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Hazardous substances are used every day in a diverse range of workplaces. The use of hazardous substances is governed by COSHH alegal requirement for your business? Keep reading to find out. COSHH alegal requirement for your business.
2002. The purpose of COSHH is to protect employees and members of the public from being exposed to any substance that could be a short-term negative health effect, such as a burn from a harsh chemical. Or, it could be a long-term condition, such as a lung disease that develops after years of exposure to dust. The COSHH
regulations state explicitly that 'every employer shall ensure that the exposure of his employees to substances hazardous to health is either prevented or, where this is not reasonably practicable, adequately controlled.' Suppose you own or manage a business or work as a self-employed person. In that case, you must follow the COSHH guidelines
about using, storing and handling hazardous substances. . Anyone that doesn't comply with COSHH regulations could face stiff penalties. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is the main body in the UK with the power to enforce regulations such as COSHH. The HSE could investigate your business if a complaint is filed or if it has any reason to
believe you're in breach of the legislation. The HSE can issue warnings and shut your business down until changes are made. It can also bring criminal charges against you. Being found guilty of a COSHH breach can result in unlimited fines or even a prison sentence. Employers are responsible for ensuring that all health and safety laws are adhered
to. However, employers and employees can be personally liable for breaches of UK health and safety legislation. Penalties for COSHH breaches can be severe. In 2020, Swindon furniture company Oak Furnitureland was found guilty of failing to protect workers from exposure to solvents and wood dust and properly conducting COSHH risk
assessments. The parent company, JB Global, was fined £398,000 and ordered to pay additional costs of £94,904. Put simply, yes! COSHH more than likely applies to your business. Most workplaces store or use substances that can be considered hazardous under the COSHH regulations. Everyday cleaning products like bleach, for example, are
categorised as dangerous. It doesn't matter how big or small your workplace is or how many employees, but you take hazardous substances into areas where there are other people. In that case, you must follow all COSHH guidelines
The only exceptions are those relating to employee monitoring and health surveillance. As a rule, it makes sense to always follow COSHH guidelines. Doing so will protect you, your employees and the public from harm. Follow the COSHH rules to ensure you stay within the law. COSHH states that self-employee monitoring and the public from harm. Follow the cosh are those relating to employees and the public from harm.
exposure to 'substances hazardous to health is either prevented or, where this is not reasonably practicable, adequately controlled.' In practice, it means employers must take all reasonable steps to avoid working with hazardous substances. If the work can't be avoided, then you must do a COSHH assessment. Once the risk assessment has been
completed and the hazards identified, adequate risk control precautions must be implemented. Employees get adequate training. Employees are responsible for ensuring they understand the risks involved in their work. They must
follow all control measures and participate in training. You must comply with COSHH training is the best way to avoid penalties and protect yourself and your colleagues. Our online training course teaches participants everything they need to know to comply with COSHH
guidelines. Trainees learn to identify risks, conduct COSHH risk assessments and implement effective control measures. This training sorted today because COSHH is a legal requirement! Since almost all organisations will buy, use or
produce hazardous substances, from cleaning solutions to highly toxic chemicals, everyone should know about their COSHH assessments are a legal requirement under two health and Safety at
Work Regulations (MHSWR) The first might seem obvious. COSHH assessments. It's where the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH Regulations), COSHH assessments are required
by law, for any substances that are hazardous to health. So, the use (or production) of any substances that are hazardous to health. An employer shall not carry out
work which is liable to expose any employees to any substance hazardous to health unless he has—made a suitable and sufficient assessment of the requirements of these Regulations The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health
Regulations 2002 Assessment of the risk to health Under the COSHH assessment is clear - you can't carry out Work involving substances hazardous to health Under the COSHH assessment is clear - you can't carry out work that exposes your employees to hazardous substances unless you have assessed the risk first. The Management of Health and Safety at
Work Regulations (MHSWR) Another set of regulations also applies to the need to carry out a COSHH assessment, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR) also apply. The MHSWR
require a risk assessment to be carried out for any risks to the health and safety of employees or other persons. This risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances and evaluating the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances are risk assessment in the risk assessment is a process of identifying hazardous substances.
