

**National Occupational Health and Safety Commission**

**GUIDANCE NOTE  
FOR THE CONTROL OF  
WORKPLACE HAZARDOUS  
SUBSTANCES  
IN THE RETAIL SECTOR  
[NOHSC:3018(1994)]**

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## **FOREWORD**

The National Occupational Health and Safety Commission is a tripartite body established by the Commonwealth Government to develop, facilitate and implement a national occupational health and safety strategy.

This strategy includes standards development, the development of hazard-specific and industry-based preventive strategies, research, training, information collection and dissemination and the development of common approaches to occupational health and safety legislation.

The National Commission comprises representatives of the peak employee and employer bodies - the Australian Council of Trade Unions and the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry - as well as the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments.

Consistent with the National Commission's philosophy of consultation, tripartite standing committees have been established to deal with issues relating to standards development, research and the mining industry. Expert groups may be established to provide advice to the standing committee on those issues with which the National Commission is concerned.



<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES</b>	<b>4</b>
Retailers' and Retail Warehouse Operators' Duties as Employers	4
Suppliers' Duties	5
Purchaser	5
<b>3. CONSULTATION</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4. INDUCTION AND TRAINING</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>5. ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>8</b>
Identification of Hazardous Substances	8
Review of Information about Hazardous Substances	8
Identify the Risk of Exposure	9
Evaluate the Risk to Health	10
Types of Assessment	10
Recording of Assessment Reports	12
<b>6. CONTROL</b>	<b>13</b>
Exposure of Employees	13
Storage of Hazardous Substances	13
<b>7. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>APPENDIXES</b>	
<b>1. TYPES OF PRODUCTS WHICH MAY BE CONSIDERED AS HAZARDOUS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH RISKS ARISING FROM THE USE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES IN THE WORKPLACE</b>	<b>19</b>

<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>REFERENCED DOCUMENTS</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>MEMBERSHIP OF THE WORKING PARTY ON THE GUIDANCE NOTE FOR THE CONTROL OF WORKPLACE HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES IN THE RETAIL SECTOR</b>	<b>25</b>

## PREFACE

In December 1993 the National Commission declared *National Model Regulations for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:1005(1994)]<sup>1</sup> and a *National Code of Practice for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:2007(1994)]<sup>2</sup>. These publications included various exemption provisions granted to the retail sector in relation to the regulation of workplace hazardous substances.

During the initial stages of framing the national model regulations and national code of practice, the National Commission recognised the need for specific guidance to be prepared for the retail sector. This need was formally endorsed in December 1990. A retail sector guidance note was developed and presented to the National Commission for endorsement in July 1992. Endorsement of this guidance note was deferred until a report from a tripartite review committee which was established to examine the control of hazardous substances in the workplace was presented to the National Commission in November 1992.

Retailers, retail warehouse operators and suppliers are exempt from certain information and register requirements in the *National Model Regulations for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:1005(1994)]<sup>1</sup> and *National Code of Practice for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:2007(1994)]<sup>2</sup>. These exemption provisions apply **only** to 'hazardous substances in consumer packages which are intended for retail sale, will not be opened on the retailers' or retail warehouse operators' premises and hold less than 30 kilograms or 30 litres.'

The retail sector covers a wide range of service outlets ranging from department stores to small family-owned grocery stores. In these outlets, employees undertake varied activities. The risks involved in handling hazardous substances in these outlets depend on how goods are delivered, stored, distributed and sold.

This guidance note identifies the specific roles of retailers, retail warehouse operators and suppliers in enabling them as employers to fulfil their obligations under the national model regulations and national code of practice.

As part of its work in relation to the regulation of workplace hazardous substances, the National Commission has produced and released a package of six major publications. The six titles that comprise the set are:

- *National Model Regulations for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:1005(1994)] (which is produced under the same cover as the national code of practice);
- *National Code of Practice for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:2007(1994)];
- *National Code of Practice for the Preparation of Material Safety Data Sheets* [NOHSC:2011(1994)];
- *National Code of Practice for the Labelling of Workplace Substances* [NOHSC:2012(1994)];
- *Approved Criteria for Classifying Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:1008(1994)]; and
- *List of Designated Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:10005(1994)].

These publications are supplemented by the following titles:

- *Guidance Note for the Assessment of Health Risks Arising from the Use of Hazardous Substances in the Workplace* [NOHSC:3017(1994)]; and
- *Guidance Note for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances in the Retail Sector* [NOHSC:3018(1994)].

Each of the above publications may be purchased separately through Commonwealth Government Bookshops.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

**1.1** The purpose of this *Guidance Note for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances in the Retail Sector* [NOHSC:3018(1994)] is to clarify for retailers and retail warehouse operators the way in which they can implement the National Commission's *National Model Regulations for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:1005(1994)]<sup>1</sup> and *National Code of Practice for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:2007(1994)]<sup>2</sup> to meet their obligations as employers, taking into account the exemptions from the requirements for retailers and retail warehouse operators in the national model regulations and national code of practice.

**Note:** The provisions in the national model regulations, national code of practice and this guidance note apply only to hazardous substances.

