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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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The COSHH Regulations 2002 (as amended) place duties on the company to identify substances that have the potential to cause harm or ill health and to ensure that any such risks are removed, reduced and controlled. To ensure staff have the necessary information, training and supervision to comply with this legislation.

Hazardous substances come in a variety of forms such as:

- Chemicals
- Fumes
- Dusts
- Vapours
- Biological Agents (bacteria, viruses, body fluids)
- Gases (mists)

**Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to set out the measures required by the Trust to ensure compliance with the Control of Substance Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002.

**Scope:** This policy applies to all staff and other persons working on Lancaster City Council premises and within the community undertaking work on behalf of the organisation.

**Compliance:** This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed in the *Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement*.

## **2.0 GENERAL STATEMENT**

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Lancaster City Council recognises that exposure to chemicals or other hazardous substances can represent a risk to health.

Lancaster City Council also recognises the extra duty of care towards members of public and vulnerable people to implement the necessary safety measures regarding the control and use of any potentially hazardous substance that is used within the organisation.

Lancaster City Council's policy, therefore, is to comply with both the letter and the spirit of the law on Health and Safety at Work and to this end, the provisions of this policy are centred around eliminating or controlling exposure to hazardous substances to prevent ill health to employees and others who may be exposed by:

- Ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to eliminate substances which can be eliminated.
- Ensuring that suitable and sufficient risk assessments are carried out.
- Ensuring that where substances cannot be eliminated, all reasonable steps are taken to substitute for safer alternatives where these are available
- To ensure that where hazardous substances have to be used, exposure to them is minimised by adequate systems of control, which manage exposure within statutory limits.
- Providing all employees with comprehensible information and training on the nature and likelihood of exposure to substances relevant to their position and measures taken to minimise the risks to health

Lancaster City Council undertakes to control exposure by engineering means where reasonably practicable. Where exposure cannot be adequately controlled by engineering means, appropriate management systems and procedural controls will be implemented, and personal protective equipment will be provided.

### **3.0 ORGANISATION & MANAGEMENT**

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The organisation has a responsibility under sections 2 and 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 for the safety of employees and others who may be affected.

Under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) employers have a duty to make an assessment of the risks to health, which arise from exposure to hazardous substances in the workplace.

#### **Chief Executive Officer**

The Chief Executive Officer has overall responsibility for ensuring that the Organisation meets its statutory obligations and that effective arrangements for the management of health and safety are put in place.

#### **Senior Leadership Team (Chief Officers)**

The Senior Leadership Team have executive responsibility to manage Health and Safety including compliance with Health and Safety at Work Act, etc. 1974 and other relevant legislation, best practice guidance and Company policies to meet legal and organisational requirements within their respective services including the provision of adequate resources to meet the requirements of the risk assessment findings.

Chief Officers are responsible for the ensuring the provision of arrangements in relation to COSHH management and risk assessment and ensuring that the organisation's policy is implemented for their respective services, for providing support and advice to their respective managers and monitoring implementation of this policy within their respective areas.

#### **The Health and Safety Team**

The Health and Safety Team is responsible for facilitating the COSHH management process by offering advice, support and guidance and ensuring that information and training is available to Managers / Department Heads and other staff involved in the process.

#### **Line Managers**

All Line Managers have direct responsibility for health and safety matters relating to premises under their control and for persons reporting directly to them and are therefore responsible for the implementation of the provisions of this policy for the homes/departments under their jurisdiction by ensuring that:

- No work is undertaken that is liable to expose employees to substances hazardous to health unless a suitable and sufficient risk assessment has been carried out through the 'My Compliance' system, in writing detailing the risks and necessary control measures needed to meet the requirements of the COSHH regulations and associated approved code of practice.
- The assessment is reviewed when there is reason to believe that it is no longer valid or there has been a significant change in the work to which the assessment relates.
- Where a review indicates that changes are required, these changes are implemented.
- Hypochlorite solutions are not used other than for infection control where no substitute product is effective – e.g. outbreaks of Norovirus.
- Employees under their control receive Information, Instruction and training appropriate to the nature of the risks they may face from hazardous substances.
- Employees understand the risks from any hazardous substances they may be exposed to.
- Suitable and sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) of the appropriate grade/specification is provided, for the control of any residual risk as determined by risk assessments and that where applicable it is appropriately maintained, cleaned, inspected, stored and replaced as required.
- Sufficient information; instruction and/or training is provided in the correct use and application of the Personal Protective Equipment
- Waste and spillages are dealt with in a safe manner with due regard for the environment.