Since hazardous substances (as the name suggests) present a hazard that can result in risks to the health and safety of employees or other persons, the requirement to carry out a COSHH risk assessment would also come under MHSWR. This doesn't mean double the work, luckily. It just means that producing your COSHH assessment will help you
comply with the requirements under both sets of regulations. Whose responsibilities. But it is the employees have COSHH assessment. An employees have coshH assessment employees to any substance
hazardous to health unless he has—made a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risk created by that work to the health of those employees and of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of these Regulations The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 Assessment of the risk to health created by work
involving substances hazardous to health This isn't the only employer COSHH responsibility. But you could argue that it is the most important one. Carrying out your COSHH assessment is the first step in getting COSHH compliant. You can't control hazardous substances until you know what hazardous substances you need to control. And that all
happens during the COSHH assessment. How to comply: As an employer, make sure COSHH assessment? It's the employer's responsibility to carry out a COSHH assessment. But this
doesn't necessarily mean the employer needs to write the COSHH assessment themselves. Employers have many health and safety responsibilities. They will often get help from a competent person to comply with certain duties. They are not
completing it themselves. For large organisations, you are likely to have an individual, or a team employed who is responsible for health and safety. The individual or team can be appointed to manage the process, but you should also consider the need to have employee representatives from each department, or site, responsible for reporting back.
Within larger organisations, the use of substances can be complex and varied, particularly in manufacturing, or construction where use is spread out over different sites. The person in charge of the COSHH assessment process in this type of working environment won't be involved in the processes, or be present on all sites, it is, therefore, important to
have input from those involved in the process for input and to report back on the effectiveness of controls in place. Smaller organisations will often (not always) have lower risks, and be easier to control. Fewer people will need to be involved in the COSHH assessment process where the individual responsible is present and involved with the activity,
and the risks are less serious or easily understandable. Employees have COSHH responsibilities too. Even if they are not directly appointed as part of the SUSHH team, they can and should be involved in the COSHH assessment process. Employees using the substance and carrying out the activity have the most knowledge of the work and this
information is key to a thorough and effective assessment. Early involvement in COSHH discussions will also help promote safe working practices and help gain compliance with the controls resulting from the assessment. How to comply: As an employer, you are responsible for COSHH assessment. But you might need extra help from a competent
person. This will usually be someone within your business (like an employee) or could be someone external (like a consultant). Whoever you appoint, they must have an understanding of the regulations and what is expected of them. It is also important that they understanding of the regulations and what is expected of them.
risks and how to analyse them. For low to medium risk substances, they do not need to be an occupational hygienist. But they do need to have the ability to follow best practice advice and to research the substances, they do need to have the ability to follow best practice advice and to research the substances. They should have access to specialist resources and the judgment to know when specialist help is needed. COSHH assessment legal
specification Now we know that COSHH assessment are needed, by law, but what are the legal requirements of a COSHH assessment contain? The COSHH assessment are needed, by law, but what are the legal requirements of a COSHH assessment contain? The COSHH assessment contain.
outline for a COSHH assessment. The risk assessment shall include consideration of—the hazardous properties of the substance; information contained in any relevant safety data sheet; the level, type and duration of exposure; the circumstances of the work, including the amount of the
substance involved; activities, such as maintenance, where there is the potential for a high level of exposure standard, maximum exposure limit; the effect of preventive and control measures which have been or will be taken in accordance with regulation 7; the results of
relevant health surveillance; the results of monitoring of exposure in accordance with regulation 10; in circumstances where the work will involve exposure to such substances in combination; the approved classification of any biological agent; and such additional
information as the employer may need in order to complete the risk assessment. The Control of Substances Hazardous to health Regulations 2002 Assessment of the risk assessmen
listed in the COSHH regulations. Start by looking at the hazardous substances you use and produce. Fill in the COSHH form with information on what the substance is, how you use it, and what controls are needed to keep people safe. If you are familiar with risk assessments, you can use many of the same tactics. You're still creating a risk assessment
when you produce a COSHH assessment. A COSHH assessment is a risk assessment that is created to assess the risk of a hazardous substance. For more details on what you should include in your COSHH assessment? Legally (according
to the COSHH regulations) the requirement to record your COSHH assessment only apply when you employees to any substance hazardous without a COSHH assessment. How to comply: The only way to show you have complied with that
legal requirement is to record your COSHH assessment. So it's often a good idea to record your COSHH assessment isn't just a "do it and forget it" exercise. Legally, there are several
triggers for when you must review risk assessment shall be reviewed regularly and forthwith if— there is reason to suspect that the risk assessment is no longer valid; there has been a significant change in the work to which the
risk assessment relates; or the results of any monitoring carried out in accordance with regulation 10 show it to be necessary, and where, as a result of the risk assessment of the risk assessment of the risk assessment of the review, changes to the risk assessment are required, those changes shall be made. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 Assessment of the risk to health created by
work involving substances hazardous to health How to comply: If you have changes in your work (like using more or less of the substance, or using different equipment), or monitoring picks up an issue, or you have any other reason to suspect the assessment is no longer valid, you are required (by law) to review your COSHH assessment. Need help
with your COSHH assessments? Use the free blank COSHH risk assessment template to get started, or pick one of our ready-to-use COSHH templates. HSE have compiled a set of example COSHH assessments for some industries. You can use these to get ideas for completing assessments in your company. See also A COSHH assessment templates.