**1.2** The national model regulations and national code of practice will be adopted throughout the States and Territories in their respective regulations. These adopted regulations will apply to all workplaces in which hazardous substances are used or produced and to all persons with potential exposure to hazardous substances in those workplaces. The two principal components of the national model regulations are:

- (a) provision of information; and
- (b) assessment and control.

**1.3** The information provisions require that retailers, retail warehouse operators and suppliers have to provide specific information on hazardous substances used in the workplace.

**1.4** The assessment and control provisions require an employer to identify hazardous substances in the workplace, make an assessment of the risks associated with any exposure to hazardous substances in a work-related activity and then take appropriate action.

**1.5** The national model regulations *exempt* retailers and retail warehouse operators from some Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) provisions and the register provisions, provided that the hazardous substances are in consumer packages which are intended for retail sale, will not be opened on the retailers' or retail warehouse operators' premises and hold less than 30 kilograms or 30 litres.

**1.6** Nevertheless employers in the retail sector have a responsibility to ensure that a safe work environment is provided. For example, precautions need to be taken to prevent/combat accidental spills or other incidents involving hazardous substances.

**1.7** It must be emphasised that the exemptions for the retail sector apply *only* to hazardous substances in consumer packages which are intended for retail sale, will not be opened on the retailers' or retail warehouse operators' premises and hold less than 30 kilograms or 30 litres.

**Note:** Where these substances are used for other activities in retail operations, all the provisions of the national model regulations and national code of practice apply.

**1.8** All labels for hazardous substances have to list the name of the supplier. As retailers are not required to distribute MSDS, it would be useful for retail outlets to be able to inform people purchasing hazardous substances for use at work that the supplier on the label will provide a MSDS on request.

**1.9** Sectors of the retail industry handling hazardous substances include:

- department and bulk stores;
- petrol stations;
- supermarkets and grocery shops;
- chemical shops;
- newsagents and stationers;
- pool chemical supply shops;
- timber merchants;
- paint shops;
- hydroponics chemical supply shops;
- plant nurseries;
- hardware and plumbing merchants; and
- electronics shops.

**1.10** Some substances sold or distributed by these service outlets are hazardous. These products or some of their ingredients are hazardous substances. The National Commission's *List of Designated Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:10005(1994)]<sup>3</sup> could provide useful guidance to identify ingredients that are hazardous substances in products such as:

- adhesives and sealants;
- garden and pet supplies;
- cleaning agents and detergents;
- pesticides;
- paints;
- agricultural and veterinary chemicals; and
- other chemicals.

**1.11** A list of the common hazardous substances carried by the retail sector is given at Appendix 1.

**1.12** Retail sector employees often perform a wide range of work activities involving hazardous substances as part of their duties. Such work includes:

- warehousing;
- stock distribution and pricing;
- customer service and check-out operation;

- waste disposal;
- handling leaking containers;
- cleaning up spills;
- opening and mixing;
- sorting; and
- wrapping.

**1.13** When working with hazardous substances, important issues that need to be considered include:

- (a) awareness of potential hazard;
- (b) education and training;
- (c) spill control; and
- (d) correct storage.

**1.14** The most common risk encountered is exposure to leaks, spills and subsequent disposal of hazardous substances.

**1.15** Commonwealth, State and Territory dangerous goods\* legislation should be referred to in spill control and product separation.

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\* Dangerous goods are classes of substances that are regulated in relation to an immediate hazard. Dangerous goods are explosive, flammable, corrosive, chemically reactive, highly combustible, acutely toxic, radioactive or infectious. Some hazardous substances are also classified as dangerous goods.

## 2. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**2.1** Retailers and retail warehouse operators storing, handling and selling hazardous substances have a duty of care as employers under occupational health and safety legislation. This is to ensure that their employees are safe from injury and risks to health while they are at the workplace.

**Note:** In addition to the above, employers in the retail sector have obligations under Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation to ensure that the health of non-employees in the workplace is not adversely effected.

Because this guidance note deals with hazardous substances, the duties and responsibilities detail provisions relating to the health effects of these substances. While physicochemical effects, that is, flammability, explosive nature, etc are not specifically covered, these properties are described in the MSDS of those hazardous substances that are dangerous goods.

Although this guidance note does not address those dangerous goods which are not also hazardous substances, there are labelling requirements for dangerous goods under the Australian Transport Advisory Council's *Australian Code for the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road and Rail*<sup>4</sup> (ADG Code) which will provide useful guidance to the retail sector.

### RETAILERS' AND RETAIL WAREHOUSE OPERATORS' DUTIES AS EMPLOYERS

**2.2** Retailers and retail warehouse operators have the following responsibilities *as employers*:

- (a) Ensure that all containers of hazardous substances are appropriately labelled. This includes the product package and any in process or decanting containers. These containers shall remain correctly labelled until they are empty and cleaned.
- (b) Carry out assessments for hazardous substances used in the workplace and undertake any subsequent action that may result from the assessment.
- (c) Be aware of their obligations under the provisions in dangerous goods regulations where a hazardous substances is a dangerous good.
- (d) Induct and train all staff required to handle hazardous substances.
- (e) If required, ensure that a register is kept and maintained. The register shall:
  - (i) contain:
    - a list of all hazardous substances used in the workplace,
    - a MSDS for all hazardous substances used in the workplace, and
    - notification of certain assessments (*see* Chapter 5); and
  - (ii) be readily accessible to all employees with the potential for exposure to hazardous substances.

