Control of Substances Hazardous to Health- (COSHH) Standard

(SHEMS-STD-GR-051)

Unitas
Stoke-on-Trent Ltd.

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this standard is to document Unitas's requirements to control the risks involved in the management and use of chemicals or other substances hazardous to health and/or the environment.

It provides guidance on Unitas's requirements to ensure compliance with legislation and the records to be maintained.

Unitas requires that any hazardous substance that cannot be eliminated;

- has been assessed as per the requirements of COSHH legislation and this standard;
- all those involved in the use are briefed on the assessment;
- provided with the necessary control measures; and/or
- PPE to safely work with the substance

2 Scope

The scope of the SHEMS covers all persons, workplaces and Operations in the Unitas business.

Exceptions will be documented through a SHEMS Appendix B process (SHEMS-FOR-GR-999), authorised by the Operations Director responsible for coordinating SHE.

Unitas SHEMS manual (SHEMS-STD-GR-003) provides guidance and signposting for the compliance, implementation, monitoring, audit and review of our systems, and demonstrating continual improvement.

2.1 External References

- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations ACOP L5
- Working with hazardous substances – What you need to know about COSHH indg136
- Respiratory Protective Equipment HSG53
- EH40/2005 Workplace exposure limits
- Controlling airborne contaminants at work: A guide to local exhaust ventilation (LEV) HSG258
- Classification, labelling and packaging Regulations (CLP Regs)
- Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmosphere Regulations ACOP L138
- REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals) Regulations
- Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations ACOP L143
- Control of Lead at Work Regulations ACOP L132

2.2 Definitions and Acronyms

Dangerous Substances

A substance or preparation classified under the Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations (CHIP) as – Explosive, Oxidising, Extremely Flammable, Highly Flammable, or Flammable.

- The physical or chemical properties of the substance or preparation and the work processes create a potential for fire, explosion or similar energetic event.
- Involves the creation or handling of potentially combustible or explosive dusts

Dangerous Substances are also defined in the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations (DSEAR) 2002 and are substances, preparations or dusts with the potential to give rise to fires, explosions and similar energetic (energy release) events which can affect the safety of employees and others.

Hazardous Substances

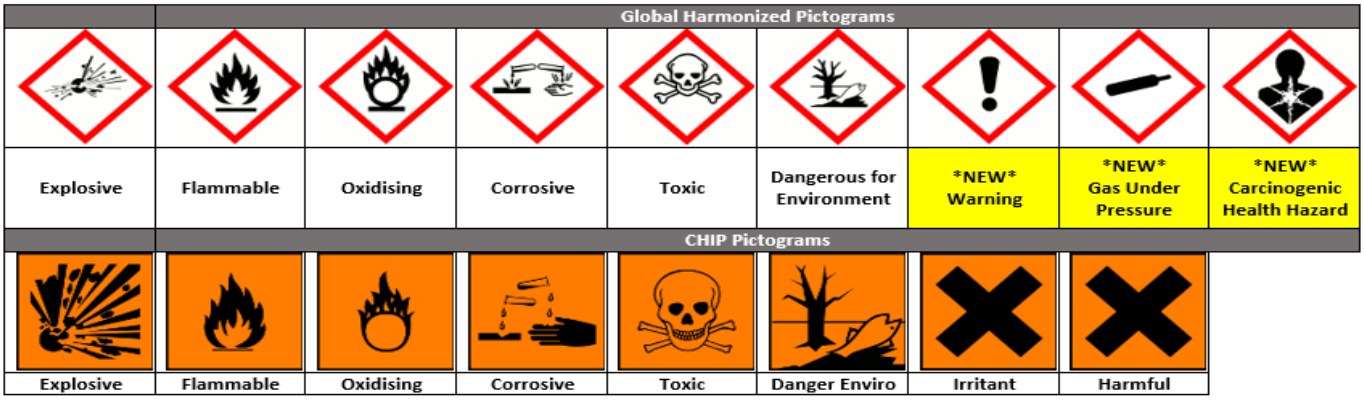
Classified as toxic, very toxic, corrosive, harmful or irritant (i.e. they have an orange warning label other than 'flammable', 'oxidising' or 'hazardous to the environment').

- Have been given an exposure limit (typically high risk substances used in manufacturing which in our work may be encountered in derelict or damaged buildings or possibly occurring in contaminated land). Details of these can be found in HSE publication EH40 (UK), the Code of Practice for the Safety, Health & Welfare at Work (Chemical Agents) Regulations (ROI) or by contacting the Unitas health and safety team.
- Biological agents (those which can cause poisoning or infection or other hazards to human health).
- Substances used directly in work activities (e.g. adhesives, paints, cleaning agents)
- Substances generated during work activities (e.g. welding fumes, dust)
- Naturally occurring substances (e.g. grain dust, wood dust, in high concentrations which could cause harm if inhaled or ingested
- Biological agents (e.g. bacteria and other micro-organisms that can be in sewage, air conditioning units)
- Any other substance, which creates a risk to health (e.g. gases which reduce the amount of oxygen available)

CLP Changing Symbols

Under the CLP (Classification, Labelling and Packaging) regulations new pictograms have been adopted for the classification and labelling of chemicals across all European Union countries, including the UK. The eight familiar orange squares with symbols will be substituted by nine new red-bordered diamond symbols with some pictures being replaced, and others being classified for the first time.

