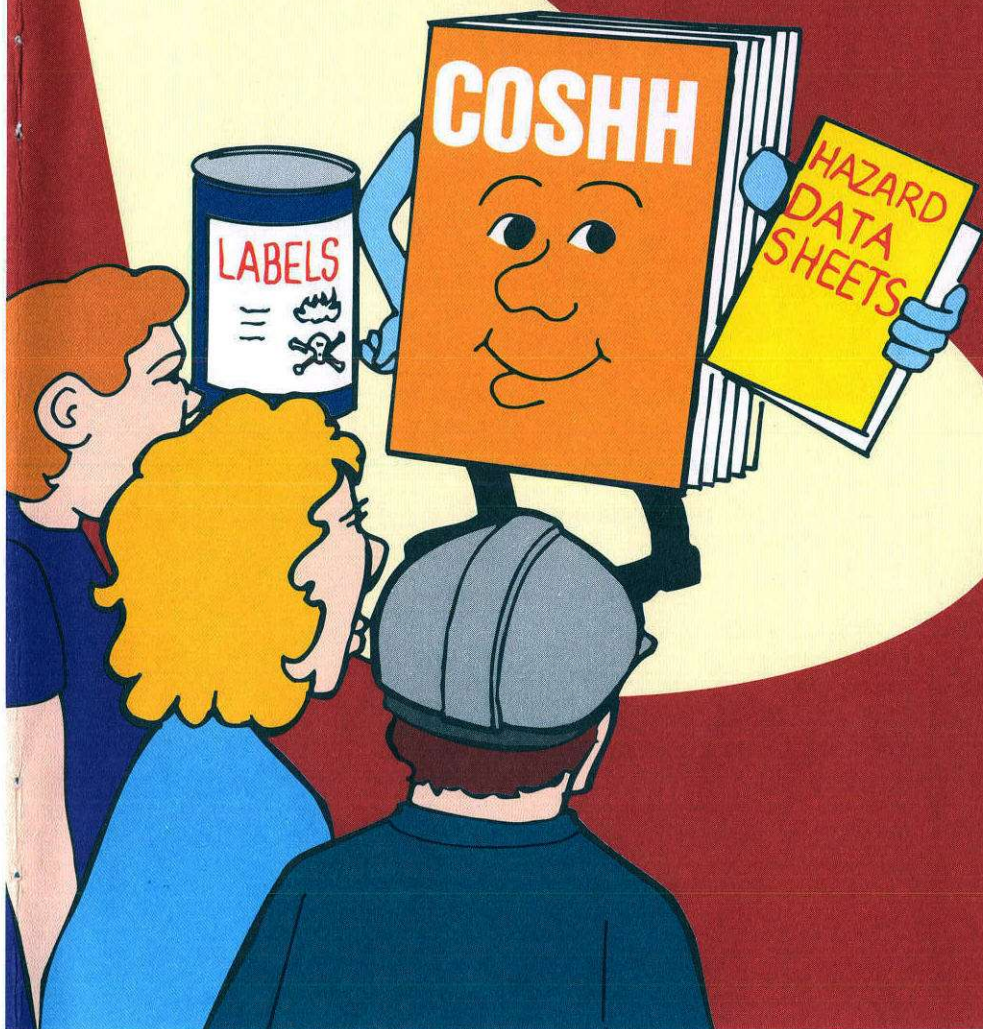


# What You Should Know About



# What is COSHH?

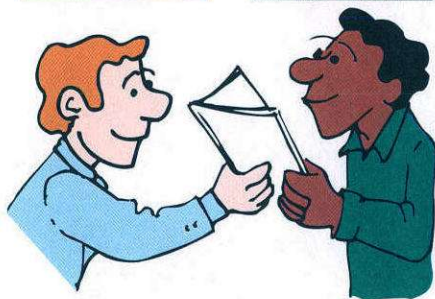
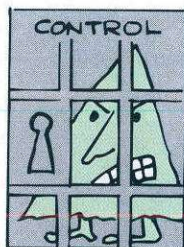
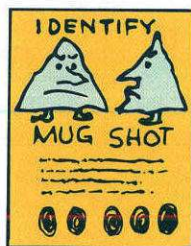
**COSHH = Control  
of  
Substances  
Hazardous to  
Health.**



