

## Substances Hazardous to Health Policy

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (CoSHH) Regulations 2002 (as amended) seeks to control the use of hazardous materials of a chemical or biological nature (noting that biological materials are covered under the Biological Safety Policy). Other legislation has a significant bearing upon the safe use, classification, labelling and packaging of substances, including the retained CLP Regulation (EU No. 1272/2008) as amended for Great Britain, which is known as GB CLP.

These pieces of legislation are applicable to many activities which occur across the University campus, not just in those areas within the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Medicine. The regulations set standards for the protection of individuals from risks related to working with hazardous substances and require that suitable risk assessments are undertaken and controls implemented to minimise the risks. Substances hazardous to health may be in the form of solids, liquids or gases, but also include dusts, micro-organisms, fumes and biological agents. Some substances may not be classified as being hazardous to health except when they are present in a particular form, for example, as nanoparticles. Exposure to the substance may occur by skin contact, inhalation, absorption or ingestion.

Under the provisions of Regulation 26, Safety Regulations and associated University Health and Safety Policy document, it is the duty of all staff, students and others working in the University to comply with this Policy, together with any other instructions, rules and guidance that may apply.

### Core Principles

1. The use of substances hazardous to health shall be avoided wherever possible, and where use is unavoidable, the risks shall be assessed before commencing use of the substance.
2. Substances hazardous to health shall be controlled in a manner which ensures that exposure to all potentially affected persons is minimised to the lowest practicable level, and control measures implemented shall, where possible, combat the risks at source.
3. The risk assessment shall consider the hazardousness of the substance, the duration of exposure, the information provided by the manufacturer, the amount used, the effect of preventive measures, any occupational exposure limit which applies, the approved classification of any biological agent, the effects of exposure to a known combination hazardous substances and the results of any relevant health surveillance.
4. If avoidance is not possible priority must be given to replacing hazardous substances with non-hazardous or less hazardous substances and then to reduction of the potential for exposure through engineering measures such as local exhaust ventilation or containment.
5. Working practices should be designed to allow safer ways of working, and to suit the individuals exposed, especially as regards the design of workplaces, the choice of work equipment and the choice of working methods, with a view to reducing their effect upon health: priority must be given to measures offering collective protection over those providing individual protection – Personal Protective Equipment is a last resort.

6. A coherent overall protection policy which covers technology, organisation of work, maintenance of suitable working conditions, regular reviews, social relationships and the influence of factors relating to the working environment should be developed within each department.
7. Any personal protective equipment identified to be necessary by the risk assessment shall be provided to persons liable to be exposed and training and information shall be provided to any person who is liable to be exposed to a substance hazardous to health.
8. Where exposure to a biological agent, or a carcinogen or mutagen cannot be practicably prevented, additional measures must be applied.
9. Where engineering controls are used they shall be subject to thorough examination and testing at a prescribed interval. For Local Exhaust Ventilation this interval shall be no more than 14 months.
10. Where necessary to ensure exposure to substances hazardous to health is suitably managed, health surveillance must be made available to those persons liable to be exposed.
11. Where work with hazardous substances generates waste, effective disposal must be carried out in accordance with the University's Hazardous Waste Policy and local procedures.

## Responsibilities

Heads of Departments are responsible for the implementation of this Policy with regard to ensuring that hazardous substance assessments are documented and reviewed. They are responsible for ensuring that the responsibility for completing risk assessment is communicated to Principal Investigators.

Principal Investigators are responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are undertaken, recorded, and that the required safe systems of work and control measures are followed. They are also responsible for providing training for use of hazardous substances as determined through the risk assessment process.

All staff within departments must comply with this Policy and the associated arrangements, instructions and guidance.

The Director of Health and Safety is responsible for advising on the standards and regulations that must be achieved in order to meet legal requirements; for keeping the University's Health and Safety website up to date with the related policy documents; and for ensuring that spot checks and audits are carried out to provide assurance that activities are being carried out in compliance with this Policy.

## Review

This policy will be reviewed when any legal requirements change or at least once every three years.

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