

# **Isle of Anglesey County Council**

## **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Guidance**

**Version 1.0 March 2016**

### **About this policy**

The regulations governing the use of substances hazardous to health at work are cited as the “Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002” as amended. A “substance hazardous to health” refers to any substance (including a preparation) which:

- a) is listed as dangerous for supply in the EU Regulations for the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals (REACH) Enforcement and Classification, Labelling and Packaging (CLP) Regulations has a maximum exposure limit or which has been assigned an occupational exposure standard by the Health and Safety Executive;
- b) a biological agent;
- c) any kind of dust/fume present in substantial concentrations in the air;
- d) any other substance not mentioned in a-d which creates a comparable hazard to any persons health as that of the above mentioned substances.

The Policy is supported by resources on the Council’s website.

### **Revision history**

Version	Date	Summary of changes
1.0	March 2015	
1.0	May 2017	No change
1.0	May 2019	No change
1.0	January 2021	No change

Date of next review	
This policy will be reviewed in:	March 2021
The review will be undertaken by:	Corporate Health and Safety Team

#### Contact Details:

Corporate Health and Safety Team ([healthandsafety@anglesey.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@anglesey.gov.uk))

We are happy to provide this policy in alternative formats on request. Please use the above contact details.

Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y  
Gymraeg.

This document is available in Welsh.

# Contents

## 1. Introduction

The regulations governing the use of substances hazardous to health at work are cited as the “Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002” as amended (COSHH).

COSHH applies to a wide range of substances and preparations (mixtures of two or more substances) which have the potential to cause harm to health if they are ingested, inhaled, or are absorbed by, or come into contact with, the skin, or other body membranes. Hazardous substances can occur in many forms, including solids, liquids, vapours, gases and fumes. They can also be simple asphyxiants or biological agents.

Employers should regard a substance as hazardous to health if it is hazardous in the form in which it may occur in the work activity. A substance hazardous to health need not be just a chemical compound, it can also include mixtures of compounds, micro-organisms or natural materials, such as flour, stone or wood dust.

## 2. Duties under the Regulations

Under these Regulations an employer has a duty so far as is reasonably practicable to ensure the health and safety of all those who work on their premises, this includes in addition to their own employees those contracted to carry out work on their premises and also visitors to the premises.

This should include providing employees with relevant information, instruction and training to be aware of hazardous substances and precautions to take to avoid harmful exposure.

In the event of an emergency all members of the emergency services at the scene must be made aware of any substance on the premises that may pose a significant risk to their health.

Where necessary under these Regulations some employees will be required to attend for medical examinations and to give appropriate health related information to the appointed doctor or employment medical advisor.

## 3. Preventive Measures in the Workplace

The potential for exposure can be reduced by:

- the carrying out of a COSHH assessment by a **competent** person - a competent person being someone, whether an employee or not, who has had suitable information, instruction and training;
- the elimination of the hazardous substance or if this is not possible, substitution by a suitable less harmful alternative;
- provision of appropriate local exhaust ventilation if this is required and regular checks of any such equipment to ensure that it is efficient and effective;

- providing suitable and sufficient storage facilities for the hazardous substances which are labelled accordingly;
- ensuring that all staff who use these substances are given suitable and sufficient training in the safe use of them and that they have access to the relevant COSHH assessments;
- providing adequate hygiene facilities for staff and ensuring that they all understand the need to wash their hands prior to eating, drinking and smoking;
- the provision of suitable Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). This should be a last resort when other forms of control have been exhausted.

#### **4. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

If following the COSHH assessment it is found that PPE is required as a last resort to protect staff using certain substances, the following points must be followed:

- identify the most suitable and sufficient from of PPE;
- draw up and use a PPE issue register;
- inspection of the PPE - this must be done by the person using the PPE prior to use. If a defect is found the PPE must not be used and must be disposed of to ensure that no one else uses it. Further inspections at regular intervals must also be undertaken to ensure the integrity of the PPE (follow the manufacturers guidelines to determine the frequency of inspection required).

Training of staff to ensure that they know:

- why they need to use the PPE
- how to use the PPE
- where to get replacements when needed.

#### **5. Training**

Staff should accept that training can play an important role in how to use hazardous substances at work. In practical terms, training will, in the main, be raising awareness concentrating on:

- what hazardous substances are;
- how to use them safely;
- how to carry out a COSHH assessment;
- where to find out and how to use the COSHH assessments;
- what PPE they are required to wear and why, how to use it and where to get replacements;
- how to use the Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV) or any other such forms of control measure.

#### **6. COSHH Assessment Guidance**

Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 as Amended, assessment is required to be made about the substances used at work which are

hazardous to health. These assessments should be updated regularly and a new assessment carried out for each new substance introduced into the workplace.

To comply with the above:

- obtain Safety Data Sheets for each substance from the manufacturer. From the data sheets, obtain the necessary information to complete the COSHH assessment forms.
- the review date is usually a year on from the initial assessment. If a new substance is used in the interim, a COSHH assessment must be carried out on it.
- if from the information on the data sheet it is found that the substance is harmful, then if possible, eliminate the use of the substance altogether, if this not possible/ practical, then seek a less harmful and suitable alternative, for which a COSHH assessment will also need to be done.
- ensure all staff using the substances have read the COSHH assessment and signed a register to say that they have read and understood it.
- ensure that a copy of the COSHH assessment and Safety Data Sheet for each substance is placed in the substance store room next to the relevant substance so that a member of staff can read it prior to using the substance.

## **7. Monitoring Workplace Exposure**

The employer is required to carry out monitoring in the workplace of any substances hazardous to health, ensuring that in the event of a breakdown of control measures no major hazard to health due to exposure to these substances will occur.

Monitoring also assesses the efficiency of any existing control measures and highlights areas of concern for which new control measures may need to be introduced.

A record must be kept of any monitoring undertaken detailing:

- when the monitoring was done;
- the results of the monitoring;
- where the monitoring was done;
- what sort of monitoring was undertaken and for how long;
- what type of work process was going on at the time of the monitoring;
- the name of the individual if monitoring of an individual was undertaken.

A detailed record of any incident involving substances hazardous to health should be kept and regularly reviewed by senior management.

## **8. Health Surveillance**

This needs to be undertaken by the employer to ensure the health of employees if by being exposed to a substance/s at work they may contract an identifiable disease or illness for which there is a suitable method of detecting the disease or illness.

The Authority must keep these records for forty years from the date of the person finishing their employment with the Authority.

When given reasonable notice, the employer must allow an employee to see the health records relating to them.

All health surveillance should be arranged in consultation with the Human Resources Department.

## **9. Employee duties**

There are some specific steps which employees should take to ensure their own safety. Everyone should:

- give due consideration to their own safety and that of colleagues;
- familiarise themselves with policies and procedures, guidelines and instructions issued by the Council;
- participate in any training which is available to them;
- report all incidents of unwellness whilst using or following use of substances to their line manager;
- record details of incidents as required by the Council;
- contribute to any reviews or enquiries held into incidents with which they have been involved;
- make use of all available staff support and first aid facilities as provided by the Council.

## **Further Information**

For further information contact the Corporate Health and Safety Team on 01248 752820