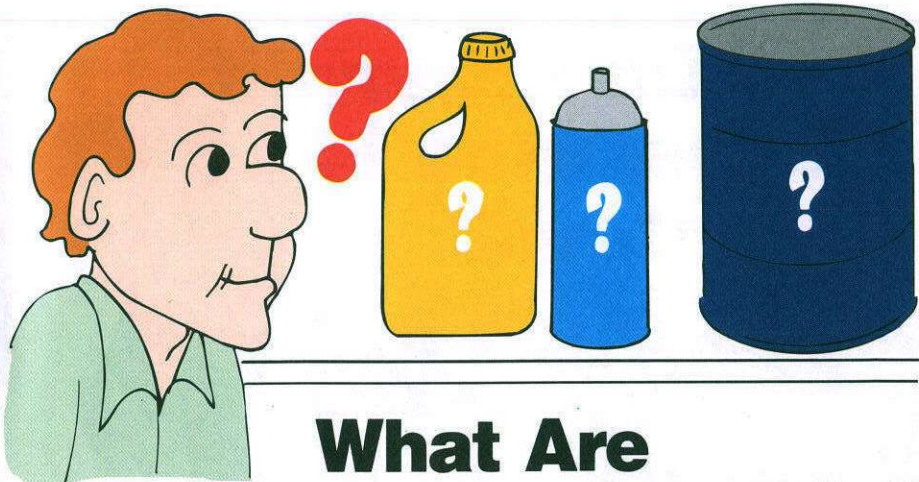
It's an important set of **regulations** designed to protect employees from risks associated with hazardous substances at work.

COSHH requires any business—factory, farm, office, or shop—that uses or creates a substance that could be a risk to employees' health to:

- Identify and control those substances
- Minimize workers' risks from exposure to those substances
- Provide the information and training you need to do your job safely.



**The information in this booklet will help you understand COSHH**—and help you learn how to protect yourself from hazardous substances at work.



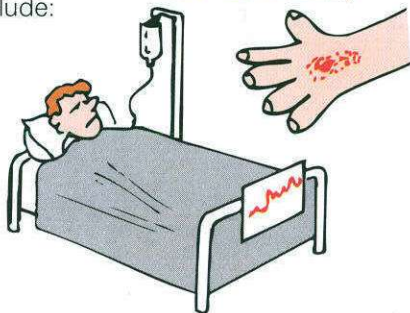
# What Are Hazardous Substances?

**A hazardous substance** is any solid, liquid, dust, fume, vapour, gas, or micro-organism that may be harmful to *your* health. Common substances like chemicals, cleaning solvents, and pesticides can be hazardous.



The types of health hazards could include:

- poisoning
- skin burns and irritation
- asphyxiation
- long-term health effects such as cancer.



**COSHH covers all hazardous substances** used, handled, processed, stored, transported, or disposed of at work. The only exceptions are asbestos, lead, materials that are harmful due solely to any radiation hazard, and substances in mines—and these are covered by their own regulations.

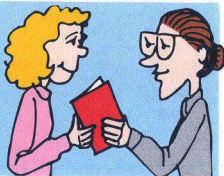
# How Do I Know if a Substance is Hazardous?



