

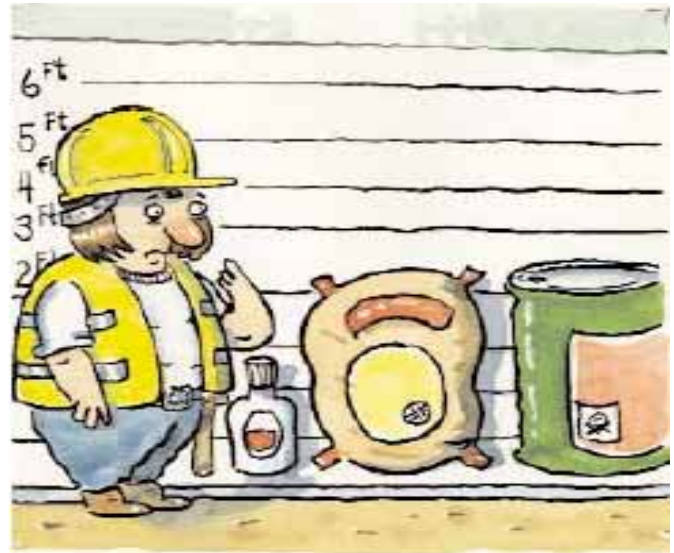
SUBSTANCES HAZARDOUS TO HEALTH

What are substances hazardous to health?

These include any substance that may have the ability to cause harm.

Some may make you ill immediately upon contact - *acute effect* - such as acids, solvents, some fumes.

Others can have a long term effect - *chronic condition* - such as silica dust, used engine oil or asbestos.



...have you identified all harmful substances and materials...?

Handling or using substances hazardous to health

When handling any substance, you need to know

- risks to health
- precautions to be taken

If you are unsure, or want further guidance or information, then you should ask to see the Risk Assessment for the substance or product.

The information is normally held in **the Site COSHH File** (COSHH stands for the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health).

Preventing contact with substances hazardous to health

The way in which harmful substances may gain access to your body is by:

Inhalation - via the nose or mouth into the respiratory system. Where dust or fume is present, wear suitable dust masks or respirators fitted with the correct type of filter cartridge.

Ingestion - via the mouth into the digestive system. Most often occurs from the hands when eating food or smoking after handling a harmful substance. **ALWAYS** wash your hands before eating, and if you smoke never do so where harmful substances may be present and wash your hands before lighting up – or better still, stop smoking!

Absorption - through the skin. Some substances, such as solvents, hydrocarbons and some acids can be absorbed through the skin. These can result in acute or chronic conditions. Avoid contact completely by wearing impervious gloves and wearing suitable face protection. Always wear overalls and if these become contaminated change them straightaway. Remember, some gloves may be impervious when used with water but can allow the absorption of solvents. Check to ensure that the gloves actually provide protection before use.

Injection - occasionally a substance, normally a liquid, can be injected through the skin into the circulatory system. This is potentially very dangerous, and immediate medical attention should be obtained if it is suspected that a fluid has been injected. Never feel for leaks with your hand or fingers on pressurised hydraulic or compressed air systems. *Never use compressed air to "blow down" overalls at the end of the working shift.*

QUESTIONS – (there may be more than one correct answer)

		A	B
1	What is an 'acute effect'?	Something that affects you long term	You become ill immediately upon contact
2	Which substances can cause 'chronic conditions'?	Silica dust	Asbestos
3	Where is information about substances kept?	Head Office	Site COSHH File
4	If you find a container without a label, what should you do?	Assume it's safe, and leave it	Report it to your supervisor
5	Can you challenge a contractor using a suspected hazardous substance in an unsafe way?	No – it's not your problem	Yes – and report your findings immediately to your supervisor

