

HARLOW COUNCIL

Addendum to Health and Safety Policy

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

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Introduction

Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 requires that, so far as is reasonably practicable, systems of work involving the use of substances hazardous to health must be safe.

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)

Employers are required to make arrangements to control the exposure of their employees to all substances that may affect their health. Exposure must be prevented or, where this is not reasonable practicable or adequately controlled.

Personal protective equipment, when used to control exposure, must be considered as a last resort but, if necessary, steps must be taken to ensure proper use by employees. This equipment must conform to the requirements of the Personal Protective Equipment at Work Regulations 1992.

Measures introduced to control exposure must be maintained, tested and examined to ensure their continual effectiveness.

Where exposure cannot be prevented monitoring of employees exposure to hazardous substances may be required.

Employee health surveillance is required for exposure to certain substances hazardous to health.

Employers have a duty to give suitable and sufficient information, instruction and training to employees exposed to substances hazardous to health.

Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy is a disciplinary offence, which in serious cases could lead to dismissal.

General Statement

Harlow Council acknowledges that no substances can be considered completely safe and will therefore take all reasonable steps to ensure that exposure of employees to substances hazardous to health is minimised to an acceptable level.

Whenever practicable exposure will be controlled by engineering means, but where this is not possible appropriate personal protective equipment will be supplied.

All employees will be provided with information and instruction on the nature and likelihood of their exposure to substances hazardous to health.

Implementation of this policy rests with the appropriate Head of Service, but it also requires the cooperation of all members of staff.

Record Keeping

Under the provisions of COSHH records should be kept of the following:

- Inventory of hazardous substances
- Risk Assessment of risks of exposure
- Control measures provided

- How control measures are used and procedures for reporting defects and faults
- Individual health records of exposure or potential exposure for 40 years from date of last entry
- Training given to employees

Arrangements for securing the Health and Safety of Employees

Harlow Council will, in consultation with staff and their representatives, implement the following:

1. Each Service will maintain an inventory of hazardous substances with appropriate hazard information sheets.
2. Competent persons will be identified to carry out risk assessments, with regard to exposure to substances hazardous to health, and these will take into account the requirements for control measures.
3. All operations, which involve, or may involve, exposure to substances hazardous to health will be assessed and appropriate control measures implemented where elimination or substitution is not possible.
4. Engineering controls will be properly maintained and monitored to ensure their continued effectiveness. This will be achieved by planning preventative maintenance and annual performance monitoring.
5. All employees, and others who may work in the effected area, will be informed of the purpose and safe operation of all engineering controls.
6. Personal protective equipment should normally only be used as a last resort or as a back up measure during testing or modification of other controls.
7. The type and use of personal protective equipment must be appropriate for the work being undertaken.
8. Each assessment will be reviewed annually and all operations using hazardous substances will be reassessed every 3 years.
9. Health surveillance required as a result of the assessments will be carried out by qualified professionals.
10. Employee health records will be kept of all exposure to substances hazardous to health for a minimum of 40 years.
11. All employees will be provided with comprehensible information and appropriate training on the nature of the hazardous substances with which they are working. They will also be informed about any monitoring and health surveillance results.
12. All changes to control measures and personal protective equipment will be properly assessed and no new substances will be introduced into the work place without prior assessment.

Information

All staff must have access to COSHH assessments that are relevant to their area of work.

Where an assessment identifies a significant risk then this must be brought to the attention of all relevant staff, along with details of any corrective action that is to be implemented.

Training

The Health and Safety Team will provide guidance, on the process of carrying out COSHH assessments.

When defining control measures as part of the assessment process consideration must be given for the need for additional or supplementary training.

Safe System of Work

The following steps can be taken to minimize risks:

- Ensure hazard information is kept up to date
- Ensure assessments are reviewed annually and re assessed every 3 years, or when material changes are made
- Ensure employees are trained in the nature of the hazards and use of control measures
- Ensure controls are maintained and monitored
- Ensure all documentation is comprehensive and comprehensible
- Encourage employees to report faults and problems

Summary of Policy Statement

Modern working methods involve the use of substances, principally chemicals, which may pose a risk to people using them. No chemical is completely safe, in all circumstances, and any air borne dust in significant quantities can damage health. Since the hazard to health posed by many substances is not known it is good practice to use working methods to minimize exposure. Where the hazards are known specific steps can be taken.

The seven most important steps are:

1. Identify the hazard
2. Assess the risk
3. Eliminate, prevent or control the risk
4. Maintain and monitor the controls
5. Monitor the health of the work force
6. Ensure assessments and controls are up to date
7. Inform and train the work force

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Revision History

Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
April 2011	None	Original Draft document	
7 July 2011		Agreed by Safety Committee	
1/2014	7/2011	Reviewed and updated	No
April 2020		Reviewed and updated	No