on the hazards and risks from hazardous substances in your workplace. Remember that health hazards are not limited to substances gou use, for example: wood dust from sanding silica dust from tile cutting fumes from welding Identify the hazards Identify which
substances are harmful by reading the product labels and safety data sheets (SDS). If in doubt, contact your supplier. Think about harmful substances produced by your processes, such as cutting or grinding, or to which workers may be otherwise exposed. Examples include: processes that emit dust, fume, vapour, mist or gas skin contact with liquids,
pastes and dusts Substances with workplace exposure limits (WELs) are hazardous to health. Assess the risks Decide who might be exposure by each of these routes how
often people work with the substance and for how long anyone else who could be exposed - do not forget maintenance workers, contractors and other visitors or members of the public who could be exposed what you're already doing to control the risks what further action you need to take to control the risks who needs to carry out the action when
the action is needed by Control the risks Once you have carried out a risk assessment and identified which harmful substances are present, and how workers can be harmed, you need to think about preventing exposure. Elimination Do you really need to use a particular substance, or is a safer alternative available? Can you change the process to
eliminate its use or avoid producing it? If this is not possible, you must put in place adequate control measures to reduce the process you use to reduce the process to reduce the process to reduce the amount of vapour
getting into the air or use pellets instead of powders as they are less dusty. Containment Enclose the process or activity as much as possible to minimise than dining systems and minimise the escape or release of the harmful substance. Use a properly designed local exhaust ventilation (LEV) system which
extracts dust, fume, mist, gases or vapour through a hood or booth and reduces the exposure of the worker. All ventilation equipment must be examined and tested every 14 months by a competent person (someone who has the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to carry out the work safely). Guidance on buying and using LEV Systems of
work Restrict access to those people who need to be there. Plan the storage of materials and use appropriate containers are correctly labelled and that incompatible materials, for example acids and caustics are separated. Plan the storage and disposal of waste. Cleaning Exposure to hazardous substances can occur
adequately control exposure by other means, provide personal protective equipment (PPE) as a control measures. Do not automatically opt for personal protective equipment (PPE) as a control measures. Bo not automatically opt for personal protective equipment (PPE) as a control measure. It is not as reliable or effective as other means, provide personal protective equipment (PPE) as a control measure.
the outcome of your risk assessment and what the hazards and risks are, and any workplace exposure limits, and what the hazards and risks are, and any workplace exposure limits, and what the hazards and risks are, and any workplace exposure limits, and what they need to do to protect themselves. You must make workers to use controls
workers. More on information and training Record your findings If you have 5 or more employees, you must record your assessment but, even if you have taken to identify the risks. Make a list of the actions you have taken to control the risks to workers' health. Review your controls
Review the risk assessment regularly to ensure it's kept up to date and accounts for any changes in your workplace. You must review the controls you have put in place to make sure they are workplace that could lead to new risks such as changes to:
staff a process the substances or equipment used Also consider a review if your workers have spotted any problems or there have been any accidents or near misses. Update your risk assessment record with any changes you make. The law
requires you to control the risks to workers. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) apply to most harmful substances but lead and asbestos are covered by separate regulations. You can read the COSHH regulations on legislation.
REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) Regulation. If you manufacture, import or formulate chemicals for supply, you should read the Classification, Labelling and Packaging of substances and mixtures (CLP) Regulation. If you transport chemicals, you should read the Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of
Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations. When is a COSHH assessment required? Is it when you do an activity involving it?You need a COSHH assessment whenever you are using, creating or producing a substance within your workplace that is hazardous to health. What is the law for COSHH
assessments? COSHH assessments are more than just good health and safety - they are a legal requirement. Required by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, COSHH assessment of the risk to health created by work involving substances hazardous to
health". The law says that you shouldn't start any work that exposes employees to substances hazardous to health unless you have: Assessed the risk Assessed the steps (controls) needed to make it safe Put those steps in place 6.—(1) An employee sto any substance hazardous to health
unless he has— made a suitable and sufficient assessment of the requirements of these Regulations; and implemented to be taken to meet the requirements of these Regulations 2002 Assessment of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of these Regulations; and implemented to be taken to meet the requirements of these Regulations; and implemented to be taken to meet the requirements of these Regulations 2002 Assessment of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of these Regulations; and implemented to be taken to meet the requirements of these Regulations 2002 Assessment of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of these Regulations; and implemented the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of these Regulations 2002 Assessment of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirements of the steps that need to meet the requirements of the steps that need to be taken to meet the requirement
the risk to health created by work involving substances hazardous to health When should you assess a substance? When you're using it? When it has been used? The answer can be found within the regulations themselves: 6.—(1)
steps referred to in sub-paragraph (a). The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 Assessment of the risk to health Created by work involving substances hazardous to health Regulations say you will not carry out work that could expose employees to a hazardous substance unless you have carried out your assessment, and
put in place any steps needed to control the risks. Your COSHH assessment should, therefore, get carried out before any activity takes place that uses, involves or exposes employees to substance until you have carried out
 hazardous to health. But sometimes, that's easier said than done. Substances that are hazardous to health include any substance or preparation (mixture) with the potential to cause harm if they are inhaled, ingested, come into contact with, or are absorbed through the skin. Often, it will be obvious when work involves a hazardous substance. The
easiest hazardous substances to spot are the ones that tell you they are hazardous. They give you this information when you purchase them. Hazardous substances will have information on packaging and manufacturer's details for the hazards they present. An eye-catching red hazard symbol might tell you it is toxic or flammable. But there could be
other hazardous substances in your workplace. Ones you don't purchase. What about the substances you create during your work? For example, if you drill concrete or sand wood, the dust you make should be assessed under COSHH. Concete or sand wood, the dust you make should be assessed under COSHH.
you about their hazards when you don't buy them in helpful packaging. You might need to take samples or find out about the material for yourself. To help identify the substances you need to assess, keep an inventory of hazardous substances using the free COSHH register. Once you have identified a hazardous substance, and know you need a
COSHH assessment, you have to create one! But don't worry, a COSHH assessment is just a risk assessment for a hazardous substance. If you know how to write a risk assessment is just a risk assessment is just a risk assessment for a hazardous substance. If you know how to write a risk assessment is just 
level, type and duration of exposure Details of the work and amount of substances involved Exposure limits WELs How you will prevent and control exposure Results of monitoring a COSHH risk assessment, you will be able to decide
which control measures are needed to prevent or control the exposure of employees to substances hazardous to health. Here are 7 types of COSHH control measures and how they reduce risks. You may need to refer to the supplier's safety data sheets to help you complete your COSHH assessment. This information will give you details of the specific
risks associated with the substance, and help you to assess if your existing practices are sufficient to ensure adequate control of exposure. However, it is important to remember that simply collecting supplier data sheets will not meet the requirements of COSHH, and you must complete a COSHH risk assessment specific to the task you do. Your
assessment may be initial or conditional, if this is the first time you have introduced a new substance, for example, you may need to test control measures to confirm effectiveness. For example, you may determine that this PPE is not necessary. In this
case, you can then update your COSHH assessment to reflect these findings. You can use the free blank COSHH assessment template to get an idea of the layout and format you will need. When should you review your COSHH assessment template to get an idea of the matter. Just
because you have a COSHH assessment in place, doesn't mean you can forget about it!You will need to review your COSHH assessment regularly, and immediately if: If it is no longer valid If there is a change to the work Monitoring results show it's necessary to review You should review your COSHH assessment even if no known changes occur. The
reason for regular reviews is that over time gradual changes can occur that may go unnoticed. But these changes could make the original assessment immediately if your existing assessment becomes invalid. An assessment could be invalid because of
significant changes in the work process or circumstances, reports from supervisors about defects in control systems, or the results of testing control measures. How often you periodically review COSHH assessment will depend on the level of risk, and the task being carried out. It's good practice to review COSHH assessments at least annually review your COSHH assessment will depend on the level of risk, and the task being carried out. It's good practice to review COSHH assessment will depend on the level of risk, and the task being carried out.
and more often for higher risk substances and procedures. If you need help producing COSHH assessment templates, or get started with the free blank COSHH assessment templates, or get started with the free blank COSHH assessment templates.