**Note:** Although a register is not required for a workplace where hazardous substances are not used or due to an exemption, it would be prudent to keep and maintain one. *See* the further note later in this section.

- (f) Ensure that MSDS:
  - (i) are obtained before or on the first supply of a hazardous substance to the workplace; and
  - (ii) are provided by the supplier for all hazardous substances used in the workplace.

**Note:** Employers (retailers and retail warehouse operators) are *exempt* from the above register and MSDS provisions for hazardous substances in consumer packages which are intended for retail sale, will not be opened on the retailers' or retail warehouse operators' premises and hold less than 30 kilograms or 30 litres.

- (g) Obtain a MSDS for all hazardous substances used in work activities, including retail packages which are opened, in a retail or retail warehouse facility. This includes paint tins opened for the purposes of tinting and mixing. Where a single MSDS from a manufacturer of two or more similar surface coating products (paints, lacquers and varnishes) provides complete and accurate information for each in accordance with the *National Code of Practice for the Preparation of Material Safety Data Sheets* [NOHSC:2011(1994)]<sup>5</sup>, that single MSDS may be used.
- (h) Ensure that all MSDS are readily available to employees with the potential for exposure to those substances.

**2.3** Accountability for ensuring health and safety rests with the employer. However, the employer may authorise another, such as a supervisor, to carry out specific activities.

**2.4** To ensure that the items in section 2.2 are properly understood, everyone, including the management at the workplace, should be trained in occupational health and safety issues relevant to their roles.

## SUPPLIERS' DUTIES

**2.5** Parties supplying hazardous substances to the retail sector have responsibilities to provide relevant information as set out below:

- (a) Ensure that all containers of hazardous substances supplied for use at work are appropriately labelled.
- (b) Produce, review and revise MSDS for all hazardous substances they supply. Suppliers must also keep MSDS up to date, reviewing them at least every five years.
- (c) Provide a current MSDS for a hazardous substance on the first supply of a hazardous substance and on request.

**Note:** Suppliers are *exempt* from providing a current MSDS on the first supply of hazardous substances in consumer packages which are intended for retail sale, will not be opened on the retailers' or retail warehouse operators' premises and hold less than 30 kilograms or 30 litres.

## PURCHASER

**2.6** It is the responsibility of the purchaser to obtain a MSDS from the supplier to fulfil any obligations the purchaser may have under the national model regulations and national code of practice.

### **3. CONSULTATION**

**3.1** Retailers and retail warehouse operators should consult with employees and employee representatives when identifying, assessing and controlling risks associated with the use and handling of hazardous substances in the workplace.

**3.2** Consultation should occur at the planning and design stages of the management of hazardous substances. This will help to ensure that risks associated with work practices involving hazardous substances are kept to a minimum.

**3.3** Consultation should address:

- (a) the introduction of new hazardous substances into the workplace;
- (b) the assessment of hazardous substances;
- (c) the control of hazardous substances; and
- (d) induction and training.

## 4. INDUCTION AND TRAINING

**4.1** Subsection 10(1) of the national model regulations states that 'Employers shall provide induction and on-going training to all employees with the potential for exposure to hazardous substances in relation to those substances in the workplace'. Induction of all new employees handling hazardous substances shall include familiarising them with the health effects of such substances. On-going training should be provided to all employees involved with the handling of hazardous substances.

**4.2** Persons storing, handling and selling hazardous substances have a duty of care in accordance with Commonwealth, State and Territory occupational health and safety legislation to carry out their tasks in a safe and efficient manner so that they do not cause harm or injury to themselves or others.

**4.3** As a minimum, the employer should ensure that employees are able to identify the following information from labels or MSDS:

- (a) **Signal word(s)**, such as 'Flammable', which indicate the relative degree of severity of the hazard.
- (b) **Risk label(s)** for Dangerous Goods Classes and subsidiary risks which indicate a major hazard or other hazard posed by a substance and also apply to those hazardous substances that are dangerous goods.
- (c) **Product name(s)** which identifies the substance in the most appropriate manner possible.
- (d) **Risk phrase(s)** which provides notice of the hazards present with the normal, or reasonably foreseeable, handling of the substance, for example, 'Irritating to eyes, respiratory system and skin' or 'May cause sensitisation by inhalation and skin contact'.
- (e) **Safety phrase(s)**, such as 'To clean the floor and all objects contaminated by this material, use - [material to be specified by the manufacturer]' or 'Never add water to this product', which provide information on safe storage, handling and personal protection in case of spills. This type of information would make the employee aware of the safety provisions needed in case of an accident.
- (f) **First aid procedures**, such as 'Wash exposed skin with plenty of warm water' or 'Remove contaminated clothing', which are needed where contact or exposure to the hazardous substance warrants immediate treatment.
- (g) **Safe handling information** for storage, spills and disposal.
- (h) **Caution or warning statements or word(s)**, such as 'Not to be taken' or 'Burns skin or throat', which indicate that the substance is poisonous or harmful as defined in the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Standard for the Uniform Scheduling of Drugs and Poisons*<sup>6</sup> and a hazardous substance.

