

The Church of St. Patrick Drumbeg

Use of Chemicals at Work Policy

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1. **INTRODUCTION**

It is our policy to provide a healthy and safe working environment for all of our employees and workers.

This policy is non-contractual but aims to ensure that any risks associated with the storage and use of chemicals on site are minimised at all times.

2. **SCOPE OF THIS POLICY**

This policy should be followed by all employees and workers who either procure chemicals for use on our premises, or who use chemicals in the course of their duties. The general principles also apply to contractors.

3. **AIMS OF THIS POLICY**

This policy aims to reduce the risks associated with the use of chemicals on site by implementing a series of risk control measures.

4. **LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The following piece of legislation applies to this policy:

- The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003.

5. STEPS TO REDUCE THE RISK

COSHH (the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2003) require us to:

- Minimise the risks from using chemicals at work
- Introduce control measures to manage those which may remain
- Train employees in the safe use of chemicals
- Monitor the effectiveness of any control measures
- Store chemicals safely in order to avoid the risks of fire, explosion or environmental damage.

Our starting point will be to eliminate the use of hazardous chemicals wherever possible. If this can't be done, we will take all reasonable steps to find less hazardous chemicals. In the event that hazardous chemicals need to be used, control systems such as local exhaust ventilation will be introduced. Personal protective equipment (PPE) will only be issued where hazards cannot be effectively managed by other means.

The use of new chemicals will be assessed prior to use and where this expertise is not available in-house, it will be provided by suitably qualified third parties.

In certain circumstances, we are also required to conduct health surveillance. This will occur if any employee is exposed to a hazardous substance which is known or is likely to cause a disease or be detrimental to health.

A COSHH Assessment Form is shown at **Annex A** to this policy.

6. ORDERING CHEMICALS

Adequate information about each chemical must be obtained prior to its use. This will take the form of a material safety data sheet (MSDS), which should be provided by the supplier of the chemical. If the intention is to use a chemical for the first time, the relevant MSDS needs to be obtained before the chemical is ordered.

Where necessary, further information will be obtained from the chemical supplier and/or other resource such as the HSE website.

7. USE OF CHEMICALS ON-SITE

The use of all chemicals on site will be assessed. For those which have relatively low-hazard properties, this process will be straightforward. In these cases, it will be assumed that implementation of controls in line with the MSDS will be sufficient.

In the event that we have high-hazard substances, such as potential cancer-causing agents, managers will try to source less hazardous substitutes. Where this is not possible, strict controls will be required.

If chemicals need to be mixed with other materials, each must be assessed in order to ensure that no adverse reaction will occur. The MSDS will provide information on incompatible chemicals. The importance of this procedure must not be overlooked as even everyday cleaning agents can cause a serious reaction if mixed.

8. STORAGE

We will provide appropriate storage according to the properties of each chemical. The type of storage necessary will be determined by reference to the MSDS. Special consideration will be given to flammable liquids, environmentally hazardous chemicals and oxidising agents (due to the risks of explosion).

The suitability of all chemical storage will be reviewed as necessary by [H&S Officer](#).

A Chemical Storeroom Checklist is shown at **Annex B** to this policy.

9. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees will be expected to co-operate with us in respect of any controls which have been introduced to ensure the safe use and storage of chemicals on site, and to comply with any instructions regarding the safe use and/or storage of such chemicals.

Where PPE has been deemed necessary, this will be issued by us and employees are required to wear and maintain it in line with the manufacturer's recommendations.

We also require all employees to report any concerns to their manager or supervisor. These will be dealt with promptly. Should any further action be required, the employee raising the concern will be informed as to what form this will take.

10. TRAINING

All relevant employees will receive information, instruction and training on how to use chemicals safely. This will be repeated as necessary, eg on the introduction of new chemicals or processes. Training will be provided in a practical form in which the hazards and controls are clearly understood, eg training on operating procedures.

11. SAFETY AUDITS

This policy will be monitored by managers through the carrying out of periodic safety audits. These will cover the use of chemicals, the maintenance of control systems, adherence to safe working practices, the provision of information to employees and the storage of chemicals.

