

Patchway Town Council

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Policy

The COSHH Regulations 2002 and approved code of practice require employers to evaluate and control the risks which employees and others may be exposed to from hazardous substances at work.

It applies to all workplaces and includes any substances, materials, processes or by-products that are hazardous to health e.g. clinical waste, microbiological agents, dusts of any kind in substantial quantities and all chemicals categorised as hazardous to health in any form i.e. solid, liquid, gas or vapour.

The health effect of hazardous substances is directly linked to:

- i) the nature of the substances
- ii) duration of exposure
- iii) quantity exposed to

This policy applies to all employees as well as visitors, contractors and members of the public who come into contact with hazardous substances used or produced Patchway Town Council.

Definitions

“Substance hazardous to health” means anything:

- i) listed as dangerous for supply within the Chemical (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations (CHIP Regulations) and which indicates specified dangers as: very toxic, toxic, harmful, corrosive or irritant
- ii) with a workplace exposure limit approved by the Health & Safety Commission (HSC)
- iii) which is a biological agent
- iv) which is dust of any kind in sufficient quantity.
- v) which is present in the workplace and which creates a risk to health e.g. micro-organisms, allergens etc.

The aim of the policy is to:

- a) Assess the risk to health that may arise from exposure to hazardous substances.
- b) Establish precautions and control measures needed appropriate to the risk. Wherever possible, risks should be eliminated.
- c) Monitor control measures to ensure they are adhered to and working properly. This includes maintenance and testing of any equipment involved.
- d) Monitor the extent to which employees are exposed to hazardous substances and carry out health surveillance where necessary.
- e) Inform, instruct and train employees regarding the hazards, risks and precautions needed.

Responsibilities

5.1 The Clerk and/or Deputy Clerk is responsible for:

- a) Ensuring the effective implementation of this Policy
- b) Allocating sufficient resources to enable the Policy to be delivered
- c) Monitoring the overall effectiveness of the Policy
- d) substances hazardous to health are identified and assessments of the associated risks to health are carried out within their roles by nominated, appropriately trained, competent people.
- e) appropriate resources are available to support safe working practice and take into account appropriate control measures
- f) assessments are reviewed annually or more frequently if circumstances change
- g) identifying all hazardous substances within their area and recording with a COSHH inventory
- h) ensuring material safety data sheets are available for reference identifying, nominating and supporting the COSHH assessor(s) through training. Ensuring that assessors have a good knowledge of working procedures and practices
- i) ensuring that any untoward incidents involving hazardous substances are reported, investigated and managed in accordance with the Council's Incident Reporting Policy and the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences Regulations. (RIDDOR) 1995.

Employees have a responsibility to:

- a) follow the safe system of work identified in the assessments
- b) make full and proper use of control measures including personal protective equipment
- c) report any compliance failures, digressions, defects or concerns to their line manager
- d) report accidents and incidents
- e) attend training as required
- f) inform their line manager of any health concerns which could reasonably be attributed to exposure to hazardous substances
- g) attend for health surveillance/medicals as required
- h) Ensure the COSHH cabinet has the correct signage on.
- i) Ensure the COSHH register is up to date and filled in correctly.

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. Assessments must be working documents, copies of which must be kept readily available

for reference 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 or if there is reason to suspect that health is being adversely affected.

Control Measures

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

- a) elimination and/or use of alternative, less hazardous substances and materials where possible
- b) modification of the use or process to eliminate, isolate or reduce exposure
- c) elimination and/or reduction of numbers of people exposed to the hazardous substance
- d) the outcome of any environmental monitoring, as appropriate, which has been undertaken by a competent person
- e) the provision, maintenance and use of any control equipment required
- f) 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

Failure to comply with the identified control measures may result in disciplinary action. Employees are required to use PPE provided in accordance with the training they have been given and report any faults/defects or concerns regarding PPE to their manager

All purchases of goods and substances must be undertaken in accordance with recognised and agreed procedures. No other purchasing approaches should be adopted. Manufacturers and suppliers of substances and materials have a legal duty to supply material safety data sheets for the materials provided. All purchases/ requisitions should include a request to supply data information sheets.