### **Employees Responsibilities**

Employees have a clear duty under Section 7 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 for the safety of themselves and others, therefore, the implementation of this policy requires the full co-operation of all levels of staff, by adhering to their responsibilities under the act.

Employees are therefore responsible for ensuring that they are fully aware of risk assessments in their area and the action they need to take as individuals to ensure compliance with control measures identified as being necessary, namely by:-

- Co-operating and assisting with COSHH Risk Assessments as required, and bring to the notice of management, any changes in labelling, packaging or physical properties of substances they use at work.
- referring to and complying with COSHH and risk assessments.
- No substances are introduced into the premises without the permission of the appropriate manager and after a suitable assessment has been carried out.
- Promptly reporting all incidents concerning the use, storage and disposal of hazardous substances, to their line managers and in accordance with the Accident/incident reporting policy and through the My Compliance reporting.
- Reporting any adverse ill health effects arising from exposure to hazardous substances to their line manager
- Reading container labels being particularly careful with those having a hazard classification.
- Following safety procedures.
- Storing substances safely in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and onsite rules
- Never putting substances into unmarked containers.
- Attending/completing training as required.
- Ensuring that they are aware of, and follow, safe systems of work and control methods provided for their safety.
- They use and follow all control measures (i.e. ventilation, personal protective equipment) provided in the interests of safety.

- Being aware of emergency procedures
- Using personal protective equipment (PPE) in accordance with information; instruction and/or training provided and report any faults/defects or concerns regarding PPE to their line manager.
- Keeping any reusable PPE in a clean condition and stored in accordance with manufacturer's instructions (e.g. respirators)

Employees at all levels are reminded that they have a legal duty to ensure that the provisions of this policy and local establishment procedures and instructions are observed at all times. Failure to do so may render them subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

### **Health and Safety Trade Union Representatives**

Health and Safety / Trade Union Representatives have certain responsibilities and duties and are able to audit and complete inspections where required.

A health and safety representative is a fellow worker who represents other union members to look after the health and safety at work of people they work with.

Health and Safety Representatives have the right to:

- take an active part in workplace risk assessments.
- investigate potential hazards and 'dangerous occurrences' and examine the accident data.
- investigate members' complaints.
- carry out inspections of the workplace in work time, at least every three months.
- be consulted on new working practices and new technology.
- receive safety information from their employer (such as inspectors' reports, hygiene surveys and risk assessments).
- attend union-approved training courses without loss of pay; and have access to a phone and office equipment, and paid time off work, both to carry out inspections and to meet staff and other safety reps.

## **4.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

Risk assessment for products identified by COSHH is a legal requirement to ensure the safety of all persons identified with our business activities. Due to the legal 'extra duty of care' we hold for the people we support, risk assessments may also be required for less hazardous products but labelled 'Keep out of reach of Children' as these still have the potential to cause significant harm. COSHH risk assessment / inventory module is available on My Compliance.

COSHH assessments should take a systematic approach by considering all factors relating to the use of substances hazardous to health. The assessment must also include reference to any emergency plans or procedures e.g. dealing with fire, spillage or first aid. They must clearly show all the control measures put in place either to prevent exposure or to achieve and maintain adequate control of exposure.

Where assessments require further control measures to be put in place, an action plan must be developed with responsibilities clearly allocated and actions timed.

Re-assessment must be undertaken whenever there are significant changes to:

- the substance's data sheet;
- the quantity or way in which it is used
- if there is reason to suspect that health is being adversely affected.

Substance data sheets should be updated at periodic intervals to ensure that copies of the most up to date are available on site.

Assessments must be working documents, copies of which must be kept readily available for reference. Obtain the appropriate COSHH data sheet for each hazardous substance used or stored within the premises. Product Data sheets are available from manufacturers or suppliers who have a legal duty to produce COSHH information on all hazardous products and make this available on request. The My Compliance system holds an inventory of product safety data sheets which is readily available.

