

## COSHH\* - Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) Guide

### (\*Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)

All Materials Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for substances supplied in the EU follow a common format. We set out the key headings below and show you how to use each section of the data to underpin your risk assessment and control measures.

For support in carrying out a COSHH assessment, please contact the Health, Safety and Welfare Team by e-mailing: [safetyadvice@gov.im](mailto:safetyadvice@gov.im)

#### Useful Links:

- HSE COSHH - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/>
- IOM Government Guidance Document - Audit Your COSHH Assessment and Controls - HSW - 116 - 09.2022
- IOM Government Guidance Document - COSHH Risk Assessment for Employees - HSW - TBC - 09.2022
- IOM Government Toolbox Talk - COSHH and Respiratory Sensitisers

Section of the MSDS	How this Helps you Assess and Control the Risks:
Date of Information	Use this to check you have the most up to date data on the material being assessed.
1. Identification of the substance/mixture and of the company/understanding	This spells out what the material is and also who is the supplier (responsible for the data and your first port of call if you need further technical information or help).
2. Hazards identification	Vital for your purposes as identifying the hazards is the first stage of your assessment. Note specially if the material has multiple hazards e.g. 'harmful' and 'flammable'. COSHH is only concerned with health hazards, but other legislation will apply too if the hazards include flammability or the potential for environmental harm.
3. Composition/information on ingredients	For preparations (mixtures) this section will set out the key ingredients and their approximate quantities, these ingredients may be hazardous in their own right. Obviously, the greater the proportion in which they are present, the greater their influence on the overall properties of the mixture. For example, if a toxic material is only 1% of the mixture, the mixture overall may well not be toxic, whereas if the material represents 90% of the mixture, it almost certainly will be.
4. First-aid measures	This wording will normally be pretty generic, but it will highlight here whether there are any special first aid requirements for the material in question. Use this to check you have the right first aid measures in place in case of accidental exposure.



5. Fire-fighting measures	This information will help you with your fire risk assessment. Check that you have the right equipment (e.g. extinguishers) available in line with the supplier's recommendations.
6. Accidental release measures	Since your assessment should consider all types of exposure, you'll need to consider accidents (spills and leaks for example) as well as normal operation. Check that your equipment and procedures enable you to handle a spillage or release safely.
7. Handling and storage	Crucial information that will enable you to handle and store the material safely. Key information could include correct storage temperatures and also where to keep the material e.g. 'keep away from flammables' etc.
8. Exposure controls/personal protection	This will cover the precautions you should take to protect your employees and others from being exposed to the material. Check as part of the assessment that your controls are in line with what the supplier recommends here.
9. Physical and chemical properties	Technical information such as boiling points, freezing points and flashpoints will help you understand the properties of the material.
10. Stability and reactivity	As above. This will help you use and handle the material safely by understanding how the material might decompose, or react with other materials in the workplace. These events could be hazardous in themselves, or lead to the production of another harmful material.
11. Toxicological information	This information will be very relevant to the health hazards as it is likely to include the results of animal testing showing the extent to which the material is toxic or otherwise harmful to health. Exposure limits may also be listed here.
12. Ecological information	This will help you understand the extent to which the material is harmful to the environment, and then check that your precautions for preventing/containing spillage or other releases are adequate to protect the wider environment e.g. streams, water courses etc.
13. Disposal considerations	Use this information to understand how to dispose of the material and deal with any waste safely.
14. Transport information	Key data for safe transport by road, rail, air and sea.
15. Regulatory information	Any other information required by law or by the regulator.
16. Other information	A space for any other information that hasn't already been mentioned but which you as the user should know in order to ensure safe handling, transport, storage and use.

