continuously review your business's approach to COVID-19 and align to government and HSE guidance.



Know your stuff

Like all other areas of health and safety, COSHH regulations are ever-changing. Stay up to date with the latest changes in COSHH governance, not only to avoid a non-compliance but most importantly, to keep your employees safe.

Have COSHH risk assessments for every hazardous substance on your site

Legally you must have a COSHH risk assessment in place for every exposure in your workplace. This includes substances such as dusts and fumes that are easy to overlook.

Educate yourself on PPE

PPE is an effective control measure however, it should be used as a last resort and in conjunction with other forms of control. Be mindful that there are many types of PPE and there isn't a one size fits all solution. Make sure that your COSHH risk assessments outline control measures and that employees understand the differences.



Keep communication open with your employees



Allow your employees to have a voice and demonstrate that as an employer, you have taken actions to make them safe at work. Engage them in your COSHH processes.

Have visibility of your COSHH risks business-wide

COSHH is complex and requires continuous management. Use software to centralise your hazardous substance usage, simplify your COSHH processes and gain full visibility of your business's risk profile.



Mike Harris

Alcumus Sypol

Head of Account Management



Delivering COSHH expertise through technology

Alcumus Sypol has helped businesses to effectively manage their use of hazardous substances for over 40 years. By partnering with Sypol, you can guarantee you are following the most up-to-date, compliant and safe guidance.

Sypol's COSHH management software (CMS) helps businesses to demonstrate a robust approach to compliance by increasing visibility of risks. The software stores over 750,000 COSHH risk assessments which are written and validated by our in-house team of scientists, allowing you time to focus on other business priorities.

Let us help you to increase your productivity and business efficiency by removing the time, resource and financial burden of managing COSHH.



Instantly access, download & share compliant COSHH risk assessments.



View hazardous substance usage for individuals and your whole business.



Access the software anywhere, any time and using any device.



Manage your compliance actions through alert notifications.



Receive safer substance substitute suggestions to ensure minimal risk is posed to your people.



Receive unrivaled support from our helpdesk team of scientists, up to 7-days-a-week.



Management information and reporting available at the click of a button.



Unlimited user and system access 24/7/365.





To find out how Alcumus Sypol's COSHH management solutions can help you to protect your people and achieve COSHH compliance, contact us using the details below:



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