

13.0 Hazardous Substances

Hazardous substances are solids, liquids, or gases that can harm people, other living organisms, property, or the environment. They are often subject to chemical regulations. Hazardous substances include materials that are radioactive, flammable, explosive, corrosive, oxidizing, asphyxiating, bio hazardous, toxic, pathogenic, or allergenic.

13.1 HSE Guidance

Using chemicals or other hazardous substances at work can put people's health at risk, causing diseases including asthma, dermatitis or cancer. The [HSE](#) gives guidance on how to control hazardous substances at work so that they do not cause ill health.

The HSE provides extensive information on the Control of substances hazardous to health ([COSHH](#)) and the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals ([REACH](#)).

13.2 COSHH Regulations

[COSHH](#) is the law that requires employers to control substances that can harm worker's health.

The [HSE COSHH regulations](#) and [The Highland Council's guidance on COSHH](#) must be adhered to fully by any contractor carrying out work for The Highland Council; a COSHH assessment must be carried out on any chemicals or hazardous substances which are being used.

13.3 REACH Regulations

[REACH](#) is a European Union regulation concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and restriction of Chemicals. It came into force on 1st June 2007 and replaced a number of European Directives and Regulations with a single system.

Almost every business in the UK will have a new responsibility under REACH. There are three main types of REACH duty holder –

- Manufacturers/Importers
- Downstream Users
- Other actors in the supply chain (i.e. distributors, suppliers)

As with the COSHH regulations the REACH regulations must be adhered to fully by any company carrying out work for The Highland Council.

13.4 Asbestos

When asbestos fibres are inhaled they can cause serious diseases which are responsible for around 4000 deaths a year. Asbestos is the single greatest cause of work-related deaths in the UK.

As a result of these serious health risks [The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006](#) along with all [HSE](#) Asbestos Guidance must be fully adhered to in order to minimise the health risk when working with asbestos.

The Highland Council has an [Asbestos Register](#) in place; this contains a list of properties which have known or suspected locations of asbestos. The register and associated drawings and photographs can be viewed on the Assist Records website (www.assistrecords.co.uk); the username is the site/building name and the password is asbestos.

The asbestos register should always be consulted before beginning work on any Highland Council property and should also be used in conjunction with [The Highland Council's Asbestos Policies & Procedures](#) and [The Highland Council's Asbestos Management Plan](#) before any works liable to disturb building fabric or services are carried out.

13.5 Lead

Working with lead can put your health at risk, causing diseases including headaches, stomach pains and anaemia. Other serious symptoms include kidney damage, nerve and brain damage and infertility.

[The Control of Lead at Work](#) regulations require employers to control worker exposure to Lead. These regulations must be followed fully when carrying out work for The Highland Council.