

# Control of Hazardous Substances toolbox talk

A simple, 5 minute outline of what to cover in a toolbox talk on Control of Hazardous Substances.



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Hazardous substances are used in many primary industries and construction. If these substances are not controlled properly, they can have significant health and safety consequences for workers.

## Why run a Control of Hazardous Substances Toolbox Talk?

- Know what a hazardous substance is
- The risk from hazardous substances
- Learn about control measures and safe use of hazardous substances

## What is a Hazardous Substance?

A hazardous substance is any product or chemical that has the following properties:

- **Explosive** – explodes or causes explosions
- **Flammable** – ignites easily and burns rapidly
- **Oxidising** – could be gaseous, solid, or liquid and can cause or intensify fire and explosion
- **Toxic** – can harm people if it enters the body through contact, ingestion, inhalation. The effects can be mild to life threatening and can be immediate or long term.
- **Corrosive** – can cause skin burns and eye damage
- **Ecotoxic** - toxic to the environment

***The Globally Harmonised System (GHS) of pictograms can help you identify substances that may harm you or others. Look for these pictograms on packaging and container labels.***

## **Risk Assessment of Hazardous Substances**

- Consider worker exposure to hazardous substances and check exposure by monitoring if there is doubt.
- Where possible, eliminate or substitute the hazardous substances
- Minimise exposure by applying isolation or engineering controls
- If risk remains, put administrative controls in place
- If risk remains, make sure fitted personal protective equipment PPE is provided and used

## **Control Measures of Hazardous Substances**

- Create an inventory of hazardous substances
- Have the Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all hazardous substances and make them accessible to workers
- Inform and train workers before using any hazardous substances
- Store in suitable containers and label them correctly
- Store hazardous substances safely - where and how they are stored depends on the type of substance and the quantity
- Install signs - place clearly visible signs at entranceways, on buildings and outdoor areas where substances are used or stored.
- Never mix hazardous substances unless you know what you are doing
- Always clean up any spillages and dispose of the hazardous waste as documented in the SDS

## **Plan For an Emergency**

If using hazardous substances, an emergency plan should be developed and include:

- How to address all foreseeable emergencies
- Inventory of hazardous substances

- Site plan with all hazardous substance's locations
- Training of staff on how to correctly wear PPE
- First aid – know where wash stations are and how to treat people who may be harmed or injured
- Procedure to contact emergency services
- Procedure to manage the area – restrict exposure to initial area, reduce severity and if possible, eliminate it.

## **Hazardous Substance DON'TS**

- Do not smoke, drink, or eat when working with or handling hazardous substances
- Do not expose others to fumes, dusts, gas or other dangers from hazardous substances when you work
- Do not use a hazardous substance you are not trained to use
- Do not leave hazardous substances around a work site – store them straight away
- Do not use any hazardous substances that are not labelled
- Do not store hazardous substances above head height

## **Key takeaways:**

- *Be prepared for any foreseeable emergencies*
- *Train your staff to correctly handle and use hazardous substances*
- *Store and label containers correctly*
- *Conduct a risk assessment before using a hazardous substance*

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