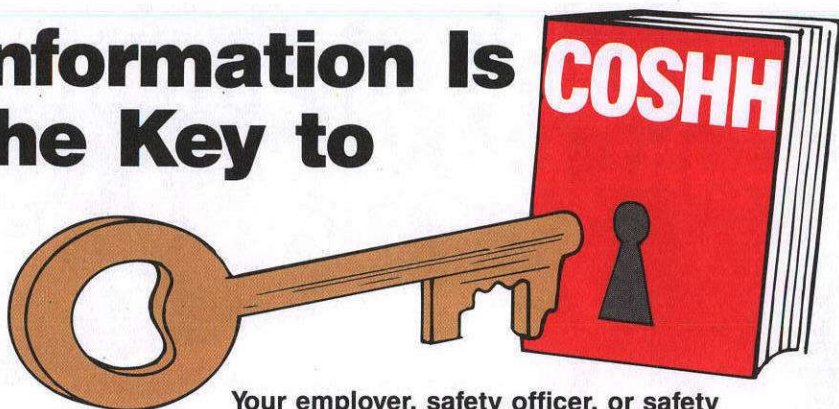
COSHH requires manufacturers, importers, and suppliers of hazardous substances to provide your employer with information on the risks of those substances, as well as precautions for safe use.

This information, which is provided on labels, data sheets, and in other formats, helps you to work with these substances properly—and safely.

**Your employer is required by COSHH** to use all this data to help inform you about the risks from the substances in your workplace. You must also be told about the precautions you must take to use them safely.



# Information Is the Key to

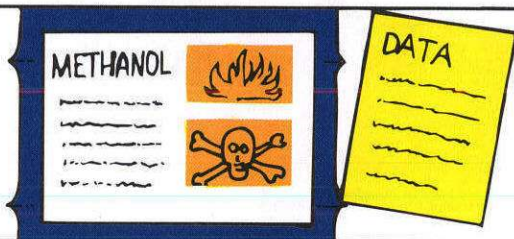


Your employer, safety officer, or safety representative will inform and train you on possible risks and appropriate safety precautions.

You'll learn about:

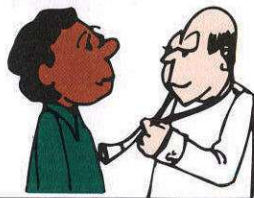
## Labels and data sheets

Where to find and how to read and interpret them.



## Health hazards

The types of hazards present and their risks to you as well as methods of preventing exposure.

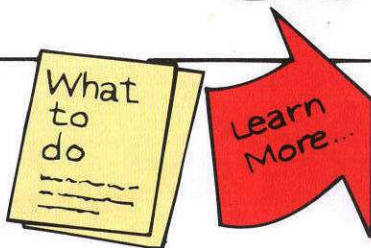


## Proper use of personal protective equipment and safe work practices



## Emergency procedures

What to do in case of a spillage, as well as first-aid information.



# Let Label Information Light the Way.



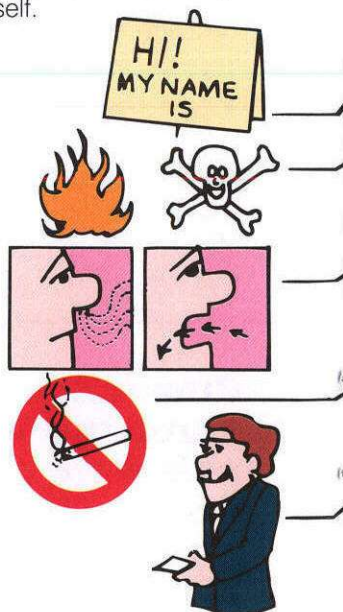
**Every container that holds a hazardous substance** must be labeled by the manufacturer.

**Labels must be in English**, and be clear, indelible, and easy to read.

**Their format may vary, but their purpose won't.** They're designed to tell you at a glance about the substance's possible hazards, and the basic steps you can take to protect yourself.