The following criteria must be identified in the risk assessment process:

- Type of exposure (inhalation, absorption, ingestion or injection).
- Hazard classification (toxic, corrosive, harmful etc).
- Any hazard and precautionary statements.
- Safe systems of work & control measures.
- Personal Protective Equipment required including the type and grade.
- Mixtures & solutions.
- Fire, spillage & First Aid measures.
- Storage requirements.
- Waste disposal requirements.

## **5.0 CONTROL OF SUBSTANCES**

Control measures must be determined by the level of risk to health and must take into account:

- Elimination and/or use of alternative, less hazardous substances and materials where possible.
- Modification of the use or process (work routine) to eliminate, isolate or reduce exposure.
- Elimination and/or reduction of numbers of people exposed to the hazardous substance.
- The outcome of any environmental monitoring, as appropriate, which has been undertaken by a competent person.
- The provision, maintenance and use of any control equipment required.
- The use of personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce or control exposure to hazardous substances/materials. PPE should be regarded as a 'last resort' in providing protection from exposure to substances hazardous to health.

## **6.0 PROVISION OF INFORMATION**

Each premises / team using / storing hazardous products must maintain a COSHH inventory on My Compliance, identifying all related products in use together with the obtained data sheet and completed Risk Assessment.

The folder must be properly maintained and reviewed, with regular audits carried out by the responsible manager.

The COSHH inventory can then be printed and stored within folders must be kept in areas appropriate to the activity location in case of an emergency:

- Kitchens
- Cleaning Stores
- Workshops/Stores
- Other specific activity areas

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## 7.0 STORAGE & USE OF COSHH PRODUCTS

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All substances identified as presenting a risk under COSHH must be stored in accordance with manufacturer's instruction and other measures as detailed within risk assessment and product data sheet. As a minimum, in a locked cupboard or secure compound not accessible by unauthorised persons.

Substances **must not be decanted into other containers that are not intended for dilution or by that product, particularly any containers originally used for food and drink**, but to remain in that in which it was supplied. All containers must be clearly labelled identifying the contents and dilution strength.

Substances must not be mixed unless directed by manufacturer's instructions.

Hazardous substances must not be used where there is any risk of contact with the people.

The provision of suitable personal protective equipment (PPE) should be made and training in its use provided wherever the need of PPE is identified in the risk assessment.

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## 8.0 PPE and RPE

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Personal Protective Equipment and Respiratory Protective Equipment is equipment that will protect the user against health or safety risks at work. It can include items for working with COSHH such as masks, gloves, air-fed hoods and goggles etc.

Each COSHH Risk Assessment must identify the appropriate PPE to be worn whilst using the substance(s) and the use of the PPE must be monitored by Line Managers.

When selecting PPE:

- choose good quality products which are CE marked in accordance with the Personal Protective Equipment Regulations 2002 – suppliers can advise the procurement officer.
- choose equipment that suits the wearer – consider the size, fit and weight; you may need to consider the health of the wearer, e.g. if equipment is very heavy, or wearers have pre-existing health issues, standard PPE may not be suitable.

Make sure anyone using PPE is aware of why it is needed, when to use, repair or replace it, how to report it if there is a fault and its limitations.

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## 9.0 TRAINING

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As part of induction training for identified appropriate staff groups, new staff will receive training for COSHH, which shall include:

- How to recognise a product which comes under COSHH by the product labelling identifying information.
- Action required when identifying a new COSHH product (obtain manufacturer data sheet).
- How to carry out a suitable & sufficient Risk Assessment for the product (approved by the line manager).
- Storage of COSHH products.
- The importance of the correct use and storage of related Personal Protective Equipment.
- Informing staff of products which are forbidden to use (i.e. Bleach).
- COSHH products are not to be introduced until the data sheets are obtained and the Risk Assessment process complete within My Compliance.

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Local training by the Line manager will identify local arrangements including storage, First Aid arrangements and locations of COSHH folder(s).

For staff groups working with classified hazardous products, direct line managers must ensure that staff receive appropriate training for the safe use of that product.

Refresher training must be completed within a three-year period from initial induction and repeated at three yearly intervals thereafter.

Please refer to the My Compliance training video available for further information.

## **10.0 MONITORING & REVIEW**

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This policy will be reviewed as part of the regular cycle of reviews, unless changing circumstances require an earlier review.