workplace. It takes the form of straightforward advice sheets' called 'control guidance sheets'. There are two types of sheets in your industry. When
using the COSHH e-tool you will be prompted by questions to enter some basic information about the substance you are using, before being directed to the most appropriate generic control guidance sheet for you. Frequently asked questions The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations represent the cornerstone of the UK's
efforts to protect workers and the public from the risks associated with hazardous substances in the workplace. Introduced as a regulatory framework, COSHH mandates employers to take systematic steps to assess, manage and reduce potential exposures to harmful chemicals, dusts, fumes, biological agents, and other hazardous materials. Ensuring
COSHH compliance is not only essential for safeguarding health and safety, it is also a legal requirement that, if neglected, can lead to serious legal landscape surrounding COSHH, exploring both the regulatory responsibilities placed on
employers and the potential ramifications of failing to meet these obligations. By examining the legal requirements and standards that underpin COSHH, as well as the penalties for non-compliance, this analysis aims to highlight the critical importance of adherence to COSHH for legal accountability and workplace safety. The Control of Substances
Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002, as amended, are a key part of the UK's framework for workplace health and safety, designed to protect workers and others from the risks associated with exposure to hazardous substances. These regulations are essential for managing workplace safety in relation to chemical and biological agents and
are grounded in the broader legislative context provided by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA). According to the HSE, 138 workers were killed in work-related accidents in 2023/2024 and 561,000 working people sustained an injury at work according to the HSE, 138 workers were killed in work-related accidents in 2023/2024 and 561,000 working people sustained an injury at work according to the HSE, 138 workers were killed in work-related accidents in 2023/2024 and 561,000 working people sustained an injury at work according to the HSE, 138 workers were killed in work-related accidents in 2023/2024 and 561,000 working people sustained an injury at work according to the HSE, 138 workers were killed in work-related accidents in 2023/2024 and 561,000 working people sustained an injury at work according to the HSE, 138 workers were killed in work-related accidents in 2023/2024 and 561,000 working people sustained accident acci
overarching framework for health and safety in the UK, establishing general duties for employees and others. COSHH falls within this framework as a more specific regulation aimed at managing risks from hazardous substances. Since its implementation, COSHH has been updated to address
changing risks in various industries, technological advancements, and improved understanding of hazardous to health. It requires practical steps and management practices to ensure worker safety across multiple sectors,
including manufacturing, healthcare, construction, laboratories and agriculture. COSHH aims to safeguard employees and other individuals from the harmful effects of chemical and biological agents present in the workplace. This protection extends to anyone who may be affected
by hazardous substances, including controls exposure to hazardous substances. Control measures may include engineering controls like ventilation systems, administrative controls and personal protective equipment
(PPE) to minimise risk. Prevention of harm from chemical and biological agents - COSHH is designed to prevent harm by promoting safe handling, storage and disposal of hazardous substances and ensuring that only those who are trained and equipped to handle such materials do so. Under COSHH, employers have specific duties,
including:Conducting COSHH risk assessments - employers must assess all hazardous substances used or generated during work activities to identify potential health risks. This involves understanding the nature of the substances, evaluating how workers might be exposed, and assessing the level of risk associated with this exposure. Implementing
control measures - once risks are identified, employees must implement control measures to prevent or limit exposure. Control methods include ventilation systems to reduce airborne contaminants, and PPE such as gloves, masks and goggles. Providing employee training - employees must receive adequate training on COSHH-related procedures,
including the safe use, storage and handling of hazardous substances. This training aims to help employees understand the risks, use control measures effectively, and know how to respond to potential exposure incidents. Ensuring ongoing health surveillance – for certain high-risk substances, employers must establish health surveillance programmes
to monitor employees' health and detect early signs of illness caused by hazardous substances. Health checks, biological monitoring and reviewing control measures - employers are responsible for regularly monitoring exposure levels
and assessing the effectiveness of control measures. This may involve periodic air monitoring, reviewing work processes, and updating controls as necessary to ensure ongoing protection. Employees are required to comply with safe work
practices established under COSHH, such as proper handling of hazardous materials, correct usage of equipment, and adherence to operational protocols. Using PPE and other protective measures – employees must use personal protocols. Using PPE and other protective measures – employees must use personal protocols.
minimising the risk of exposure to hazardous substances. Reporting hazards or incidents - if employees identify potential hazards, incidents or failures in control measures, they must report these promptly to their employees identify potential hazards, incidents or failures in control measures, they must report these promptly to their employees identify potential hazards, incidents or failures in control measures, they must report these promptly to their employees identify potential hazards.