## 5. ASSESSMENT

**5.1** The *National Model Regulations for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:1005(1994)]<sup>1</sup> require that a 'suitable and sufficient' assessment is made of the risks to health created by work involving potential exposure to hazardous substances. An assessment is the critical appraisal of the use of the hazardous substance in the workplace. The main elements of a 'suitable and sufficient' assessment are as follows:

- (a) identification of hazardous substances in the workplace;
- (b) obtaining information about the nature of the health hazards of the hazardous substances identified in the workplace; and
- (c) identification of the risk of exposure to persons in the workplace to hazardous substances and determining the risk to their health.

**5.2** The National Commission's *Guidance Note for the Assessment of Health Risks Arising from the Use of Hazardous Substances in the Workplace* [NOHSC:3017(1994)]<sup>7</sup> is a useful reference for retailers and retail warehouse operators when assessing work undertaken on their premises. The flow chart from that publication describing the health assessment process is reproduced at Appendix 2 of this guidance note.

**5.3** It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that an assessment is made. It should be carried out by the employer or manager, with the cooperation of the relevant employees in the organisation, including input where appropriate from health and safety committees and/or health and safety representatives. A person with special expertise may be required to assist with the assessment.

### IDENTIFICATION OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

**5.4** The first step of the assessment process is to identify *all* the hazardous substances in the workplace. This can be done by referring to:

- (a) labels;
- (b) stock-lists;
- (c) inventories;
- (d) MSDS; and
- (e) the National Commission's *List of Designated Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:10005(1994)]<sup>3</sup>.

### REVIEW OF INFORMATION ABOUT HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

**5.5** The next step is to obtain information about the health effects of the hazardous substances in the workplace such as routes of exposure into the body, recommended control measures and other actions to prevent or minimise risk.



**5.6** The primary sources of this information are MSDS and labels provided by the suppliers. Additional sources of information are:

- (a) registers;
- (b) codes of practice;
- (c) technical references, that is, textbooks, trade journals, Australian Standards, etc; and
- (d) experience and information from previous use of substances or process.

**Note:** A label can be sufficient information for the assessment of work where hazardous substances are in consumer packages.

## **IDENTIFY THE RISK OF EXPOSURE**

**5.7** The final step in the assessment process is identifying the risk of exposure to persons in the workplace. This can be done by making a 'walk-through' inspection of the work areas.

**5.8** The inspection will necessitate checking specific tasks of the employees involved in handling hazardous substances to identify those in which exposure could occur.

**5.9** To identify those tasks, retailers should do the following during the inspection:

- (a) Consult with employees, where possible, to use their experience which may indicate situations where exposure to hazardous substances may occur.
- (b) Discuss with employees work practices and procedures. For example, they could describe what happens when an accidental spill occurs.
- (c) Consider the ways in which exposure may occur during handling or use, for example:
  - (i) breathing in the vapour or dust;
  - (ii) direct contact with skin or the eyes; and
  - (iii) absorption through the skin either directly or from contact with contaminated surfaces or clothing.
- (d) Determine if a hazardous substance is released or emitted into the work area by noting:
  - (i) evidence of contamination such as dust fumes, substances visible on a person's clothing, odours of substances, visible leaks, spills or residues;
  - (ii) chemical splashes; and
  - (iii) employees' experience or symptoms of exposure.
- (e) Estimate and note the probability, degree, frequency and duration of exposure when hazardous substances are handled, for example, handling leaking containers and chemical spills.
- (f) Consider all persons who might be exposed who work directly with the substance, or are near to or pass through the work area in which the substance is stored or transported.

**5.10** Although hazardous substances may not be released or emitted in work areas of retail or retail warehouse facilities where they are contained in consumer packages, it would be prudent to inspect the above work areas in order to complete a thorough assessment.

**5.11** If hazardous substances are released or emitted in the work areas of the above facilities, an inspection of the workplace would be necessary.

**5.12** Risks can also be identified by analysing the records of injuries, near misses related to the use of hazardous substances and records of spills and leakages. This information can be used to identify the type of accidents and injuries and where and when they have occurred.

## **EVALUATE THE RISK TO HEALTH**

**5.13** To evaluate the level of risk to health, it will be necessary to draw together the information gathered about the hazardous substances used and the information collected in the work evaluation. In summary, this will involve considering:

- (a) the nature and severity of the hazard for each substance;
- (b) the degree of exposure to it in the workplace; and
- (c) whether existing control measures adequately control exposure. The risk may be generally described as 'not significant' or 'significant'.

**5.14** If the work evaluation shows that hazardous substances are already or can be readily controlled in accordance with the MSDS and there is not a significant risk to health, then the assessment is complete. The assessment can be regarded as 'simple and obvious', that is, the risks are 'not significant' now and are not likely to increase in the future. *See* section 5.18.

