

Checklist

Identifying and tackling problems with hazardous substances

Obtaining information on substances and processes

- ✓ Are unions consulted and informed prior to new substances being introduced?
- ✓ Is management already passing on information about substances?
- ✓ Is this information kept up to date?
- ✓ Are all containers properly labelled?
- ✓ Are there reliable chemical safety data sheets on all hazardous substances used at work?
- ✓ Is there a central register, which safety representatives can see, of all substances used at work?
- ✓ Are safety representatives checking independently on the hazards of substances?

Negotiation and consultation procedures

- ✓ Has the employer agreed to keep safety representatives informed about the COSHH strategy?
- ✓ Is there a procedure for handling disagreements about assessments?
- ✓ Have dates, priorities and targets been agreed?
- ✓ Is progress on COSHH monitored through a joint safety committee?
- ✓ Is the workforce kept informed of progress?

Has management:

- ✓ involved, and consulted with, safety representatives?
- ✓ assessed health risks in relation to actual workplace conditions?
- ✓ used COSHH Essentials in appropriate circumstances?
- ✓ made sure assessments are done by a 'competent person'?
- ✓ provided written copies of assessments?
- ✓ looked for safer alternatives?
- ✓ devised control measures?
- ✓ assessed existing control measures, improving them if necessary?
- ✓ used personal protective equipment as a temporary or last resort?
- ✓ made sure control measures work?

- ✓ regularly examined and tested control measures?

- ✓ reduced exposure to as low as possible?

- ✓ arranged for health monitoring (if appropriate)?

- ✓ made arrangements for:

- storage, handling, transport?

- spillage control?

- disposal?

- maintenance work?

- housekeeping?

- first aid?

- ✓ made sure workers are fully trained and informed?

- ✓ kept records?

- ✓ reviewed control measures regularly?

Have safety representatives:

- ✓ carried out regular inspections?

- ✓ critically examined all work operations involving substances?

- ✓ asked members whether they suffer any symptoms that they think are attributable to hazardous substances?

- ✓ used questionnaires or body mapping with their members?

- ✓ examined the accident book and sickness records?

- ✓ produced written reports and discussed these with members?

- ✓ met with management and agreed priorities for COSHH risk assessments to be carried out?

- ✓ made sure that safety representatives and workers are involved in the assessment process?

- ✓ checked that all operations involving substances have been covered?

- ✓ agreed priorities for action with management, with a timetable for improvements?

- ✓ made sure that assessments are not seen as an end in themselves? The value of an assessment is to identify areas where work can be made healthier and safer

- ✓ ensured that management has taken appropriate steps to prevent ill health to employees, using the COSHH standards that were outlined above?

- ✓ helped any members who have suffered from ill health because of substances to obtain advice from their union about compensation and rights to benefits?