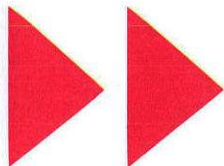
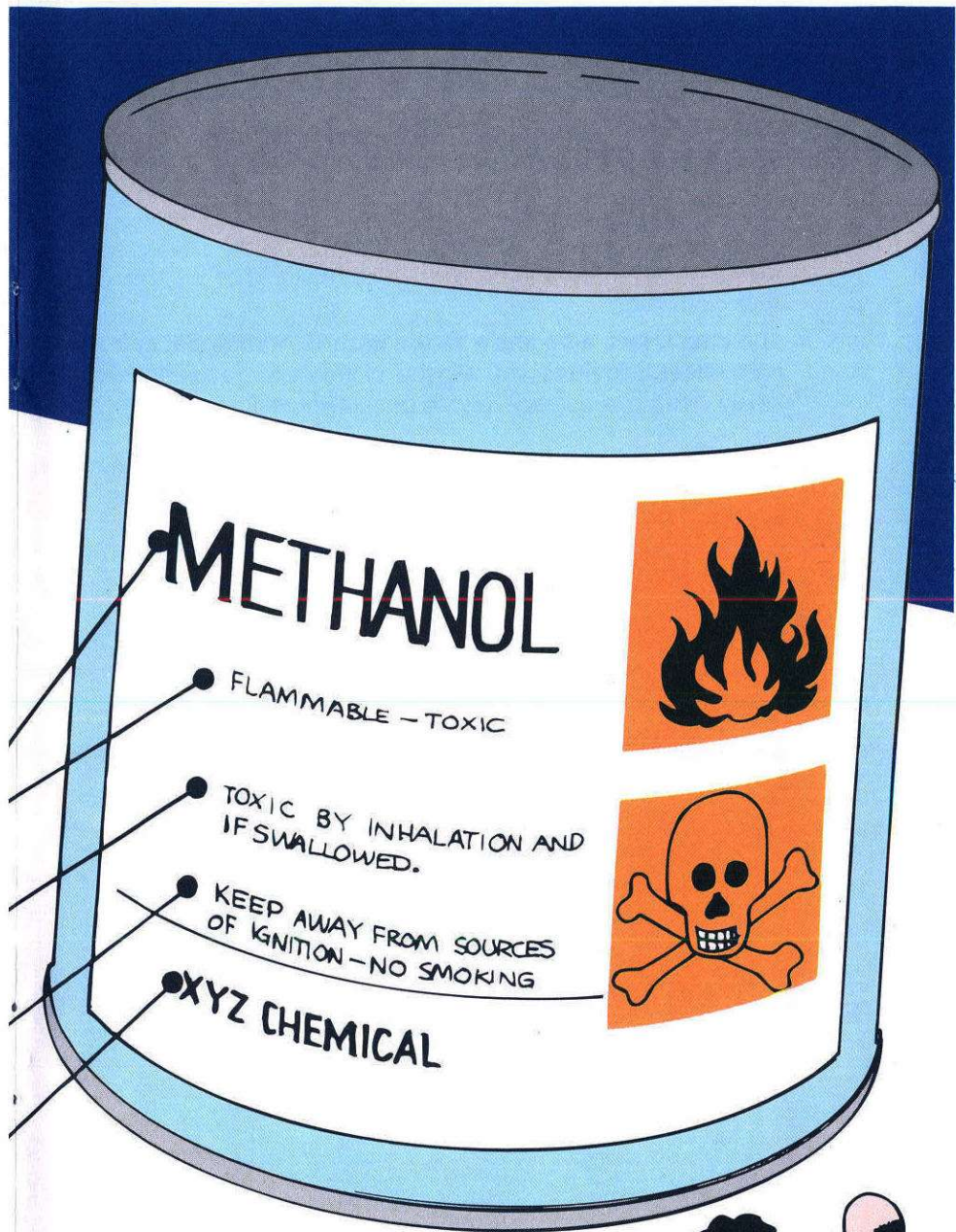
Labels contain:

- The name of the substance.
- The nature of the risk in words — Toxic, Corrosive, Explosive, Flammable — and often in symbols.
- A description of the hazard — for example, "Toxic by inhalation and if swallowed."
- Safety basics — such as, "Keep away from sources of ignition — No smoking."
- The name and address of the manufacturer, importer, wholesaler, or supplier of the substance.



Labels may also include other information such as emergency procedures to follow in case of exposure or fire.

**READ THE LABEL** before you move, handle, or open a chemical container—and follow its instructions.



If you're not sure about something, **don't guess. ASK YOUR SUPERVISOR** before you act.