**5.15** However, if after the assessment and evaluation there is:

- (a) a 'significant' risk to health; or
- (b) uncertainty as to what the risk is,

a more detailed assessment may be required. *See* sections 5.21-5.23.

**5.16** The steps to complete a detailed assessment are shown in Appendix 2. It may be necessary to use the *Guidance Note for the Assessment of Health Risks Arising from the Use of Hazardous Substances in the Workplace* [NOHSC:3017(1994)]<sup>7</sup> to complete a detailed assessment.

## **TYPES OF ASSESSMENT**

**5.17** The assessment process for hazardous substances can be simple and obvious, generic and/or detailed depending on the particular workplace and substances used.

### **Simple and Obvious**

**5.18** A simple and obvious assessment is a straightforward assessment. It consists of:

- (a) Reviewing the MSDS or equivalent information for hazardous substances used in the workplace.
- (b) Identifying risks involved in their use.

- (c) Evaluating the above information and risks.
- (d) Concluding that the hazardous substances in the workplace are already or can be readily controlled in accordance with the MSDS and there is not a significant risk to health. For example, a cleaning agent may have potential skin irritation effects while being non-volatile, that is, low vapour generation. The assessment process is simple in that being aware of the MSDS or label information, workers who handle this substance and may come into contact with it will require the control measure of gloves in order to protect the skin. Without such an assessment, skin irritation when handling the cleaning agent could have occurred.

### **Generic**

**5.19** For the retail sector, simple generic assessment procedures are possible, that is, ones which apply to many similar workplaces or situations. In a generic assessment, an assessment is made (using the process in Chapter 2 of the National Commission's *Guidance Note for the Assessment of Health Risks Arising from the Use of Hazardous Substances in the Workplace* [NOHSC:3017(1994)]<sup>7</sup> of a representative workplace or job, and this assessment is then used for the similar work activities which involve comparable tasks. For example, a single employer might do a generic assessment for a number of workplaces, for example, a chain of fast food outlets. Alternatively, a generic assessment might be done by an industry or trade association on behalf of its members with essentially identical workplaces, for example, service stations.

**5.20** It is important to note that it is the employer's responsibility to ensure that if a generic assessment is made, the work being assessed is the same as that described in the generic assessment.

### **Detailed**

**5.21** In certain workplaces in the retail sector, a more detailed assessment may be required. It will be required when there is a 'significant risk' to health or uncertainty as to the risk of exposure or health. For example, a detailed assessment may be required for a dry cleaning shop where some of the clothing to be cleaned is processed on the premises. After the assessment team has determined what cleaning chemicals are hazardous substances, obtained more information about them and inspected the workplace, they may not be in a position to clearly evaluate the risk to a dry cleaning worker's health. Therefore, they are uncertain about the risks to health. The team should then seek more information or engage an expert to help them evaluate the risk. After expert advice or more information, the assessment team is able to determine in this instance that the risk to health is 'not significant'. At that point the evaluation would be noted along with the relevant assessment information in the register and the assessment is complete.

**5.22** In order to complete a detailed assessment, further decisions will need to be taken to:

- (a) eliminate the uncertainty of any risks;
- (b) select appropriate control measures;
- (c) ensure that control measures are properly used and maintained;
- (d) arrange induction and training; and
- (e) determine if monitoring or health surveillance are required.

**5.23** The National Commission's *Guidance Note for the Assessment of Health Risks Arising from the Use of Hazardous Substances in the Workplace* [NOHSC:3017(1994)]<sup>7</sup> provides useful guidance to complete a detailed assessment for those situations that may require it in the retail sector.

## **RECORDING OF ASSESSMENT REPORTS**

**5.24** If upon completion of the assessment process:

- (a) the evaluation of the risk is:
  - (i) nil - no hazardous substances are used in the workplace, or
  - (ii) 'not significant' to health; or
- (b) the assessment is 'simple and obvious',

a formal note shall be made and kept in the register (or with other readily available operational documents in the workplace if a register is not kept) that includes the date, confirmation that each step of the assessment has been completed. MSDS or equivalent information reviewed, notation that controls are in place and a list of members of the assessment team.

**5.25** Should the evaluation indicate that there is a 'significant risk' to health, a formal report shall be made. The National Commission's *Guidance Note for the Assessment of Health Risks Arising from the Use of Hazardous Substances in the Workplace* [NOHSC:3017(1994)]<sup>7</sup> provides a sample format for the report. The report shall be readily accessible to employees who are potentially at risk of exposure to any hazardous substance. The report might be most accessible to employees if it is kept in the register.

**5.26** All workplace assessments shall be reviewed at a maximum of every five years from the date of origin or review.

**5.27** It should be noted that some hazardous substances are dangerous goods and for this reason they should be assessed for their compatibility of storage with other goods. Assessments for the above should take into consideration the dangerous goods requirements of the relevant government authority. For example, pesticides should not be stored with food stuffs.

**5.28** The need for precautions against breakages and spillages should be assessed as follows:

- (a) identify handling tasks in which containers may be damaged, for example, by forklifts in loading operations;
- (b) consider the height at which hazardous substances in glass containers are displayed, taking into account statutory and labelling requirements; and
- (c) check whether hazardous substances are stored in accordance with the directions on the label, in the MSDS and any additional requirements of the dangerous goods authorities in the Commonwealth, States and Territories or relevant statutory requirements.

