

Control of Substances Harmful to Health (COSHH)

BIGGA'S new Health & Safety series produced by Xact



All employers are required to assess the risk of harm to their employees' health from exposure to substances used or encountered within their working environment. Generally, these are thought of as chemicals used for work such as cleaning products, pesticides, lubricants etc. They can usually be easily identified from the product container which will carry a hazard warning label depicting the particular hazard posed by the substance. Manufacturers also have a duty to supply safety data sheets which have information on the physical and chemical properties of the substance. Less commonly understood is that COSHH also applies to dusts generated by work and biological risks e.g. Lymes disease as well.

EMPLOYERS SHOULD START BY

- Making an inventory of the substances used and encountered within the workplace and then categorising these as hazardous or non-hazardous. Remember to include dusts, fumes and biological type hazards which may be generated by work or are encountered in the workplace.

Hazardous substances are usually identified by hazard warning symbols on the packaging:



IRRITANT
OF
HARMFUL



CORROSIVE



TOXIC



DANGEROUS
FOR THE
ENVIRONMENT



HIGHLY
OF
EXTREMELY
FLAMMABLE



OXIDISING



EXPLOSIVE

- Ensuring that manufacturer safety data sheets are available for those products classified as hazardous. The manufacturer or supplier is obliged to provide these by law
- Assessing how these products are delivered, stored and used within the working environment. As well as planned uses, the assessment should also include disposal of waste containers and surplus materials, unplanned events such as spillages, fires etc

From the assessment of use decide who could be harmed and how from use of the substance. As well as the direct users other persons need to be considered e.g. cleaning staff, the general public, Club members, neighbours. When assessing the risk of harm consider how people may come into contact with the substance

- Inhalation of dusts and vapours
- Skin absorption of liquids and gases
- Ingestion from eating, smoking etc
- Injection from sharp edges

The duration of exposure also needs to be taken into account as the degree of harm is directly related to the time spent using the substance. Many substances have workplace exposure levels which give an indication of the safe level of exposure over a working day. This information can be found in the HSE publication 'EH40 Occupational Exposure Limits'

- Decide on the control measures to limit the exposure to as low as reasonably practicable e.g. stop using the product, use something less harmful, use engineering controls and as a last resort issue/use personal protective equipment.
- The control measures should be briefed to persons using the substance and monitoring carried out to ensure that the safety controls are observed.

As can be seen a COSHH assessment is all about how a substance is used. It should be remembered that a manufacturer's safety data sheet which details the properties of a substance is not a substitute for a COSHH assessment.



FAST, SAFE, ECONOMICAL

There is nothing more productive for moving people and equipment around the course, than the MPT from E-Z-GO. It's the preferred choice for Golf Course Superintendents around the world. Please call to improve your productivity.

DRIVING ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE.



Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd. Marketing GK102/07 MPT
West Road, Ransomes Europark, Ipswich IP3 9TT UK
Tel: +44 (0)1473 270000 Fax: +44 (0)1473 276300
www.e-z-go.co.uk



A Textron Company