# Data Sheets Provide a Wealth of Hazard and Safety Information

They'll tell you **vital details** on the substance you're working with—physical and health hazards, safety procedures, and possible emergency actions—information that will help keep you safe.

The **data sheet**, also known as the **hazard, or material safety, data sheet**, provides you with the information you need to work safely with the substance, and to protect yourself and others.

**HAZARD DATA SHEETS**

PRODUCT NAME \_\_\_\_\_

USES \_\_\_\_\_

COMPOSITION \_\_\_\_\_

PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL PROPERTIES \_\_\_\_\_

HEALTH HAZARDS \_\_\_\_\_

FIRE HAZARDS \_\_\_\_\_

STORAGE PRECAUTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

TRANSPORT PRECAUTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

HANDLING/USE PRECAUTIONS  
(including advice on personal protective equipment) \_\_\_\_\_

DISPOSAL PRECAUTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY ACTION  
Fire, spillage, first aid \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION  
Ecological hazards  
Relevant regulations  
Advice to Occupational Medical Officers  
References \_\_\_\_\_

NAME, ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER OF SUPPLIER \_\_\_\_\_

REFERENCE NUMBER, DATE OF ISSUE \_\_\_\_\_

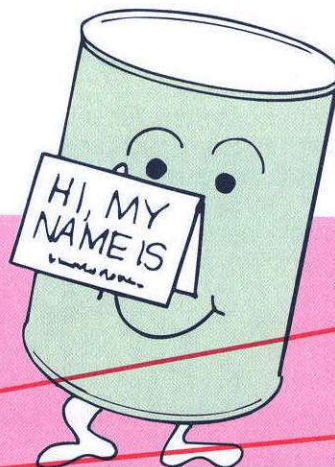


## Read the data sheet before you start a job.

Let it help you—by keeping you informed, prepared—and safe.

Here's what you'll learn:

1. **Name of the substance.**
2. **Reasonably foreseeable uses**—and cautions about possible dangerous misuses.
3. **Composition of the product.** Some substances may have more than one hazardous ingredient.
4. **Physical and chemical properties** such as:
  - Boiling point
  - Vapour pressure
  - Vapour density
  - Evaporation rates
  - Potentially dangerous reactions with other substances.



# Hazard Data Sheets

## 5. Health hazards.

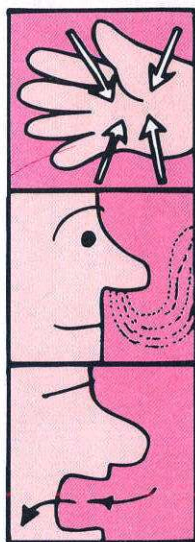
This section tells you the hazards to health from overexposure — and how the substance may enter the body.

Health hazards can be:

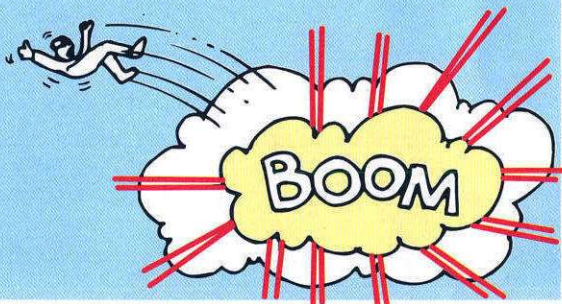
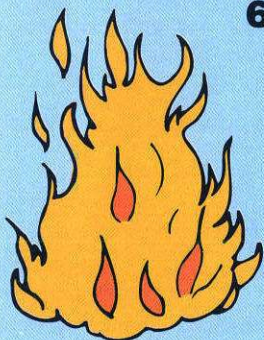
- Immediate (acute)—health problems that develop right after exposure, such as skin irritations, burns, or nausea.
- Long-term (chronic)—health problems that develop, after years, as a result of repeated, often small, exposures. Examples include lung damage, allergies, or even cancer.

There are three ways you may be exposed to a substance's health hazards:

- Skin contact
- Inhalation
- Swallowing.