**5.29** An assessment should be used to determine the specific training needs of workers who handle hazardous substances and may come into contact with them.

## 6. CONTROL

### EXPOSURE OF EMPLOYEES

**6.1** The employer shall ensure that exposure of employees to hazardous substances is prevented. Where that is not practicable, exposure shall be adequately controlled to minimise health risks.

**6.2** In order to reduce exposure and the risk associated with exposure that may occur in a specific work activity, the following hierarchy of control measures may be applied, where practicable:

- (a) **Elimination** - eliminating a work activity involving the handling or use of a hazardous substances that is not essential.
- (b) **Substitution** - substituting a less hazardous substance, the same substance in a less hazardous form or the same substance in a less hazardous process.
- (c) **Separation** - when storing hazardous substances or dangerous goods, consider the need to keep chemically incompatible substances away from each other. The MSDS should have information about safe storage.
- (d) **Engineering controls** - such as exhaust ventilation to extract dusts and fumes.
- (e) **Encouraging safe work practices** such as:
  - (i) reducing staff contact with hazardous substances;
  - (ii) ensuring that all staff handling hazardous substances are adequately trained;
  - (iii) providing appropriate equipment for stacking shelves and handling stock; and
  - (iv) prohibiting smoking and consumption of food by persons entering areas where hazardous substances are stored or used.
- (f) **Protective measures** - using personal protection equipment such as:
  - (i) goggles approved to Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1337 *Eye Protectors for Industrial Applications*<sup>8</sup>,
  - (ii) respirators approved to Australian Standard AS 1716 *Respiratory Protective Devices*<sup>9</sup>, and
  - (iii) PVA or PVC gloves.

### STORAGE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

**6.3** Premises where hazardous chemicals are stored should be adequately ventilated. Some hazardous substances are dangerous goods and should be stored accordingly. For example, methanol should be stored in accordance with Australian Standard AS 1940 *The Storage and Handling of Flammable and Combustible Liquids*<sup>10</sup>.

**6.4** The lighting level in accordance with Australian Standard AS 1680.1 *Interior Lighting Part 1*<sup>11</sup> should be sufficient to allow easy reading of product labels and routine inspection of stored products.

**6.5** Aisles and emergency exits shall be kept clear at all times in accordance with statutory requirements.

## 7. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

**7.1** Employers should provide instructions for staff on control of spills and leaks. Depending on the substances, the instructions may be as follows:

- A spillage or leak of a hazardous substance should be reported to the Duty Manager or Duty Supervisor. This person should, subject to the severity of the incident, arrange for the area to be cordoned off and warning signs displayed.
- All hazardous substance spills should be cleared up immediately, either by direct action or by contacting relevant authorities.
- Check the label of an unbroken container or, if available, a generic emergency procedure to identify any special safety precautions which need to be taken. If this information is insufficient, then consult the MSDS.
- Using the cleaning and protective equipment provided, clean up the spillage, thoroughly taking care to avoid exposure to the hazardous substance on skin, clothing or by inhalation.
- Ensure that the clean up material is disposed of properly. When in doubt, seek advice from the appropriate authorities or the supplier (refer to the label) rather than flushing the material down drains, sinks or toilets.
- Customers and staff should not be allowed into the area of the spillage, nor should the notice be removed until all of the spilt substance is cleaned up and odours dissipated.

**7.2** Each store carrying hazardous substances should have an emergency clean-up kit. It may comprise the following:

- Diatomaceous earth bags (kitty litter) or sand;
- mop;
- suitable disposal container;
- shovel;
- yard broom;
- dustpan and brush;
- lengths of rope approximately four metres long (for cordoning-off purposes);
- signs reading '**Warning, Spillage - Do Not Enter**' in red on a white background;
- yellow or orange cones with the appropriate sign attached to the top;
- appropriate goggles that meet Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1337 *Eye Protectors for Industrial Applications*<sup>8</sup>;

- sufficient number of suitable protective gloves;
- if required, appropriate respirator and filter that meets Australian Standard AS 1716 *Respiratory Protective Devices*<sup>9</sup>; and
- a generic emergency procedure that is easy to read and laminated.

These should be kept as a kit and the storage location should be shown to all staff members.

**7.3** All staff who have the potential to be exposed to accidental spills of hazardous substances should be trained in how to clean up emergency spills using the emergency clean up kit.

**7.4** If personal contact with a hazardous substance is made, read the label, MSDS or a generic emergency procedure, if available, for first aid advice. Seek medical attention should it be necessary.

**7.5** For hazardous substances which are dangerous goods, retailers and retail warehouse operators should be aware of dangerous goods requirements relating to the above substances.





## TYPES OF PRODUCTS WHICH MAY BE CONSIDERED AS HAZARDOUS

**A1.1** The following appendix is included only as a guide to the types of products which may be considered as hazardous. To determine if a substance is hazardous, refer to the *List of Designated Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:10005(1994)]<sup>3</sup> or *Approved Criteria for Classifying Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:1008(1994)]<sup>12</sup>. The *List of Designated Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:10005(1994)]<sup>3</sup> contains a list of entries which can also be used to determine if an ingredient of a substance is hazardous.

