

St Bartholomew & All Saints  
Parochial Church Council

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# Health & Safety Guidance

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## **Section C.08 – Hazardous Substances**

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**Document Change Record**

<b><u>Change No.</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Change</u></b>	<b><u>Reason for Change</u></b>
1	05/2018	Document reviewed and rewritten	Periodic Review

## **Section C08 – Safe Handling & Use of Hazardous Substances (COSHH)**

### **1. Introduction**

The use of chemicals or other hazardous substances has the potential to put people's health at risk. Even within seemingly low risk environments, people may encounter a range of substances capable of being hazardous to health. This guidance document sets out the values, principles and policies underpinning the Parochial Church Council's approach to meeting the requirements of the COSHH Regulations and provides a framework to be adopted to ensure compliance with the regulations.

### **2. Policy**

St Bartholomew's Parochial Church Council is committed to controlling and reducing the risk to all employees and voluntary helpers and others who may use hazardous substances. The PCC will use the safest substances, carry out risk assessments and introduce appropriate preventative and protective measures to reduce those risks so far as is reasonably practicable. The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 (as amended) provides a framework to help protect people in the workplace (paid or voluntary) against health risks from hazardous substances.

### **3. Compliance Requirements**

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 (as amended)

### **4. Legal Framework**

The principle aim of the COSHH Regulations 2002 is to ensure that where there is a need for the use of a hazardous substance, the situation is assessed and appropriate control measures are introduced. Specifically they require employers to:

- assess the health risks arising from the use of hazardous substances in their activities
- ensure that the exposure of personnel to substances hazardous to health is either prevented or adequately controlled
- ensure that any equipment provided to control the risk is adequately maintained
- provide information, instruction and training to those who may be affected on the level of risk and how it is to be controlled

### **5. Definitions**

For the purposes of this guidance, the PCC defines **substances hazardous to health** as:

- Substances labelled as very toxic, toxic, corrosive, irritant, harmful
- Substances with Workplace Exposure Limits (WELs)
- Biological agents (e.g. micro-organisms)
- Dusts of any kind in substantial concentrations
- Known respiratory sensitisers

- Carcinogenic substances
- Any other substance that can be harmful to health

The only exceptions are those things which are subject to control by separate specific legislation e.g. asbestos; lead; radioactive substances.

## 6. Forms of Substances Hazardous to Health

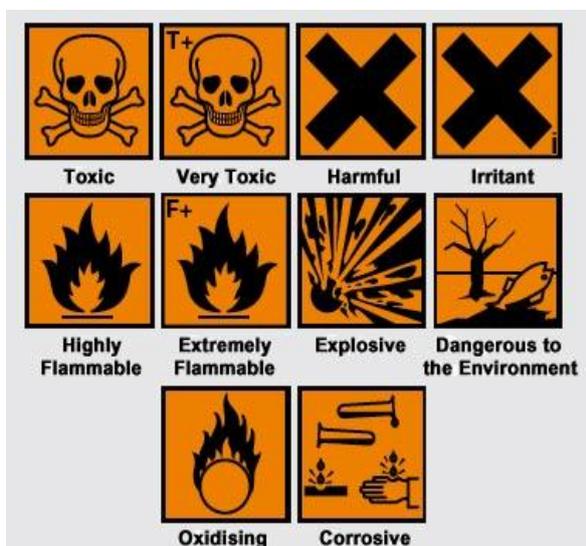
Substances may come in a number of forms and can be any solid, liquid, dust, fume, vapour, gas or micro-organism that could be harmful to health. Such substances may be hazardous through inhalation, ingestion and/or absorption through the skin or skin contact.

## 7. Safety Data sheets

The **Safety Data Sheet** is a document that must be provided by the manufacturer or the supplier of the substance. It should be the first point of reference prior to handling hazardous substances as it details the precautions to be taken during handling, use and in the event of an emergency. Hazard sheets and manufacturer's instructions provide useful information for substances identified as a hazard.

Products classified as 'dangerous for supply' will be labelled with one or more of the hazard symbols illustrated below. Where the product carries a hazard symbol, the Safety Data Sheet for that substance should be obtained. These products include common substances such as paint, bleach, solvent and fillers.

### European Symbols



### International Symbols



## 8. COSHH Risk Assessments

For the purposes of this guidance, a hazardous substance is any solid, liquid, dust, fume, vapour, gas or micro-organism that could be harmful to health. Common substances found in the workplace with the potential to be harmful include:

- cleaning wipes for computer screens
- photocopier toner
- white board cleaning products
- cleaning materials including furniture polish, window cleaner, hard surface floor cleaner, toilet cleaner, air freshener

Although these substances have properties that make them potentially harmful, they should not present a significant risk during day-to-day use providing appropriate precautions are taken.

The purpose of this guidance is to enable a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks of hazardous substances to be made so that the preventative and protective measures necessary to protect health can be identified and put in place.

The following systematic, five-step approach is the most effective way of identifying, assessing, reducing and monitoring the health risks associated with hazardous substances:

- identify which hazardous substances should be included
- evaluate the risk to health
- manage and reduce the risks
- record the findings
- review the assessments

The flow chart in **Appendix 1** summarises the main steps in a COSHH risk assessment

### **9. Preventing and Controlling Risks**

It is essential that steps are taken to reduce the risks associated with substances hazardous to health. In many instances, common-sense measures relating to the storage, use and disposal will adequately control the risks associated with many hazardous substances. Typical measures include:

- where it is reasonably practicable to do so, exposure should be prevented by changing the process or activity so that the hazardous substance is not used or generated, or
- replacing it with an alternative
- providing secure storage
- incompatible substances are kept apart
- provision of well-ventilated storage where appropriate
- minimum quantities are stored
- containers are manageable to move and handle
- substances are purchased in the concentration required (avoiding dilution where possible)
- substances are dispensed from the original, labelled container (avoid decanting into other, smaller containers)
- provision of warning signs where the risks have not been avoided by other means
- any relevant COSHH information is kept locally for ease of reference
- any temperature ranges detailed in the safety data sheet are adhered to

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All substances should be handled carefully and stored in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. The manufacturer's instructions for any item/substance that is unfamiliar should be carefully read and complied with. Anyone using flammable materials should ensure that they use only the minimum quantity necessary.

**Appendix 1 – COSHH Flowchart**

**Step 1 ~ Identify the Hazardous Substances**

- decide who will carry out the assessment
- list the hazardous substances
- find out about them
- find out who might be exposed and how

**Step 2 ~ Evaluate the Risk to Health**

- consider risks to groups of people and individuals
- decide on the likely exposure and the chances of this happening

**Step 3 ~ Manage and Reduce the Risk**

- prevent or control exposure
- use and maintain controls
- monitor exposure
- carry out health surveillance if necessary
- inform, instruct and train

**Step 4 ~ Record the Assessment**

- use the attached assessment form [**see Appendix 2**]
- make sure any further actions necessary are clear, achievable and measurable

**Step 5 ~ Review the Assessment**

- when anything changes significantly
- changes to personnel e.g. new volunteers
- if the substances, processes or procedures change
- if none of the above occur then 3-yearly review

**Appendix 2 ~ COSHH Risk Assessment & Hazardous Substances Record**

<b>Premises:</b> .....		<b>Location:</b> .....		<b>Date of assessment:</b> .....		
Step 1 ~ Substance ~ What are the hazards?	Step 2 ~ What harm and to whom?	Step 3 ~ Manage and reduce the risks		Step 4 ~ Action required		
		what is being done already?	what needs to be done?	who?	when?	check
<b>Step 5 ~ Review Date:</b>	.....					