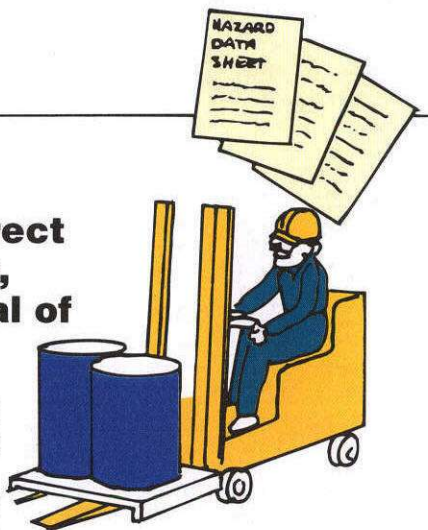


## 6. Fire and explosion hazards.

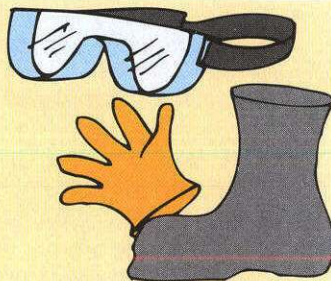


## 7. Information on correct use, handling, storage, transport, and disposal of the substance.

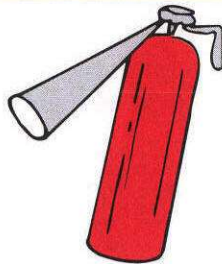
This is perhaps the most important section of the data sheet. It gives vital advice for you to follow. This includes: work or hygiene practices, such as washing thoroughly after working with the substance, as well as situations to avoid, such as enclosed spaces.



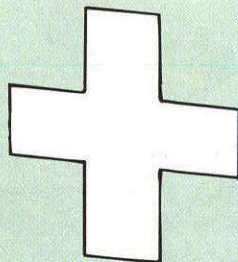
## 8. Recommended personal protection to use— protective clothing, gloves, eye protection, or respirators.



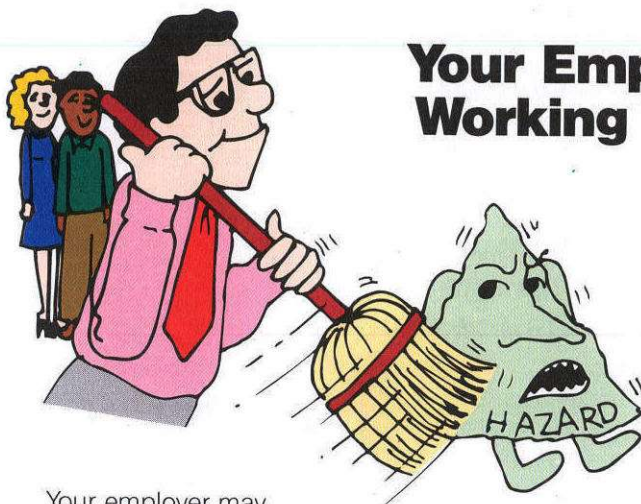
## 9. Emergency action to take in case of spills or fire, such as what absorbents or extinguishing agents to use.



## 10. First-aid techniques to follow in case of exposure, as well as information useful to a doctor or nurse.

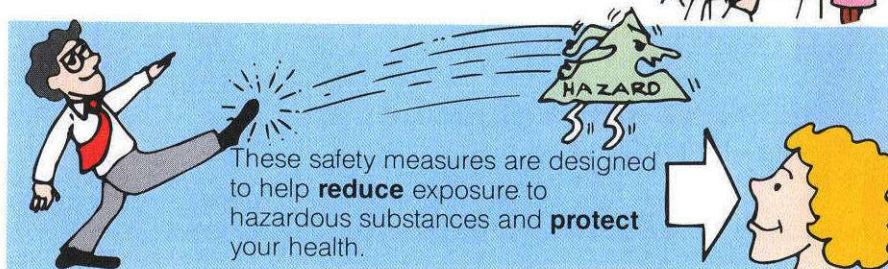
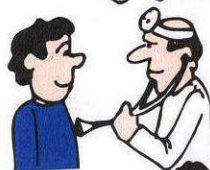
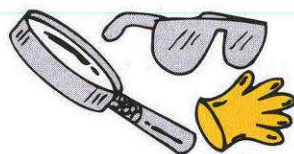