***Oil based paints, paint strippers (PS)  
paint thinners (PT) and  
anti fouling paints (AFA):***

- methylene chloride;
- pigments:
  - cadmium;
  - lead;
  - chromium;
  - resins;
- solvents;
  - dichloroethane;
  - turpentine (PT);
  - ammonia;
  - dicholobenzene;
  - butanol;
  - propylene glycol;
- extenders;
- plasticisers;
- organo copper compounds (AFA);
- petroleum spirit/turpentine (PT);
- varnishes:
  - epoxy resin.

***Garden and pet supplies:***

- algaecides;
- fungicides;
- weed-killers;
- rodenticide;
- insecticides;
- miticides;
- herbicides.

***Water and pool chemicals:***

- calcium hypochlorite;
- liquid aluminium chloride;
- trichloroisocyanuric acid;
- sodium bisulphate;
- sodium carbonate;
- sodium hypochlorite.

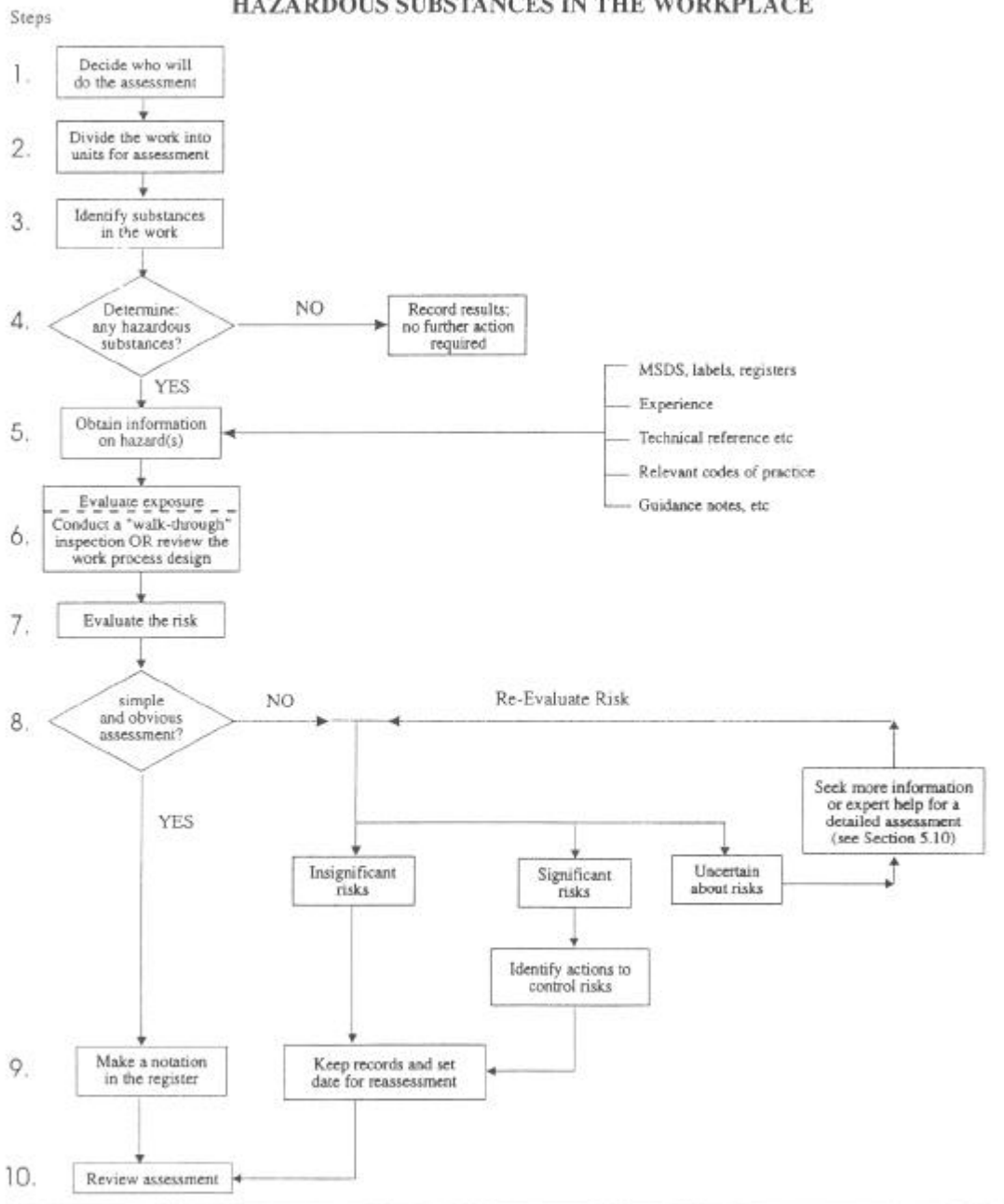
***Cleaning agents and detergents:***

- bleach;
- sodium hypochlorite (>5% chlorine);
- mould removers;
- surface (abrasive) cleaners;
- all purpose cleaners;
- carpet cleaners:
  - glycol ethers;
- drain and oven cleaners:
  - caustic soda;
- laundry detergents:
  - phosphates;
  - silicates;
- dishwashing detergents;
- dry cleaning agents:
  - tetrachloro ethylene;
- prewash cleaners:
  - trichloroethane;
- degreasing agents;
- metal cleaners:
  - ammonia;
- polishing agents:
  - floor and furniture polishers;
  - naphtha;
  - nitrobenzene;
  - formaldehyde;
- toilet cleaners:
  - para dichlorobenzene;
- window cleaners:
  - glycol ether.

