

9 Health and safety

A The average person finds it difficult to assess **risks**. For this reason, work practices need to be **regulated**. Examples of **dangerous** activities are:

- welding or grinding without **goggles**
- working on a construction site work without a **hard hat**
- working in **noisy** factories, cabs, on airport tarmacs and with outdoor machinery without ear **protection**
- working in chemical areas without **protective** clothing
- **smoking** near hazardous **substances**

Without regulation some employees will take risks.

Health and safety is a part of employment (labour) law. It covers general matters such as:

- **occupational health**
- **accident** prevention regulations
- special regulations for hazardous occupations such as mining and building
- provisions for risks such as **poisons, dangerous machinery, dust, noise, vibration, and radiation**
- the full range of dangers arising from modern industrial processes, for example the widespread use of chemicals

B The key concerns for health and safety are to assess the *risks and hazards* by identifying and quantifying the *effects* so that appropriate *protective measures* can be taken.

Risks and hazards

combustion • contamination • drains • dust • explosion
 flammable • friction • fumes • fumigation • gas
 harmful • shock • spraying • toxic • vapour

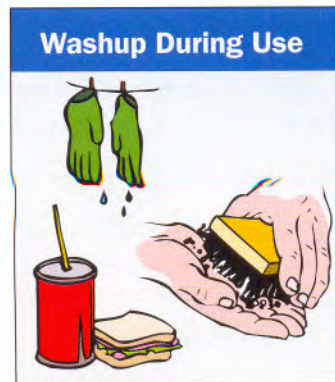
Effects

adverse effects • birth defect • burn • cancer • dizziness
 drowsiness • genetic damage • impair fertility • irreversible effect • vomiting

Protective measures

avoid contact with • dispose of • dry • handle • keep
 precautionary • protect • recycle • rinse • seal
 tightly • wash • well-ventilated

C The following health and safety notices show some protective measures that can be taken:



TASKS

1 Choose the correct word in each sentence.

- 1 Store containers in a **well-ventilated/good-ventilated** place
- 2 Wipe up any spillages immediately and **wash/rinse** with soapy water.
- 3 Process cooling water can be **returned/recycled**.
- 4 This chemical is **toxic/intoxicating** if swallowed.
- 5 Leftover chemicals should be **disproved/disposed** of safely.
- 6 Please wear protective gloves when **fingering/handling** this material.
- 7 Remember that asbestos fibres can cause **cancer/coma**.
- 8 Pregnant women should not take this medicine as it may cause birth **defects/effects**.
- 9 Increased levels of radiation may lead to **compared/impaired** fertility.
- 10 Do not empty chemical paint products into the **drains/grains**.
- 11 **Protect/Avoid** contact with skin and eyes.
- 12 Do not use with other products as it may release dangerous **fumes/fumigation**.

2 Complete the following sentences with a form of the word in brackets.

- 1 When working in this area, please wear _____ clothing (protect).
- 2 Don't pour used chemicals into the drains as they will cause _____ (contaminate).
- 3 Heating this liquid may cause an _____ (explode).
- 4 These chemicals must be kept in a locked cupboard because they are _____ (harm).
- 5 While they repair the roof, we will close this department as a _____ measure (precaution).
- 6 _____ health is one part of Health and Safety (occupation).
- 7 Working in a noisy factory without ear protectors is a _____ activity (danger).
- 8 Petrol and oil are _____ chemicals (flame).
- 9 Make sure the containers are closed _____ (tight).
- 10 Make sure you are wearing breathing equipment before starting _____ (fume).

3 The manager in charge of health and safety is explaining things to some new employees. Complete what he says by filling the blanks with the correct word from the box.

noise • protection • drowsiness • dust • accidents • smoke
poisonous • fumes • risks • burns • goggles

MANAGER: New government regulations mean that we are all required to be more aware of (a) _____ in the workplace. As your employer, we will provide you with the necessary safety equipment. You must wear (b) _____ to protect your eyes when working on this machinery. You should also wear ear (c) _____ because the (d) _____ from the machines is high enough to cause damage to your hearing. And of course, there is a lot of (e) _____ in the air, so please wear masks to stop you breathing it in. But, you too are responsible for your safety and for preventing (f) _____ happening.

EMPLOYEE: Are we looking at fire risks?

MANAGER: Yes, of course. Remember that it is very dangerous to (g) _____ near the chemical store. In fact, we have a no smoking policy throughout the company. Chemicals themselves are, of course, (h) _____ so they should never enter your mouth. They could cause (i) _____ if you get them on your skin. If you leave them without a lid, (j) _____ may escape and cause headaches, (k) _____ or dizziness.