exposure.COSHH applies broadly to any industry where hazardous substances are used or generated, covering diverse sectors such as:Manufacturing and engineering - managing exposure to chemical disinfectants used in clinical
settings. Construction - reducing exposure to dust, cement and asbestos during building and demolition. Laboratories - handling potentially harmful chemicals, pathogens and radioactive substances. Agriculture - managing risks from pesticides, fertilisers and animal-based biological agents. COSHH Regulations play a critical role in safeguarding
health and safety by requiring employers to implement rigorous controls over hazardous substances, provide adequate training, and enforce the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary. Through these measures, COSHH supports a safer workplace environment across a range of high-risk industries. Failure to comply with these
places a duty on employers to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees and any others who may be affected by their work activities. Failure to control hazardous substances under COSHH is a breach of these duties, as inadequate measures can result in employee exposure to dangerous chemicals or materials. Companies found guilty of
breaching COSHH Regulations may face substantial fines. These penalties vary based on the severity of the breach, the degree of harm caused, and whether it was a repeated offence. Fines for large corporations can reach millions of pounds, especially when breaches are deliberate or due to gross negligence. Employers and even individual managers
may face prosecution for serious COSHH violations. Prosecutions are typically initiated when there is evidence demonstrates non-compliance and harm. In the most severe cases, where breaches of COSHH have led to fatalities or significant
health consequences for workers, company directors or responsible managers can be sentenced to imprisonment. The length of imprisonment depends on the severity and intentionality of the breach. Examples of recent legal cases include: HSE v. Great North Eastern Railway Ltd - the railway company faced substantial fines for failing to protect
workers from asbestos exposure. This case demonstrated the importance of COSHH Regulations and how a lack of compliance can expose companies to both fines and enforcement action. HSE v. Veolia ES (UK) Ltd. - this company was fined for multiple COSHH breaches due to failing to control employee exposure to hazardous dust and other toxic
substances. The case illustrates how repeated non-compliance can result in more severe penalties. These examples highlight the consequences of failing to control exposure to hazardous substances, underscoring the legal seriousness of COSHH non-compliance. Employees who suffer injury, illness or chronic health issues due to hazardous substance
exposure in the workplace may file civil lawsuits against their employer. Civil liability often focuses on employer negligence, where employers are held accountable for failing to prevent exposure risks effectively. Employers are held accountable for failing to prevent exposure risks effectively.
to control exposure. Failing to implement these can form a basis for a civil claim if exposure results in harm. Employers must provide adequate training to workers handling procedures and emergency response actions. Claims can arise if inadequate training leads to the risks of exposure, proper handling procedures and emergency response actions.
to exposure or injury.COSHH mandates that employers carry out risk assessments to understand the potential hazards associated with substances in the workplace. Employees exposed due to incomplete or absent risk assessments may pursue claims based on this negligence. The financial repercussions of COSHH non-compliance can be extensive
including the legal fees associated with defending against criminal and civil cases, which can be devastating, particularly for smaller businesses. If employees suffer harm and are successful in civil claims, companies may need to pay compensation
for medical costs, lost wages and other damages. The cumulative financial impact can be significant, particularly when numerous employees are affected or if the health issues are long term. Beyond financial costs, non-compliance with COSHH can damage a company's reputation, including:Loss of employee trust - non-compliance can lead to
employee mistrust, reduced morale and difficulty in retaining skilled workers are less likely to feel secure and valued if they believe their employer is neglecting that clients or business partners are reluctant to work with
them. This could lead to a loss of business opportunities and difficulties in establishing new partnerships. Regulatory scrutiny - COSHH violations can lead to increased scrutiny from regulatory bodies like the HSE, which may conduct more frequent inspections and audits. This can disrupt operations and further strain company resources. COSHH non-
compliance carries serious consequences, including criminal prosecution, civil claims, financial losses and reputational damage. For companies, compliance is essential to protect both workers and the business from the legal and financial risks associated with hazardous substance exposure. There are several key regulations and standards related to
