



SAFETY2BUSINESS

9 COSHH SYMBOLS WHICH YOU SHOULD KNOW



Explosives



Flammable



Oxidising



Gases under pressure



Corrosive



Toxic



Caution



Long Term Health Hazards



Dangerous for the environment

Did you know that the inkjet printer which your staff use could be hazardous to their health? Breathing in emissions from the photocopier may not be as harmful to lungs as asbestos but it surely requires your attention whether you are an employer or an employee. This comes to show that no matter what industry you operate in, your staff are likely to use chemicals (consciously or not) that could impose risks to their health.

Lets talk about COSHH

For those of you who don't know what the abbreviation stands for, COSHH is the law that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health. Apart from the example above, other health hazards include processes that emit dust, fume, vapour, mist or gas; as well as skin contact with liquids, pastes and dusts.

Deciding how to prevent harm to health

You are probably already aware of the many obvious risks in your trade or industry. You may, however, want to complete a set of risk assessments (which should be bespoke to your business) just to make sure you haven't missed anything. Keeping a documentation of actions being taken could also serve as a proof in case of accidents at the workplace.

How to do that?

Your next step is the most important one and it is all about educating your staff and yourself about the risks and hazards which have been highlighted by the COSHH risk assessments. Remember, this could save lives in the long term so it is your duty as an employer (and as a human being!) to take action.

First steps

For every chemical that your employees use as part of their job responsibilities, you will need a product data sheet which you can get from the manufacturer or supplier. Remember, a safety data sheet is not a risk assessment- it is designed to help you create your own! Whether you are working with hazardous substances or you are completing a COSHH risk assessment, you will need to know what the black and orange COSHH labels on the packaging of the substance mean. Best way to do that? Print this poster off and put it on your workplace notice board.

Alternatively, print off a copy for each one of your employees to make sure you raise awareness and have performed your responsibilities in the best way possible.