

Toolbox Talk



Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Hazardous substances are found on many sites and can be used in or created by the construction process. Hazardous substances must be treated with caution as they can have some nasty knock on effects.

Assess the Risk:

A competent person must carry out a risk assessment to decide whether:

- Exposure to a substance can be avoided
- An alternative work method can reduce the exposure.
- A less hazardous substance can be used instead.

Any substance with a hazard warning label has the potential to cause harm - the risk must be assessed before it can be used.

Hazards:

- Your health could be affected by a hazardous substance through; ingestion, inhalation or absorption.
- Mixing chemicals and substances can create a hazardous substance,. Be careful and only mix if it is a safe authorised process.

Control Measures:

- Follow the correct guidelines set out in the COSHH assessment.
- Always wear the correct PPE, look after it and make sure you know how to use it.
- Make sure hazardous substances are put back in the correct storage area after use and are not left lying around.
- Don't store hazardous substances above head height.

Key points:

- Make sure you are trained to use hazardous substances.
- Read and apply with the COSHH assessment and the instructions on the project label.
- Don't eat, drink or smoke when handling substances.
- Always wash at the end of the shift and before eating.
- Don't expose other workers to hazardous fumes or substances.

Examples of Hazardous substances:

- Contaminated Ground
- solvent fumes
- epoxy-based paints
- concrete admixtures
- hardwood dust
- welding fumes
- lime
- asbestos
- brick and stone dust.

Correct PPE:

Depending on the hazardous substance the type of Personal Protective Equipment worn can change. You must read the COSHH assessment and label on the hazardous substance for further information.

When working with chemicals such as toxic fumes, masks and eye protection must worn at all times. and adequate ventilation should be provided.

Often gloves will be required. Make sure you use the correct type.

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Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) contd

Warning signs; chemical labelling and packaging:

Warning signs are laid down in annex V to the Classification, labelling and packaging of substances regulation, known as CLP.

They are diamond shape, black pictogram on white background with red edging.



Gas under pressure



Explosive



Oxidising



Flammable



Corrosive



Health hazard



Acute toxicity



Serious health hazard



Hazardous to the environment