COSHH, including: REACH is a European Union regulation that requires manufacturers and imported into the EEA. It complements COSHH by focusing on chemicals are adequately assessed and regulated before they are used or sold
Under REACH, substances that pose significant health or environmental risks may be restricted or require specific authorisation, thus supporting COSHH's objective of minimising chemical hazards in the workplace. The GHS is a global standard for the classification and labelling of chemicals, aimed at achieving consistency in chemical hazard
communication worldwide. Through standardised labels, safety data sheets and classification criteria, GHS helps ensure workers understand the hazards associated with chemicals, regardless of where they are produced. The UK's COSHH Regulations incorporate GHS principles to promote a clear understanding of chemical hazards, thus enhancing
workplace safety through harmonised hazard communication. The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) sets regulatory standards for managing hazardous substances in the workplace, similar to COSHH. OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) aligns with GHS for consistent labelling and safety data sheets. Like
COSHH, OSHA mandates risk assessments, employee training and control measures to prevent workplace exposure to hazardous substances, establishing a comparable framework for managing biohazardous materials, including pathogens, biological samples and
COSHH compliance. In construction, COSHH requires that employers implement dust control measures, such as dust suppression systems or respiratory protective equipment, to minimise worker exposure. Asbestos remova
must follow strict guidelines to ensure safe handling and disposal, and any exposure must be managed through specific risk assessments and health surveillance procedures, as outlined by COSHH. These regulations work alongside COSHH to ensure that workers exposed to hazardous substances are provided with adequate PPE. Employers are
safe disposal practices for substances classified as hazardous, aligning closely with COSHH's focus on reducing exposure to hazardous substances, and the Hazardous Waste Regulations require the correct labelling, storage and disposal methods to prevent environmental
contamination. These regulations ensure that waste containing hazardous chemicals is managed to protect public health and the environment. A COSHH risk assessment identifies hazardous substances, assesses the level of risk assessment identifies hazardous substances, assesses the level of risk assessment identifies hazardous substances, assesses the level of risk assessment identifies hazardous substances, assesses the level of risk assessment identifies hazardous substances, assesses the level of risk assessment identifies hazardous substances, assesses the level of risk assessment identifies hazardous substances, assesses the level of risk assessment identifies hazardous substances, assesses the level of risk assessment identifies hazardous substances, assesses the level of risk assessment identifies hazardous substances, assesses the level of risk assessment identifies hazardous substances, assesses the level of risk assessment identifies hazardous substances, as a substance identifies hazardous substances, as a substance identifies hazardous substances, as a 
chemicals and substances used, produced or encountered in the workplace. Safety Data Sheets (SDS) - obtain SDS for each substances - identify which substances are hazardous and require COSHH assessment. This includes chemicals, dust, fumes, mists, vapours and biological
agents. Assess the level of risk - determine the ways employees may be exposed to each substance, for example inhalation or skin contact. Evaluate how often and how long workers are exposed. Consider the potential health impact, ranging from minor irritation to chronic health conditions or fatal consequences. Identify any vulnerable groups, such
as pregnant employees or those with existing health conditions. Decide on necessary control measures - based on the risk assessment, implementing control measures effective with existing health conditions. Decide on necessary control measures to reduce exposure to an acceptable level. Implementing control measures employees or those with existing health conditions.
There are three primary types of control measures: Fume hoods and local exhaust ventilation (LEV) - capture hazardous fumes, dust or vapours at the source before they disperse into the work environment. Enclosures - use enclosed systems to contain hazardous materials, particularly in manufacturing or lab settings. Automation - automate
processes to reduce the need for direct human contact with hazardous substances. You should limit the amount of time workers spend exposed to hazardous substances and develop and implement procedures for safely handling, storing and disposing of hazardous substances and develop and implement procedures for safely handling, storing and disposing of hazardous substances.
prominently in work areas.PPE should include: Respirators - for employees exposed to harmful dust, mists or fumes. Protection - use gloves, gowns or aprons to protect against chemical splashes. Eye and face protection - use gloves, gowns or aprons to protect against chemical splashes.