***Other chemicals:***

- solvents:
  - acetone;
  - methanol;
- sealants and adhesives:
  - glues:
    - urea formaldehyde;
    - epoxy resin;
    - toluene, xylene;
- correction fluid;
- batteries:
  - lead;
  - acid;
  - cadmium;
- refrigerants:
  - ammonia;
- antifreeze:
  - ethylene glycol;
  - methylated spirit;
- silver-fish repellent:
  - naphthalene (moth balls);
- pesticides/insecticides:
  - organochlorines;
  - organophosphates;
  - fumigants;
  - carbamates.

# **AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH RISKS ARISING FROM THE USE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES IN THE WORKPLACE**



Note:

- 1) Some steps may not be necessary for smaller workplaces.
- 2) Individual steps may need to be repeated to complete the assessment.
- 3) Specialist help may be required for some of the assessment steps.

## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

### **Competent person**

In relation to work, means a person who is suitably qualified (by experience and/or training) to carry out the kind of work for which the person is required or in which the person is engaged.

### **Consumer package**

Means a package which is intended for retail display and sale. It may be transported and distributed as part of a larger consolidated package consisting of a number of identical consumer packages.

### **Emergency services**

Shall be defined on a jurisdiction by jurisdiction basis with the intention of including all fire fighting services and organisations with functional responsibility for emergency response.

### **Employee**

Means an individual who works under a contract of employment, apprenticeship or traineeship.

### **Employee representative**

Includes an employee member of a health and safety committee where established in the workplace, or a person elected to represent a group of employees on health and safety matters.

### **Employer**

Means a corporation or an individual who employs persons under a contract of employment, apprenticeship or traineeship.

**Note:** The definition of employer includes the self-employed which means a person who works for gain, other than under a contract of employment, apprenticeship or traineeship, whether or not that person employs others.

### **Exposure**

Means the intensity, frequency and duration of any contact with an agent that is present in the environment.

### **Hazardous substance**

Means a substance which:

- (a) is listed on the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission's *list of Designated Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:10005(1994)]<sup>3</sup>; or

- (b) has been classified as a hazardous substance by the manufacturer or importer in accordance with the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission's *Approved Criteria for Classifying Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:1008(1994)]<sup>12</sup>.

**Label**

Means any information on a container which identifies the substance in the container, identifies whether the substance is hazardous and provides basic information about the safe use and handling of the substance.

**Manifest**

Means an emergency services manifest which lists, describes and illustrates the type, quantity and location of hazardous substances stored on a particular premises.

**Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)**

Means a document that describes the properties and uses of a substance, that is, identity, chemical and physical properties, health hazard information, precautions for use and safe handling information.

**Purchaser**

Means a person or employer who acquires an article or substance by the payment of money or its equivalent.

**Register**

Means a listing of all hazardous substances which are used or produced in the workplace and the available MSDS for hazardous substances, as required by the National Occupational Health and Safety Commission's *National Model Regulations for the Control of Workplace Hazardous Substances* [NOHSC:1005(1994)]<sup>1</sup>.

**Retailer**

Means a person or business who sells articles and substances to members of the public who themselves are not engaged in any further resale of that article or substance.

**Retail warehouse operator**

Means a person who operates a warehouse where unopened packaged goods intended for retail sale are held on the premises.

**Risk**

Means the likelihood that a substance will cause harm in the circumstance of its use.

**Signal words**

Means word(s) prominently displayed on labels of hazardous substances to indicate the relative severity of hazard.

**Substance**

Means any natural or artificial entity, composite material, mixture or formulation other than an article.

**Substitution**

The process of replacement of a substance with a less hazardous substance, the same substance in a less hazardous form or the same substance in a less hazardous process.

**Supplier**

Means an importer, manufacturer, wholesaler or distributor of workplace substances, but excludes a retailer.

**Use**

Means the production, handling, storage, transport or disposal of substances in the workplace. Substances carried in compliance with the ADO Code<sup>4</sup>, the Inter-Governmental Maritime Consultative Organisation's *International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code*<sup>13</sup>, the International Civil Aviation Organisation's *Technical Instructions for the Safe Transport of Dangerous Goods by Air*<sup>14</sup>, the International Air Transport Association's *Dangerous Goods Regulations*<sup>15</sup> or relevant Commonwealth, State or Territory legislation are excluded from this definition.

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**MEMBERSHIP OF THE WORKING PARTY ON  
THE GUIDANCE NOTE FOR THE CONTROL OF WORKPLACE  
HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES IN THE RETAIL SECTOR**

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