

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland

Smash repair industry (including Spray Painters) – Hazardous substances

Most paints (especially those containing isocyanates) and solvents used in the smash repair industry are hazardous to health. These are classed as 'hazardous substances'. Some polishes, welding consumables, body fillers and adhesives are also hazardous substances.

It is important that the health and safety of workers using hazardous substances are protected.

There are several things that must be done if hazardous substances are used at your workplace:

- ensure all containers are labelled with the products name and the main safety information about the product (e.g. flammable)
- find out if the product is a hazardous substance. Do this by getting the product's Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) from the supplier. It will say on the MSDS whether or not the product is a hazardous substance
- make a list of the products that are hazardous substances - referred to as a 'Hazardous Substances Register'. (An example of a hazardous substance register is available)
- conduct a risk assessment for each hazardous substance (a sample of risk assessment is attached). The risk assessment will help to decide on how to use the products safely
- put into place the decisions made, based on the risk assessment, that will allow safe use of the product.

- train those who will be using the products on how to use them safely (this information will come from the MSDS and risk assessment). Keep a record of the training.
- put the MSDS with the hazardous substances register and make them available to those using the products.

Safe use of hazardous substances

When you do a risk assessment for each hazardous substance, you need to decide on the safest way to use it. Some questions to consider when making these decisions include:

- **Can I get rid of the hazardous substance altogether?** If you don't need it, get rid of it.
- **Can the hazardous substance be substituted for something less harmful?** Chemical manufacturers are frequently developing new products that do the same job but are less harmful. There may also be alternative processes that use less harmful chemicals.
- **Can I prevent people coming in contact with the hazardous substance?** For example, using an automatic gun wash machine eliminating the need for workers to do it by hand.
- **Do I have adequate ventilation to remove hazardous substance vapours/fumes?** You might be able to remove vapours and fumes from the workplace through an exhaust system or by increasing the flow of fresh air into the area. **IMPORTANT:** Don't rely on being able to smell a chemical to know if people are inhaling vapours as some chemicals have little or no odour.

- **Do I have work procedures that limit people's exposure to the hazardous substance?** Developing good work procedures can help minimise people's exposure to hazardous substance. For example, ensure:
 - equipment is properly maintained to prevent leaks
 - flammable chemicals are stored away from heat and ignition sources
 - chemical spill management procedures are in place
 - work involving hazardous substances is done when there are the least number of people around
 - people have been trained how to use the hazardous substance safely.

Refer to the information sheets on dust, spray painting and flammable liquids for further guidance.

For more information on hazardous substances, refer to the *Hazardous Substances Code of Practice* and the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 1997*.

For more information on hazardous substances and general workplace health and safety issues call 1300 369 915 or visit www.deir.qld.gov.au

The right personal protective equipment (PPE)

If you can't prevent people being exposed to a hazardous substance in any other way, you must provide people with the right personal protective equipment such as gloves, respirators and eye protection (refer to the substances MSDS for details on what personal protective equipment to use). People using personal protective equipment have to be trained in how to use and maintain the equipment properly.

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