

Information for Employers and Duty Holders

Risk Assessments (COSHH Regulation 6) – Common Issues

COSHH Regulation 6

- An employer must not carry out work that is liable to expose employees to substances hazardous to health, unless;
 - A suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to health and the steps needed to comply with the COSHH Regulations has been completed by a competent person
 - The above identified steps have been implemented
- Regulation 6 (2) outlines the different aspects the risk assessment should consider
- Two-way consultation with workers and/or their safety representatives must be completed
- The risk assessment should be reviewed regularly, especially if;
 - Occupational hygiene exposure monitoring, health surveillance, or the examination and testing of engineering controls show a deterioration in control effectiveness
 - Workers etc. report a defect in control measures
 - There have been changes to the work or operating circumstances

Common Issues

A COSHH risk assessment must;

- Be task based, not substance based
- Consider all processes from raw materials handling through to housekeeping tasks
- Be carried out before the start of the process, where possible
- Consider all hazardous substances (including by-products, process generated substances, waste products, biological agents, etc.)
- Consider all routes of exposure (inhalation, skin/dermal, ingestion)
- Be carried out by a competent person with knowledge of the processes, substances, health hazards, and appropriate control measures etc.
- Include two-way worker involvement and training for workers
- Provide sufficient detail as per the list outlined in Regulation 6 (2)
- Be dynamic as work, processes or circumstances change
- Where multiple exposures may occur, consider the possible enhanced harmful effects of combined or sequential exposures

An occupational hygienist can help you to understand and apply COSHH Regulation 6 to your workplace, and assist you to ensure your risk assessments are suitable and sufficient