requires employers to conduct health surveillance to monitor any impact of exposure on workers' health. Surveillance is necessary if employees are exposed to:Substances that can cause cancer, asthma or dermatitis. Materials with known adverse health effects in prolonged or repetitive exposure. Conduct regular health assessments, for example
respiratory function tests, to detect early signs of health effects from exposure. Keep confidential records of each employee's health surveillance data, ensuring it is regularly updated. If an employee shows early signs of exposure related illness, adjust their work conditions or exposure levels to protect their health. Training is essential to ensure all
employees understand the hazards, proper handling of hazardous substances, and their role in maintaining COSHH compliance. Ensure all new employees receive training on COSHH Regulations, risks and safe work practices. Offer periodic refreshers or updates on new procedures, substances or equipment. Training should include straightforward
guidance on handling hazardous substances, using PPE, and emergency procedures. Ensure that training materials, including SDS, COSHH assessments and emergency instructions, are easily accessible for all employees and literacy
needs.COSHH requires employees understand their role in managing risks. Regularly involve employees in discussions about workplace safety and encourage feedback. Accurate record-keeping is essential for compliance and is a legal requirement under COSHH. Keep a record of all COSHH assessments, including details of
identified hazards, assessed risks and implemented control measures. Record details of engineering, administrative and PPE controls. Include regular maintenance logs for equipment like LEV systems. Keep logs of all COSHH-related training sessions, including attendance records, topics covered and dates. Ensure that all records are complete, up to
date and easily accessible for internal reviews and external audits. Non-compliance due to inadequate documentation could lead to legal penalties and affect worker safety. By following these steps, employers can achieve full compliance with COSHH Regulations, reducing health risks to employees and fostering a culture of safety. The push for greater
workplace safety and public health is likely to drive more stringent enforcement of COSHH Regulations. As awareness grows around the long-term health impacts of hazardous substances, regulatory agencies may increase the frequency of workplace inspections and enforce stricter compliance. This trend could involve: Tighter exposure limits - future
COSHH legislation might further reduce permissible exposure limits for certain hazardous substances, particularly those known to have cumulative health effects, such as carcinogens or reproductive toxins. This approach is already seen in sectors like manufacturing and construction, where toxic exposures are common. Regulatory agencies might
adjust these limits to reflect the latest research in toxicology and occupational health. Expanded substances, including newly classified nanomaterials and biotechnological agents. New testing methods and data may identify
additional risks associated with previously overlooked substances. Higher penalties for non-compliance - penalties for failing to meet COSHH standards may become more severe, encouraging proactive risk management. New laws may also introduce liability for indirect exposures affecting local communities or ecosystems, which could further push
companies to adopt stringent compliance practices. Technological advancements in compliance – the rise of digital tools and artificial intelligence has introduced new ways for businesses to manage and comply with COSHH requirements efficiently. The movement towards sustainability – this is influencing COSHH and similar regulations to emphasise
the use of safer, more environmentally friendly chemicals. Legislation may require companies to replace hazardous chemicals with safer alternatives when available. This approach, known as 'green chemistry', aims to design chemicals with safer alternatives when available.
requirements might eventually mandate the substitution of certain substances or the use of chemicals with lower toxicity, persistence and bioaccumulation. Chemical management and lifecycle assessment - COSHH laws could evolve to encompass the entire lifecycle of chemicals, from production to disposal, ensuring that companies account for
potential environmental and health impacts throughout a chemical's use. Businesses may need to provide environmental impact reports and outline how they will responsibly manage waste. COSHH Regulations are likely to become stricter, with a greater emphasis on real-time compliance, technological integration and sustainability. Future legislation
will not only protect workers from immediate health risks but also consider the broader environmental impact of chemical use, pushing companies towards safer and more sustainable practices. These anticipated changes will require organisations to be agile, investing in both technology and green alternatives to remain compliant in an increasingly
regulated landscape. Understanding the legal implications and regulatory framework surrounding COSHH is essential for ensuring workplace safety, minimising health risks, and ensuring legal compliance. COSHH Regulations establish clear guidelines for assessing, managing and controlling exposure to hazardous substances, protecting both
employees and the wider community from potential harm. Employers hold a critical responsibility to not only identify potential hazards but also to implement preventative measures, conduct regular risk assessments, and provide adequate training for all personnel involved. Non-compliance with COSHH Regulations can lead to severe legal
repercussions, including fines, legal liabilities, and even criminal charges in cases of gross negligence. By adhering to COSHH guidelines, organisations not only safeguard their workforce but also uphold their reputations and demonstrate a commitment to health and safety standards. Compliance encourages a proactive approach to risk management,
creating a safer work environment and reducing the likelihood of accidents or health issues related to hazardous substances. In an evolving regulatory landscape, staying updated with COSHH Regulations and implementing best practices remains a legal and ethical obligation, reinforcing a culture of safety and responsibility across industries.
Understanding COSHH regulations is crucial to ensuring a safer work environment—discover how you can stay compliant and protect your team. Our Blogs Latest blog posts "alt="How to Become a Teaching Assistant in the UK" /> "alt="Maintaining Patient Confidentiality: A Nursing Assistant's Duty" /> "alt="The Importance of Proper Body
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