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An Introduction to a UK Scheme to Help Small Firms Control Health Risks from Chemicals FREE

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Abstract

The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1994 (COSHH), provide the main British legislation to protect against health risks arising from hazardous substances used at work. Under the regulations, employers have a duty to carry out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and take steps to ensure exposure is adequately controlled. The paper by Topping *et al.* (1998) concluded that small firms need more basic, readily available advice on how to effectively control hazardous substances. To meet this need the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances (ACTS) have developed a new scheme for the UK. It involves a simple system of generic risk assessments to identify appropriate control strategies and a series of control guidance sheets providing good-practice examples of those strategies for common operations. The approach builds on earlier industry risk banding schemes and HSE's general approach to risk assessment and risk management. To help ensure the advice reaches small firms, HSE is seeking to involve key intermediaries in its dissemination. This paper describes the rationale for the new UK scheme, how it sits in the legal framework, and proposals for its dissemination. The papers by Brooke (1998) and Maidment (1998) set out in detail the technical basis for the scheme. Crown copyright © 1998. Published by Elsevier Science Ltd on behalf of BOHS.

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