

Containment

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Containment

Control approach 3



This guidance sheet is aimed at employers to help them comply with the requirements of

the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) by controlling exposure to chemicals and protecting workers' health.

The sheet is part of the HSE guidance pack *COSHH essentials: easy steps to control chemicals*. It can be used where the guide recommends control approach 3 (containment) as the suitable approach for your chemical(s) and task(s).

This sheet provides good practice advice on containment, and can be applied to a range of tasks involving small, medium or large-scale use of solids and liquids. It describes the key points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It is important that all the points are followed.

Some chemicals can also be flammable or corrosive. Where they are, your controls must be suitable for those hazards too. Look at the safety data sheet for more information.

Depending on the scale of work, releases into the atmosphere may be regulated within the pollution prevention and control (PPC) framework. You should consult your local authority or the Environment Agency. In Scotland, consult the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA). They will advise you if PPC legislation applies to your company, and about air cleaning and discharging emissions into the air. Otherwise, minimise emissions into the air.

Access

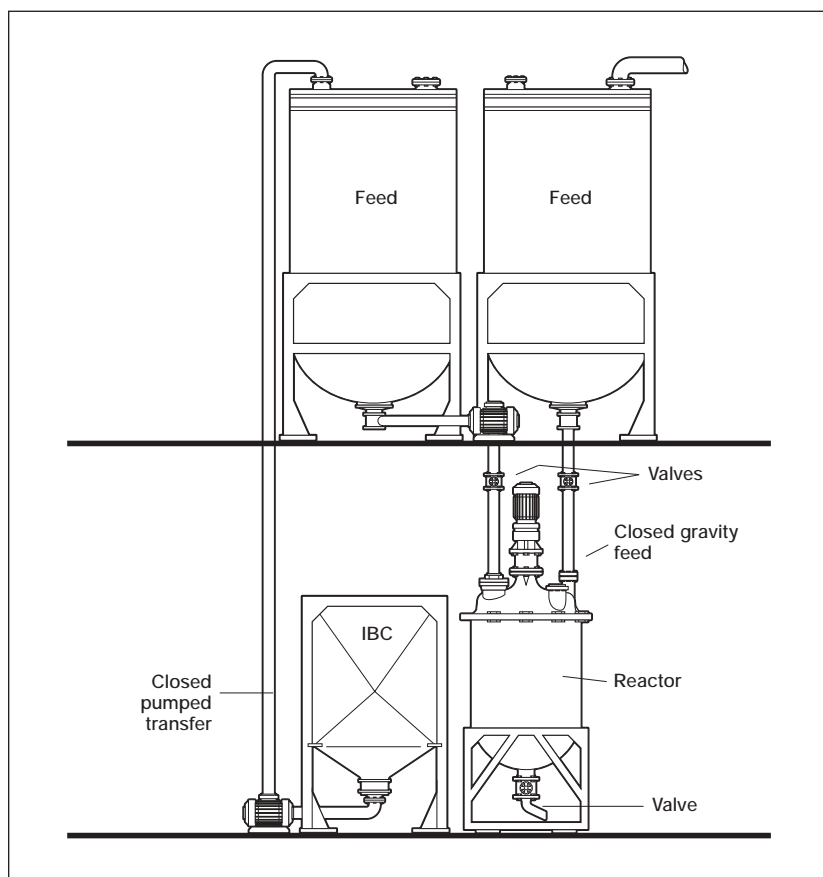
- ✓ Control staff entry to the work area.
- ✓ Work area and equipment should be clearly labelled.

Design and equipment

- ✓ You need to use closed systems to a standard normally used in industry. Limited breaching of containment is allowed, for example taking quality control samples.
- ✓ Design the closed system to allow easy maintenance.
- ✓ Where possible, keep equipment under negative pressure to stop leaks.
- ✓ Discharge extracted air to a safe place away from doors, windows and air inlets.
- ✓ Get information from the supplier on all parameters needed to safely operate the system.

Maintenance

- ✓ Ensure all equipment used in the task is maintained as advised by the supplier/installer, in effective and efficient working order and good repair.
- ✓ Adopt a 'permit to work' system for maintenance work.



- ✓ Follow any special procedures that are needed before the system is opened or entered, eg purging and washing.
- ✗ Don't enter any confined space until it has been checked for hazardous materials and oxygen content (see HSE publication INDG258).

Examination and testing

- ✓ Visually check all equipment at least once a week for signs of damage.
- ✓ Have equipment thoroughly examined and tested against its performance standard. This is generally at least every 14 months (see HSE publication HSG54).
- ✓ Keep records of all examinations and tests for at least five years.

Cleaning and housekeeping

- ✓ Clean equipment and the work area daily. Clean other equipment and the workroom regularly - once a week is recommended.
- ✓ Store packages/containers in a safe place, and dispose of empty packages/containers safely (see CGS 101).
- ✓ Put lids on containers immediately after use.
- ✓ Deal with any spills immediately.
- ✗ For dusts, don't clean up with a dry brush or compressed air, use a vacuum system or wet cleaning.
- ✓ For liquids, contain or absorb (with granules or mats).

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Chemicals in **hazard group S** can damage the skin and eyes, or enter the body through the skin and cause harm. See CGS S100 and S101 for more specific advice. Check the safety data sheets to see what personal protective equipment is necessary.
- ✓ Ask your safety clothing supplier to help you select suitable protective equipment.
- ✓ Respiratory protective equipment (RPE) shouldn't be needed for routine tasks. It may be needed for some cleaning and maintenance activities, eg dealing with spills. Be aware that some maintenance activity may involve entry into confined spaces. Decide if supplied air is needed when RPE is used.
- ✓ Ensure PPE is kept in a clean condition and replaced when necessary.

Training

- ✓ Give your workers information on the harmful nature of the chemicals.
- ✓ Provide them with training on: operating the process; following maintenance procedures; when and how to use PPE; and how to detect and deal with leaks.

Supervision

- ✓ Have a system to check that control measures are in place and are being followed.

Further information

- Safety data sheets
- *Safe work in confined spaces* INDG258 HSE Books 1999
- Control guidance sheets 101, 204, 302, S100 and S101

Employee checklist for making the best use of the controls

- Make sure any ventilation system is switched on and working.
- Look for signs of leaks, wear or damage of any equipment used. If you find any problems, tell your supervisor. Do not carry on working if you think there is a problem.
- Wash your hands before and after eating, drinking or using the lavatory.
- Do not use solvents to clean your skin.
- Clear up spills immediately. For liquids, contain or absorb spills with granules or mats. For solids, use vacuum cleaning or wet mopping. Dispose of spills safely.
- Use, maintain and store any PPE provided in accordance with instructions.



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