



Selection of personal protective equipment

Chemicals causing harm via skin or eye contact

S101



The guidance in this sheet is aimed at employers and the self-employed to help them

comply with the requirements of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), by controlling exposure to chemicals and protecting workers' health.

The sheet is part of the HSE guidance pack *COSHH essentials: easy steps to control chemicals*. It can be used alongside control approaches 1-4 where the guidance allocates a chemical to hazard group S ie where chemicals can cause harm in contact with skin and eyes.

This sheet provides advice on the selection and use of personal protective equipment (PPE). It describes the key points you need to follow to provide adequate control and to help ensure exposure is reduced to an acceptable level. Other sheets in the S series provide additional help on specific issues related to substances in group S.

Some chemicals can also be flammable or corrosive. Control equipment must be suitable for these hazards too. Look at the safety data sheet for more information.

Depending on the scale of work, releases into the atmosphere may be regulated within the pollution prevention and control (PPC) framework. You should consult your local authority or the Environment Agency. In Scotland, consult the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). They will advise you if PPC legislation applies to your company, and about air cleaning and discharging emissions into the air. Otherwise, minimise emissions into the air.

Types of PPE

The information you obtained from answering the questions on sheet S100 will help you decide which parts of the body are likely to be exposed to the chemicals in hazard group S. The five types of clothing that may be required are:

- chemical protective gloves;
- coveralls;
- protective footwear;
- face or eye shields;
- respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

Your protective equipment supplier should normally be able to tell you the type of protective material to select. Not all materials give protection against all chemicals. Some chemicals pass through protective materials over a period of time. It is important that you also ask your supplier how frequently the protective equipment needs to be changed. Ensure that the equipment is changed when necessary. Remember to train your workers and make sure they follow the instructions.

General precautions

- ✓ Check protective equipment for damage both before and after use.
- ✓ Clean and maintain all PPE regularly.
- ✓ Use disposable protective equipment only once and dispose of it safely after use.
- ✓ Wash cotton type overalls on a regular basis.
- ✓ Wash overalls at work or at a specialist laundry. They should not be taken home and washed with the 'family' wash.
- ✓ Store protective clothing in a clean cupboard or locker.
- ✓ Store clean and dirty clothing separately.
- ✓ Provide a good standard of personal washing facilities.



Chemical protective gloves

- ✓ The gloves must be sufficiently robust not to tear or cut while undertaking the work activity.
- ✓ Leather or stitched working gloves are not suitable for working with chemicals.
- ✓ If you do need to use single-use natural rubber latex gloves, they must be 'low-protein, powder-free' gloves. See latex allergy web pages at www.hse.gov.uk/latex
- ✓ Make sure workers don't touch the outside of a contaminated glove with a naked hand when putting gloves on or taking gloves off.

Coveralls

- ✓ The material selected should be resistant to the penetration of liquids, dusts or granules as appropriate.
- ✓ For corrosive materials such as acids, an impervious apron gives good protection.
- ✓ Coveralls should normally be worn over boots rather than be tucked in.
- ✓ Gloves should normally be worn over the sleeves to help stop contamination getting on the inside of the PPE.

Protective footwear

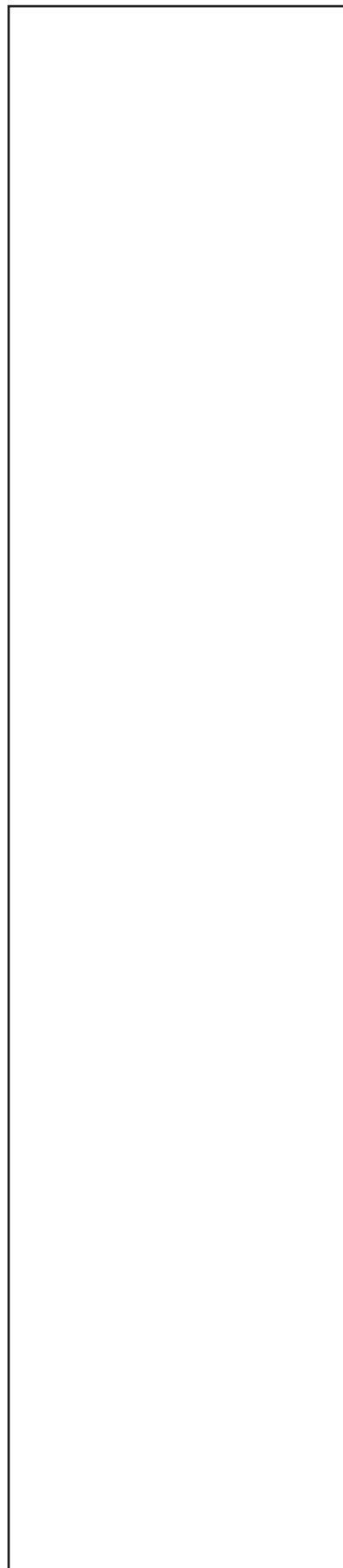
- ✓ Protective footwear may be necessary for safety reasons as well as for protection against chemicals. Toe cap protection, heat protection and a metal sole plate may be needed.
- ✓ Ensure protective footwear complies with the appropriate EC Standard.
- ✓ When there is a risk of liquid coming into contact with the lower leg, wellington boots should be worn.

Eye and face protection

- ✓ When handling open containers of corrosive liquids, full-face shields should be worn.
- ✓ Chemical splash goggles may be more practicable when wearing a respirator.

Respiratory protective equipment (RPE)

- ✓ The selection and use of RPE needs careful consideration - see the HSE publication *The selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment: A practical guide* HSG53 (second edition)
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