



## COSHH

Several chemicals are used on sites and depending on your role, some of them could be classed as dangerous. Chemicals can affect you in several ways:

- Ingestion, e.g., eating contaminated food.
- Inhalation, breathing in fumes or dust.
- Absorption, through the skin via cuts.
- Eyes, splashing your eyes with chemicals.

### Why?

Basic principle of the regulations is to safeguard the health of everyone who works with chemicals. They apply to all places of work. A substance can be a liquid, solid or gas and include microorganisms and dust.

The regulations require the employers to:

1. Assess the risk to health arising from the work and what precautions are required.
2. Introduce appropriate measures to prevent or control the work. Use alternative safer substances where possible.
3. Ensure that control measures are used, and that equipment is properly maintained, and procedures adhered to.
4. Inform, instruct and train employees about the risks and precautions to be taken. Make sure you are aware of the COSHH report and what actions to be taken in the event of an accident.

### Do:

- Wear the correct PPE when using chemicals and that the PPE is fit for use.
- Ensure that the location of use is as well ventilated as possible.
- Ensure the chemicals are stored as per instructions.
- Be aware of the closest first aid points and eye wash stations.
- Use the smallest amount of chemicals as possible.
- Report any spills, contact with chemicals or illness after use.

### Don't:

- Mix chemicals.
- Leave any spilt chemicals on skin or surfaces (clean up using correct procedure)
- Use chemicals without reading and understanding the label and the COSHH report.
- Eat, smoke or drink while using chemicals.
- Expose others to dust, chemicals or fumes.
- Presume that because two containers look the same, they are the same.
- Forget to check the symbols on the container prior to use.
- Forget to wash your hands after handling chemicals.



**Environmental Issues:**

- As part of the COSHH assessment the chemical/product shall be assessed for its effects on the environment. Some chemicals can cause extreme harm to the environment through destruction of flora and fauna on local waterways and rivers.
- Some examples of chemicals that are classified as harmful to the environment are as follows.  
Ammonia  
Chlorine  
Turpentine oil and certain pesticides
- The pictogram show here is displayed in a COSHH assessment to indicate that the chemical is classified as harmful to the environment.
- It is recommended that such chemicals should not be used, where practicable, and an alternative chemical is used.
- The COSHH assessment will also detail the methods for disposal of the chemicals and its container. Some products will be classed as “hazardous” and will have to be disposed of using approved hazardous waste containers.
- It is recommended that a copy of the waste carriers license be obtained from the contactor to ensure they are registered to handle such waste and to fulfil your duty of care.