# Your Employer Is Working Hard to Keep You Safe



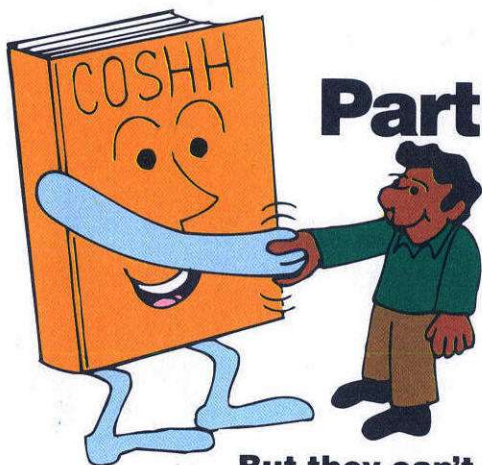
Your employer may be required by COSHH to:

- Assess workers' health risks and determine ways to remove or reduce them.
- Implement measures to control risks. For example, your employer might find substitutes for hazardous substances, change or enclose work processes, add ventilation, or where other controls are not practical, provide personal protective equipment.
- Monitor workers' exposure to risks and perform health surveillance where necessary.
- Inform, instruct, and train workers in the nature and degree of the hazard, and the precautions to take to protect themselves and others.



These safety measures are designed to help **reduce** exposure to hazardous substances and **protect** your health.

# Your Safety Requires Your Participation

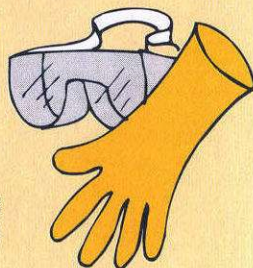
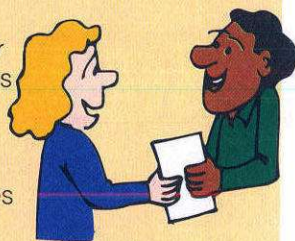
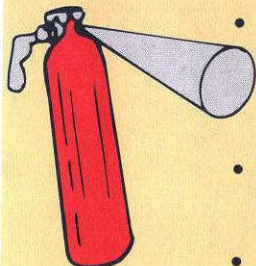
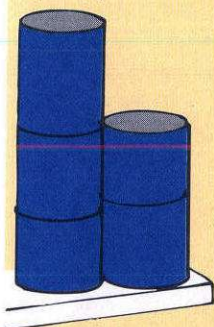


COSHH and your employer are doing a lot to remove and reduce workplace risks. They will provide you with the information, controls, procedures, and protective equipment you need to work safely.

**But they can't succeed without you.**

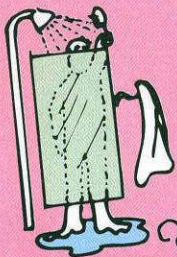
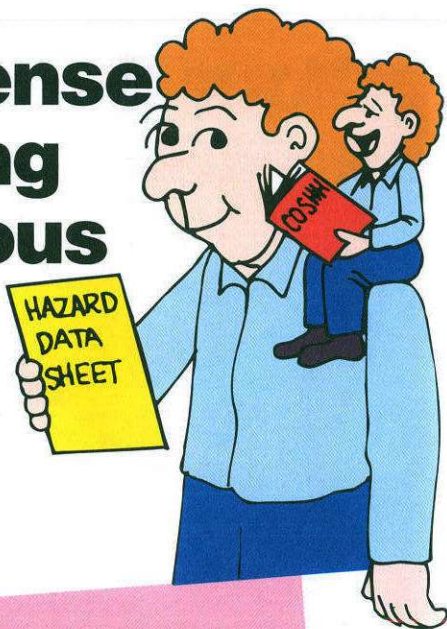
COSHH requires **you** to:

- Cooperate with your employer in meeting COSHH obligations
- Make full and proper use of control measures such as ventilation and storage facilities
- Select, wear, and store personal protective equipment properly
- Practice good hygiene and follow company rules
- Learn and follow proper means of using, handling, storing, and disposing of hazardous substances
- Know what to do in case of an emergency
- Report promptly any inadequacies or defects in control measures or protective equipment.



