

Taking control of events

The control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations require that an employer must make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks associated with substances used in his work place (Regulation 6).

To comply with this regulation, the first thing that we must determine is what substances we have actually on site. It is essential that we decide what chemicals we are using, or are going to use in the future, and discard any substances that are now surplus to requirement. The substances that we no longer plan to use must be disposed of in the correct manner. They must not be tipped down the drain or thrown in the general household or site rubbish unless there are specific instructions on the package or with the substance that say otherwise.

After having decided that substances we are likely to use in our day to day tasks and what we have on site we must ensure that we have product Health and Safety Data Sheets for these substances. The suppliers of these substances are under a legal obligation to provide these data sheets and they must be available for every substance used. The Health and Safety Data Sheets will give information pertaining to the substances properties, be they hazardous or otherwise, the manufacturers address

and telephone number, the procedures to follow in case of emergencies and how to dispose of the substance and its packaging.

Once all the Data Sheets have been obtained then the next step is to look at the factors involved in the actual use of the substance. Where will the substance be used? Will it be used in the workshop or will it be used on the course net to a free flowing stretch of water? How often and how many people will use or be in contact with this substance? Is it only the Head Greenkeeper or is it to be everyone right through to part time assistants and possibly holiday staff or work placements. What precautions do we take before, during and after the use of the substance? Where do we store it before use and how is the substance or its packaging disposed of?

All these points have to be considered and in essence this is what an assessment actually entails under the COSHH Regulations.

The points mentioned above have to be taken on their merits and then

we can determine what exactly is a suitable and sufficient assessment.

If the substance is extremely hazardous, ie. weed killer or battery acid then the assessment would have to be more in-depth than an assessment for, say, a tub of general purpose hand cleaner. You would have to consider details such as limiting access to the substance, substituting for a less hazardous alternative, using in well ventilated areas, what training is required

to use the substance safely and keeping records in order that only fully trained operators can use the substance. The last resort in protecting ourselves and our employ-

ees from hazardous substances should always be the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) ie. the use of goggles, gloves, boots, masks, breathing apparatus, chemical resistant clothing etc. PPE should be used where other forms of controlling the hazardous substances are inadequate and PPE should be chosen with regard to not only what it is to be used to protect against but also who is to use it.

Records of the COSHH Assessment

need to be kept and also need to be easily accessible in case an emergency situation should arise. This is important due to the fact that if medical treatment is required then the medical staff would know that the substance was, what chemicals are contained in it, who manufactured it and also how to contact the manufacturer.

A COSHH Assessment sheet is self explanatory: Starting with the assessment number, then the Job Description. Then list the substances we are using for the job. How often and for how long we do the job. What control measures we are currently using to protect operators. Then we need to show our assessment of the type of exposure operators using the substance would be subjected to, eg. splashes, inhalation etc.

Finally if we feel that we could do more, then this becomes the Action Required to reduce the risk further.

To enable us to carry out this assessment the Health and Safety Data Sheets for the substances used, must be used to allow us to identify what control measures the manufacturers recommend, eg. good ventilation, good hygiene practices, etc. This should tie in with the control measures in use, if not should become Action Required.

Further information on training courses and consultancy contact ATB Landbase Training Services (Jean John on 01282 617466 or Tony Rees on 01686 622799).



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