

A-Z COSHH Key Terms

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

Useful Links:

- HSE COSHH - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/>

Term	What it means for you
Air Monitoring	Checking the concentration of hazardous materials in the air and benchmarking this against a standard (see Workplace Exposure Limits below).
Aspiration Hazard	The danger of hazardous materials (usually liquids or solids) entering the respiratory system.
Biological Monitoring	Checking for harm or other effects by blood or similar tests. May form part of medical surveillance (see below).
Carcinogenic	Causing cancer.
CHIP	Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations 2009 – These will be replaced by CLP (see below) on 1 June 2015.
CLP	Classification, Labelling and Packaging. This European Regulation came into force in all EU member states, including the UK, on 20 January 2010. The CLP Regulation adopts in the EU the Globally Harmonised System (GHS) on the classification and labelling of chemicals and is being phased in through a transitional period which runs until 1 June 2015. It applies to substances from 1 December 2010, and to mixtures (preparations) from 1 June 2015.
Control Measure	Any action taken to prevent or minimise exposure to a substance hazardous to health.
Corrosive	A common category of hazardous materials including acids and alkalis. Corrosive materials can cause serious burns to skin and are especially hazardous to the eyes and mucous membranes. They can also attack metals



	causing rust and leakage.
Harmful	A common category of hazardous materials with the property of causing harm to health, but generally a lower risk than 'toxic'.
Hazard	Something with the potential to cause harm; in the case of COSHH, harm to health. Substances hazardous to health may pose other hazards, principally fire/explosion and the ability to harm the environment.
Hazard Statement	Words on a chemical label that describe the hazards. Replaces the old 'risk phrases'.
Health surveillance	Systematic monitoring of people's health, for example a regular skin check for signs of dermatitis. See also medical surveillance below.
Irritant	A common category of hazardous materials with the property of causing redness, burning and irritation that is usually temporary. Generally lower risk than 'corrosive'.
Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV)	Extract ventilation designed to remove a hazardous material from the workplace atmosphere at the point of production and before it can be inhaled by the worker. Normally consists of a capture hood, ducting, a fan and some sort of collection or filter mechanism (eg bag filter or cyclone). An engineering control in COSHH and usually preferred to general ventilation that merely dilutes the harmful material.
Medical surveillance	Health surveillance carried out by a medical practitioner eg doctor or nurse.
Mutagenic	A physical or chemical agent that can change an organism's genetic material (DNA), increasing the frequency of mutations. As many mutations cause cancer, mutagens are often carcinogens (see above).
Nanotechnology	The creation and/or manipulation of materials at the nanometre (nm) scale. One nanometre is 10 ⁻⁹ m or one millionth of a millimetre.
Pathogen	A virus, bacterium, prion or fungus that can cause disease.
Poison	A very toxic material capable of causing serious harm (possibly death) in very small quantities.
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment. Examples are gloves, face masks, chemical



	suits and all types of RPE (see below)
Precautionary Statement	Words on a chemical label that describe the safeguards or precautions needed. Replaces the old 'safety phrases'.
REACH	The European legal framework for the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals.
Risk	The likelihood of harm occurring, together with its severity. In COSHH terms, this means harm to health, either immediate (acute) or chronic (long term). COSHH requires you to assess it and to put in place control measures to minimise it.
RPE	Respiratory Protective Equipment – mask, respirators and breathing apparatus to filter out or otherwise minimise the inhalation of harmful materials and, in the case of breathing apparatus, allow work in an oxygen-deficient atmosphere.
Sensitiser	A material that can cause the individual to develop an allergic reaction. Once a person is sensitised, they can suffer a severe reaction to even small quantities of the substance. Normally divided into two categories – respiratory sensitisers and skin sensitisers.
Signal Word	'Warning' or 'Danger' on a substance label. Part of the CLP (see above) labelling scheme.
Substitution	Replacing a hazardous material with one that is less hazardous, or one which is in a less hazardous form (e.g. pellets instead of dust).
Teratogenic	Material able to cause birth defects.
Toxic	Able to harm a living organism. The greater the toxicity, the greater the harm. Very toxic materials can be fatal in minute quantities (see also poison).
Workplace Exposure Limits (WELs)	Limits used in air monitoring to determine whether control is adequate. WELs are set for about 500 substances and listed in the HSE's guidance EH40. They are typically set in terms of a weight of material per cubic metre of air (mg/m ³) or parts per million (ppm).