# Use Good Sense When Working with Hazardous Substances

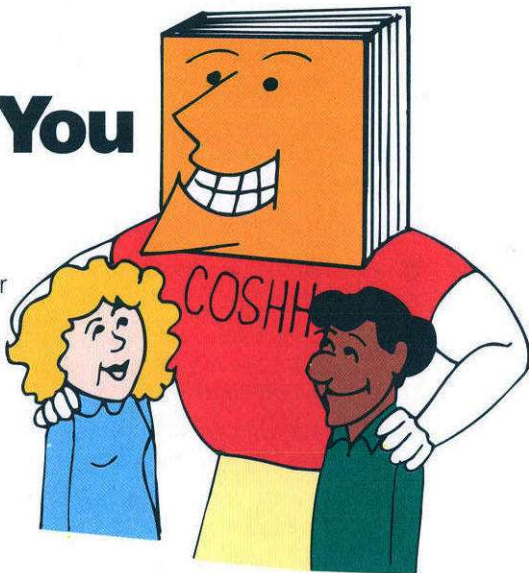
**Working safely with hazardous substances** means using the safeguards provided by your employer to protect yourself. It also means making safety a constant part of your job and your thinking.



- Use labels and data sheets to identify hazards before you start a task.
- Follow the safety precautions provided. Always follow company safety rules.
- Don't take food, beverages, or cigarettes into the work area.
- Wash thoroughly every time you leave the work area, and before handling food, beverages, cigarettes, or cosmetics.
- Disinfect and clean work clothes according to company procedure to keep hazardous substances out of uncontaminated work areas and your home.
- Don't take chances with safety.
- If in doubt, ask your supervisor.

# COSHH Protects You

Under COSHH, hazardous substances must be **identified** and their risks to your health and safety assessed. COSHH requires your employer to reduce the risks from hazardous substances at work and provide you with the information and training you need to work safely.



**It's up to you to  
learn about and  
use the  
safeguards  
provided.**

Be sure to:

Read and use the  
information on labels and  
data sheets

Follow warnings and  
instructions

Use the proper procedures  
and protective clothing and  
equipment

Learn emergency  
procedures

Practice sensible, safe,  
work habits.



# Test Your COSHH Knowledge

## QUIZ

**Directions:** Circle **T** if the statement is true  
or **F** if the statement is false.



- T F** 1. COSHH stands for Control of Substances Hazardous to Health.
- T F** 2. A hazardous substance is classified as a fume that is harmful to your health.
- T F** 3. Your employer is required to tell you about the risks from substances in your workplace and precautions you must take to use them safely.
- T F** 4. Every container that holds a hazardous substance must be labeled by the manufacturer.
- T F** 5. If you're not sure about something on a label, you should assume that it's safe to use.
- T F** 6. Data sheets provide you with information about physical and health hazards, safety procedures, and possible emergency actions.
- T F** 7. It's not necessary to read a data sheet before starting a job, but once you've used the substance, you must read the hazard sheet.
- T F** 8. The section on health hazards tells you how a substance may enter your body.
- T F** 9. The emergency action section of the data sheet tells you what to do in case of a spill or a fire.
- T F** 10. COSHH requires every employee to learn and follow safety guidelines for using, handling, storing, and disposing of hazardous substances.

Employee's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**For the correct answers, turn this page upside down.**

1. T 2. F—a hazardous substance is any solid, liquid, dust, fume, vapour, gas, or micro-organism that is harmful to your health. 3. T 4. T 5. F—if you're not sure about something on a label, ask your supervisor before you use the substance. 6. T 7. F—you should always read the data sheet before starting a job. 8. T 9. T 10. T



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