Where contractors are engaged on site, they will be monitored to ensure that they do not pose a hazard to employees, visitors or themselves.

12. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS

We also have the following related policies and documents: COSHH Assessment; Chemical Storeroom Checklist; Health and Safety Policy; Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Policy; Record of Equipment Issued Form.

13. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

This policy will take effect from **1st December 2016**.

The **Health and Safety Officer** has overall responsibility for implementing and monitoring this policy, which will be reviewed on a regular basis following its implementation (**at least annually**) and additionally whenever there are relevant changes in legislation or to our working practices.

Employees will be consulted about any proposed changes, and adequate notice given of these.

Any queries or comments about this policy should be addressed to The **Health and Safety Officer**.

POLICY REVIEW DATES

9th February 2018			

COSHH ASSESSMENT

Note: A copy of this questionnaire should be kept for at least three years.

Name of substance:	
Where the substance is used:	
How the substance is used:	
Who uses the substance:	
Date of review:	
1 Identified Hazards	
<p><i>List the main hazards (eg skin irritants or corrosives). Note: refer to the hazards on the label or in Section 2 or 15 of the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). If there are other hazardous properties list them here, eg flammable.</i></p>	
2 Required Controls	
<p><i>What controls are in place? Note: refer to precautions on the label or Section 2 or 15 of the MSDS. If using materials where health surveillance is required or the process generates significant hazardous fumes requiring atmospheric monitoring, record it here.</i></p>	
3 Maintenance of Controls	
<p><i>How are controls maintained? List maintenance, such as log book entries for respirator checks, service records of extract ventilation systems etc.</i></p>	
4 Elimination/Substitution of the Hazardous Substance	
<p><i>Record actions you can take if any:</i></p>	
5 Any Additional Controls Required	
<p><i>What else is necessary? List any additional actions (eg training, improve ventilation etc) and dates. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.</i></p>	
Assessment completed by:	Date:
Job title:	
Further action completed by:	Date:
Job title:	

CHEMICAL STOREROOM CHECKLIST

Note: A copy of this questionnaire should be kept for at least three years.

Location/address of storeroom:		Date checked:	
		YES	NO
1	The Storeroom		
	Is the storeroom clearly labelled as a “chemical storeroom”?		
	Is the storeroom kept locked to prevent unauthorised access?		
	Is/are the key(s) to the storeroom kept secure?		
	Are “No Smoking” signs clearly visible?		
	Are “No Eating” signs clearly visible?		
	Does the storeroom have good ventilation, whether mechanical or natural?		
	Is all shelving in good condition?		
	If necessary, is all shelving securely fixed to the floor or walls?		
	Is all shelving kept clean?		
	Does the shelving have any raised edges in case of spillages and leaks?		
	If not, are the chemical containers placed in trays?		
	Are fire resistant cabinets available for any flammable chemicals that need to be stored?		
	Is the storeroom sufficiently well lit?		
	Is the storeroom cleaned regularly?		
	Is the storeroom kept clear of all rubbish and excess items?		
	If necessary, are chemical spill kits kept in the storeroom?		
	Do staff know how to use them?		
	Are any combustible materials, such as oily rags, stored in a metal container?		
	Are Material Safety Data Sheets available for every chemical?		
	Is a full inventory of chemicals kept?		

		YES	NO
2	Storage Containers - General		
	Are all chemical containers properly labelled?		
	Are chemicals kept in shatterproof containers?		
	Are all containers rust and corrosion free?		
	If glass containers are used, are they stored in such a way as to prevent breakages?		
	Are glass containers periodically checked for cracks or other defects?		
	Are containers periodically checked for leaks?		
	Are chemicals stored together according to their properties?		
	Are containers dated when received and opened (to avoid them being used after their "use by" date)?		
	Are new containers marked to show their full level?		
3	First Aid		
	Are first aid facilities easily accessible?		
	Are eye wash facilities available in case of an accident?		
	Is first aid assistance nearby?		
<p>Comments/further action to be taken: <i>(please include details of any necessary action and dates – continue on a separate sheet if necessary)</i></p>			
<p>This checklist has been completed to the best of my knowledge.</p> <p>Signed: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Job title: _____</p>			