

# OCE23

## Offshore COSHH essentials



This information will help offshore dutyholders (owners, operators and contractors) to comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), as amended, to protect workers' health.

This guidance consolidates good control practice and reinforces existing knowledge with additional information.

It will help you carry out COSHH assessments, review existing assessments, deliver training and in supervising activities involving substances hazardous to health.

It is aimed at staff whose responsibilities include the management of substances hazardous to health on offshore installations (eg occupational health specialists, COSHH assessors, supervisors etc). It is also useful for trade union and employees safety representatives.

Following this guidance is not compulsory and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow this guidance, you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance as illustrating good practice.

Also see essential information on the back of the sheet.

# Cleaning up body fluids

## Control approach 1 General ventilation

### What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good practice for cleaning up body fluids – vomit, faeces, blood etc. It covers the key points you need to follow to help reduce exposure to an acceptable level, as part of your COSHH assessment.

### Hazards

- ./ Body fluids are a source of infectious micro-organisms (bacteria, viruses and fungi).
- ./ The main risk is infection following hand to mouth/nose/eye contact.
- ./ There is also a risk of infection via broken skin (cuts or scratches).
- ./ Cleaning products may contain hazardous substances such as biocides and surfactants.
- ./ Health effects from cleaning products include irritation, dermatitis and breathing problems.

### Access

- ./ Erect barriers and notices.

### Storage

- ./ Store cleaning products and materials in a designated area.

## Equipment and procedures

### Control equipment

- ./ Provide dedicated cleaning equipment.
- ./ Chlorine-releasing disinfectant is suitable, eg hypochlorite solution.
- ./ Provide closeable containers and bags, labelled 'Clinical waste'.
- ./ Provide buckets with disinfectant and long-handled brushes for personal decontamination at the exit point.

### Control procedures

- ./ Ensure a good standard of general ventilation.
- ./ Scrape up residues into the closeable container, for safe disposal.
- ./ Bag up contaminated material that needs laundry or disposal, eg bedding, clothing.
- ./ Wash surfaces clean with detergent before disinfecting.
- ./ Heavily fouled soft furnishings may need bagging for disposal as clinical waste.

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### *First aid*

- ./ Provide sterile wipes and clean water to cleanse wounds.
- ./ Keep a supply of sterile adhesive waterproof dressings nearby.

### *Personal protective equipment (PPE) – see OCM3*

- ./ Respiratory protective equipment (RPE) is not needed.

### *Other protective equipment*

- ./ Provide eye protection – a full-face visor.
- ./ Provide disposable coveralls with a hood.
- ./ Provide a disposable plastic apron.
- ./ Provide wellingtons or waterproof disposable overshoes.
- ./ Provide waterproof, abrasion-resistant gloves, eg nitrile.
- ./ Ensure that all cuts and abrasions are covered with a waterproof dressing before work begins.

## **Cleaning and housekeeping**

### *Decontamination*

- ./ Assume that everything that might be contacted by body fluids is contaminated.
- ./ Clean and disinfect the area after the task.
- ./ Use the 'buddy' system to decontaminate PPE and work clothing – minimise the spread of contamination.
- ./ Change out of work clothing before exiting the area.
- ./ Provide bags labelled 'Clinical waste – Biohazard' for all contaminated PPE.
- ./ Disinfect or sterilise reusable work equipment.
- ./ Ensure that waste from the cleaning of body fluids is disposed of safely according to local rules and regulations.

Caution: If soiled, bag up work clothes for laundry as a separate load.

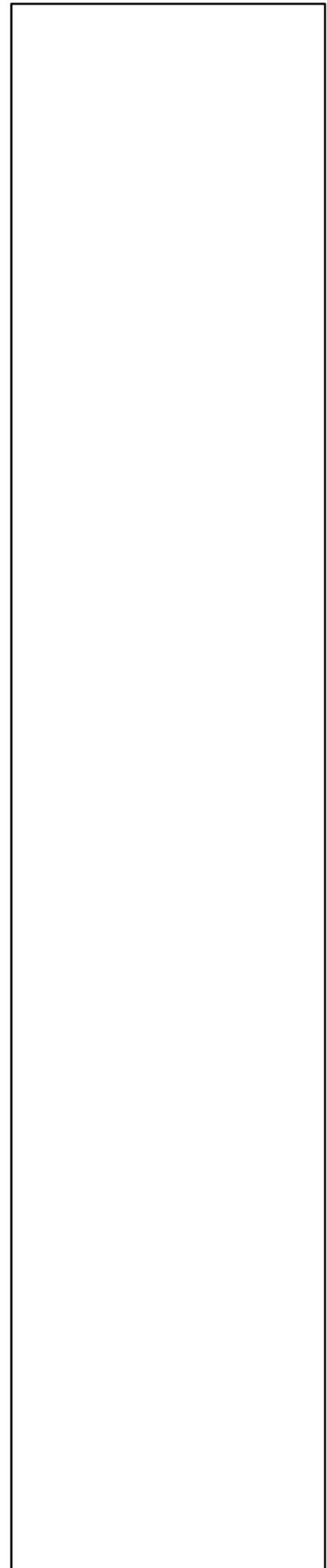
### *Personal decontamination and skin care*

- ./ Wash before eating or drinking, and after touching any surface or object that might be contaminated.
- ./ Provide warm water, mild skin cleansers, nailbrushes, and soft paper, fabric towels or hot air for drying. Avoid abrasive cleansers.
- ./ Instruct workers in how to clean their skin effectively.
- ./ Provide pre-work skin creams, which will make it easier to wash dirt from the skin, and after-work creams to replace skin oils.

Caution: 'Barrier creams' or 'liquid gloves' do not provide a full barrier.

## **Health surveillance**

- ./ Conduct skin checks for dermatitis.
- ./ Keep good records of gastric upsets – monitor that personal hygiene is adequate.
- ./ Where appropriate, make available effective vaccines for those workers at risk of repeated exposure to body fluids.



### Training and supervision

- ./ Provide supervision – ensure that safe work procedures are followed.
- ./ Tell workers, including maintenance workers, what the hazards and risks are.
- ./ Explain the early signs of dermatitis.
- ./ Training includes toolbox talks on:
  - how to use the right safe working procedures;
  - checking for damage;
  - personal hygiene;
  - how to decontaminate effectively; and
  - what to do if something goes wrong.
- ./ Involve managers and supervisors in health and safety training.

### Essential information

OCE0 *Advice for managers*

OCM3 *Personal protective equipment (PPE)*

OCE22 *Cleaning accommodation and facilities*

### Employee checklist

- Are you clear about the procedures for doing the job?
- Clean up leaks and spills immediately.
- Look for signs of wear and damage to equipment.
- If you find any problem, get it fixed. Don't just carry on working.
- Report all illnesses to your supervisor.
- Use, look after and store your PPE in accordance with instructions.
- Wash hands before eating, drinking or using the lavatory.

### Further information

*Working with sewage: The health hazards – A guide for employees* Pocket card INDG197 HSE Books 1995  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg197.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg197.pdf)

You can find the full Offshore COSHH essentials series at [www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/index.htm)

**This guidance was developed by representatives from the UK offshore oil and gas industry and trade unions, with HSE.**