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Subject: VIRTUAL TOOLBOX TALK: COSHH - To all Cleaning & Property Services Colleagues

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION: VIRTUAL TOOLBOX TALK: COSHH - To Cleaning & Property Services Colleagues

Good Morning,

Hope you are well and reason you have received this email is to increase your awareness of COSHH – Control of Substances Hazardous to Health.

Purpose / Objectives: This virtual toolbox talk will cover: COSHH assessment, hazards, control measures and safe use of substances.

Why is it important?

Ignore a hazardous substance today and you may wish you hadn't by tomorrow as most businesses every day use substances, or products that are mixtures of substances and some processes create substances. These could cause harm to employees, contractors, and other people. Sometimes substances are easily recognised as harmful. Common substances such as paint, bleach or dust from natural materials may also be harmful.

COSHH Assessment: Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH)

Employers should carry out a COSHH assessment to find out whether:

- Exposure to a substance can be eliminated?
- Alternative work methods to try and reduce exposure?
- A less hazardous substance can be used.

Any substance with a hazard warning label has the potential to cause harm – please carefully read the label and assess the risk before using it.

Employers have a legal duty to assess the risk involved in working with a hazardous substance, decide what precautions should be taken to deal with the risk and to instruct you on what precautions must be taken.

Make sure you understand these instructions before you work with any hazardous substance, get the COSHH assessment and details are shown on the McSence Staffzone - [McSence Health & Safety Information | McSence](#).

What is a hazardous substance?

- Any preparation (mixture) that is dangerous for supply, and for which an indication of danger, specified for the substance is very toxic, toxic, harmful, corrosive, or irritant.
- Any substance which has a Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL).
- Any biological agents used at work.
- Any dust other than one with a Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL) at a concentration in air above 10 mg/m³ averaged over 8 hours, or any such respirable dust above 4 mg/m³ over 8 hours.
- Any other substance that creates a risk to health because of its properties and the way it is used or is present in the workplace.

What is a Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL)

Workplace exposure limits (WELs) are GB occupational exposure limits approved by HSE. They are set to help protect workers' health. WELs are concentrations of hazardous substances in the air, averaged over a set period of time.

Hazards A): How you could be affected by a hazardous substance...

- Ingestion - eating contaminated food.
- Inhalation - breathing harmful dust or fumes.
- Absorption - chemicals entering through skin, cuts, etc.

Hazards B). Examples of hazardous substances on construction sites...

- Contaminated ground.
- Concrete ad-mixtures.
- Cement.
- Hard wood dust.
- Resins.
- Epoxy-based paints.
- Welding fumes.
- Asbestos.

Hazards C): Don't mix chemicals or substances unless they are specifically intended to be mixed together, such as some adhesives.

Control Measures:

- When using hazardous substances, wear the correct PPE.
- Know how to look after and use PPE correctly.
- Know where washing and first-aid facilities are on site.
- Ensure hazardous substances are put back into a secure location after use and not left out on site.
- Provide control measures to reduce harm to health, e.g., extraction.
- Providing information, instruction and training for employees and others.
- Provide monitoring and health surveillance in appropriate cases.
- Plan for emergencies.

Use of Substances:

- Make sure you are trained to use hazardous substances and if not or you have concerns, raise this with your line manager or email services@mcsence.co.uk
- Read and comply with the information on the COSHH assessment and the instructions on the product label.
- Don't eat, drink or smoke when handling substances.
- Don't expose workers to fumes, dust, gas or other dangers from hazardous substances caused or required due to the work being done.
- Always wash hands and face at the end of each shift and before eating.

Storage:

Some chemicals can become unstable when old and explosions can result if these are mishandled.

Check the condition of all containers for indications of leaks, swelling, or age (e.g., rust).

Store in accordance with packaging instructions. Some chemicals must not be stored next to others – check the label.

Questions & the answers are in the text above:

- QUESTION: Name the three ways a substance can enter your body? | ANSWER is in **“Hazards A)”**
- QUESTION: Where should substances be put at the end of a shift | ANSWER is in **“Control Measures”?**
- QUESTION: Where can you obtain information about the hazardous substance you are using? | ANSWER is in **“Use of Substances”?**
- QUESTION: What can you wear to protect against substances? | ANSWER is in **“Control Measures”?**
- QUESTION: Name five hazardous substances you may find on site? | ANSWER is in **“Hazards B)”**

REMEMBER KNOW WHAT PPE TO WEAR TO PROTECT AGAINST HAZARD(S) – if you require PPE or have any concerns, raise this with your line manager and/or email services@mcsence.co.uk and we will action this asap.

Please also see the links below for more HSE & company information...

HSE website and links below:

- HSE – Asbestos Essentials - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/a0.pdf>

- HSE – Lifting Equipment at Work – A Brief Guide - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg290.htm>
- HSE – Manual Handling at Work – A Brief Guide - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.htm>
- HSE – Slips & Trips – A Brief Guide - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/cleaning/topics/slips.htm>
- HSE – Working at Height & Safe Use of Ladders - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg455.pdf>
- HSE - COSHH - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/basics/whatdo.htm>
- HSE – COVID-19 - <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>

STAFF ZONE is a bespoke intranet for all McSence colleagues with company information in one place - to access this click on this [Company Policies | McSence](#) and enter password staffzone123

Any feedback is most welcome and going forward we will be sharing more of this information on a regular basis.

Warmest regards, Martha

Martha Convie

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