

C.O.S.H.H. (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) overview

About C.O.S.H.H. and this overview:

Thousands of people each year become ill due to substances hazardous to health, causing issues including breathing difficulties including asthma and skin problems including dermatitis.

Employers are bound by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 which require these harmful substances to be reduced where possible, and subsequently the effects of these products be reduced. Many substances are harmful but used correctly and with the correct precautions rarely are.

The process of a COSHH assessment follows identifying substances harmful to health present in the building, evaluating the risks to health, determining the control measures needed and then recording the results. This assessment should be reviewed every year. In this assessment, section leader means the leader of any activity taking place in the HQ, Scouting or not.

What substances harmful to health exist in the HQ?

The following are known to exist in the HQ:

- **Asbestos.** Controls for this are found in the Asbestos register for the HQ, in the HQ Safety Folder in the kitchen.
- **Cleaning chemicals** including products that are irritants, corrosive and toxic to aquatic life.
- **Flammable gasses** including aerosols and flammable gas cannisters.

There is also the potential for harm through:

- **Dusts** caused by any construction work or through excess build-up of dirt in heating system.
- **Legionella**, a bacterium that can cause legionnaires disease if sufficient precautions are not taken.

Cleaning Chemicals

Who is affected and in what way?

Users of the chemicals are directly affected. This is likely to be limited to the cleaner or a section leader. The cleaner would have contact with the chemicals on a weekly basis, whereas a section leader may only have to deal with these chemicals if the situation arose, such as dealing with a spillage. Depending on the substance, harm may be done through contact with skin or eyes or by breathing in vapours.

Existing controls:

- Cleaning chemicals are currently stored in a cupboard that must be locked when not in use. The more hazardous chemicals are stored at higher levels.
- Cleaning currently takes place once a week when no others use the HQ. This reduces the risk of harm to others by reducing the number of people in contact with any chemicals.
- Majority of chemicals used are commercially bought chemicals suitable for household use. These include clear instructions on the container detailing precautions that should be taken.
- Chemicals are stored in plastic boxes to contain any spills and similar chemicals are stored together. The store is kept in an orderly fashion.
- PPE is provided by the scout group for the use of HQ users. This includes a set of protective goggles, gloves of various types and sizes, dust masks and ear defenders.
- Adequate washing facilities are available in the bathrooms and kitchen to clean any contact with skin.
- First aid facilities are in place to ensure recommended care in the case of contact with eyes or skin.
- A C.O.S.H.H. Risk Assessment is written for each chemical in the cleaning cupboard. These assessments are stored in a folder in the cupboard and are numbered – the number of the assessment is labelled onto each chemical container.

Individual risk assessments exist for each chemical in the cleaning cupboard. They are reviewed annually.

Written by:

Steven Osborn, Beaver Scout Leader and Executive committee member.

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