CLP is being introduced gradually over a number of years to allow suppliers time to change their products over to the new system. **All products manufactured after 1 June 2015 must comply. Stocks already in the supply chain can be supplied without needing to be relabelled for a further 2 years after the deadline.** It is important to be aware there will still be a mixture of labelling until all former products are out of the supply line.



3 Unitas Requirements

3.1 General

For the vast majority of commercial chemicals, the presence (or not) of a warning label will indicate whether COSHH is relevant.

Unitas subscribes to the COSHH Management System (Sypol) for the preparation of COSHH assessments and these must be used in all circumstances, unless a subcontractor has provided a suitable alternative.

Each COSHH Co-ordinator shall be appointed through the Appointment of a COSHH Co-ordinator (SHEMS-FOR-GR-007) and have been trained in the use of the Sypol system.

3.2 Control Measures

Use the ERIC principles of; Eliminate, Reduce, Inform and Control when assessing the risks in using a hazardous substance. The questions to be asked are;

1. Is the Material Safety Data Sheet available?
2. Can a safer product be substituted in place of the harmful product?
3. Can the product be used in a safer form (e.g. lower concentration, paste in place of powder)?
4. Can the process be changed to emit less of the substance?
5. Can the process be enclosed so the substance does not escape?
6. Can emissions of the substance be extracted near the source?
7. Can the number of persons exposed be reduced to a minimum?
8. The type of personal protective equipment (PPE) that may be needed?

3.3 Preparing a COSHH Assessment

The Manager/Supervisor of the activity, where a hazardous substance will be used, provides details to a 'competent' person to carry out the assessment and they;

1. Use the 'ERIC' principles to confirm the substance to be used
2. Assess the conditions that the hazardous substance will be used e.g. period of exposure, area of exposure (environment where the substance/material is to be used) and number of people involved
3. Obtains an existing assessment if available from the COSHH Coordinator
4. If a new assessment is required completes and forwards a COSHH Request form (SHEMS-FOR-GR-026) to a COSHH Coordinator.

The COSHH Coordinator, a member of Unitas, trained in the use of the Sypol database;

1. Forwards details of existing assessment if available
2. Uses the completed COSHH Request form to input into database and obtain an assessment
3. Forwards assessment to the 'competent' person. They review the information and forward details to the Manager/Supervisor of the activity.

3.4 Health Assessments

Where necessary and determined by the COSHH assessment, health surveillance and other medical intervention may be required. Examples of the type of health assessments necessary are materials such as hardwoods and bituminous products. Line management must ensure that where medical surveillance and/or intervention is required that they contact the Occupational Health Advisor. Employee's health records will include substances that they are exposed to and kept for a minimum of 40 years.

3.5 Monitoring & Review

The Manager/Supervisor of the activity monitors the activity to ensure the measures are in place and the process has not changed from that of the assessment. If the activity, use or exposure to the hazardous substance changes, a new assessment must be prepared.

Monitoring of workplace exposure levels is carried out where exposure is critical to the health of personnel i.e. exposure to significant levels of lead.

Changes to control measures or PPE will be properly assessed and new substances will not be introduced into the workplace without prior assessment.

Engineering controls (e.g. Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV)) will be properly and effectively maintained, monitored and serviced/inspected annually or as specified by the manufacturer. Employees will be trained on the purpose and safe operation of all engineering controls. All LEV service/inspections will be completed every 14 months or as specified by the manufacturer.

3.6 Training & Information

The COSHH Assessment includes all relevant details associated with the hazardous substance including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and emergency plans. This information must be briefed to all persons involved in, or affected by, the use of the hazardous substance.

COSHH Coordinator will require training in the use of the Sypol system.

3.7 Record Keeping

Details of all COSHH assessments are held on the Sypol database.

Under the provision of COSHH Regulations, records must be kept for the following:

- COSHH Substances Summary Sheet (SHEMS-FOR-GR-027)
- assessment of risks of exposure
- control measures provided
- methods and use of control measures including; defects/ fault reporting and equipment service/ inspection
- examination, testing and repairing of control measures – either the records itself or a summary register must be kept for a minimum of 5 years
- exposure monitoring for 5 years if a record of background exposure or control proving record and for 40 years for a record of exposure of an identifiable employee;
- individual health record of exposure or potential exposure for 40 years from date of last entry;
- training given to employees.