

## *Hazardous Substances*

If you use any hazardous substances I would recommend looking at the new criteria setting out exposure limits to the inhalation of hazardous substances. These will be reflected in the current EH 40/2006 – “Workplace Exposure Limits”

The following list is from a hand out that you may find useful with COSHH.

### Hierarchy of COSHH Controls

- **Elimination**
  - Can the hazardous substance be taken out of use altogether?
  - Can the method of use or process be stopped?
  - Can it be taken off site and carried out by a specialist?
  
- **Substitution**
  - Can a less hazardous substance be substituted?
  - Can the same substance in a less hazardous form be used?
  - Can a different method of use be employed?
  
- **Total enclosure**
  - Can the process be completely carried out within an enclosure, cabinet, extractor, etc?
  
- **Minimise emissions**
  - Can the dust, fumes etc, from the process be reduced before being released?
  - Can emissions to outside be reduced also?
  - Can all emissions be filtered or cleaned before being released?
  
- **Partial enclosure with local extraction**
  - Is it possible to carry out the process within an extractor cabinet or hood, or inside a partial enclosure?
  
- **Local extraction**
  - Can a local fan / collector be used to contain the emissions, and keep them away from the operators breathing area?
  
- **General ventilation**
  - Can the general ventilation be improved by opening doors, windows etc? Can circulation fans be used to move air around better?
  
- **Segregation**
  - Is it possible to carry on the process away from other processes, or away from people?
  
- **Reduce exposure times**

Can the time people are exposed be cut down, by employing shift work or job rotation?

- **Regular cleaning and decontamination**
- **Safe storage and disposal**
- **Suitable PPE**
- **Prohibition of eating, drinking smoking**
- **Provision of Hygiene facilities**

## **COSHH 2002**

The COSHH 2002 (as amended) has also introduced 8 new principles of good practice to assist employers to comply with COSHH.

Employers should;

- Design and operate processes and activities that minimise the emission, release and spread of substances hazardous to health.
- Take into account all routes of exposure – inhalation, skin contact and absorption, and ingestion – when they develop control measures
- Use measures that are proportionate to the health risk to control exposure to substances hazardous to health
- Choose the most effective and reliable control measures that minimise the escape and spread of hazardous substances
- Provide suitable PPE together with other control measures
- Make regular checks on all control measures to ensure their effectiveness
- Provide employees with adequate information, instruction and training on hazards and risks from the substances they work with, and the control measures that reduce the risk.
- Make sure the introduction of control measures does not adversely effect the safety levels in any other ways.

Further reading on relevant regulations is available on [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)