

Take control

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## Chemicals and other substances

# Long term contact with chemicals or substances >

**This information bulletin has been produced to assist in the prevention of workplace injury and disease. By identifying causes and assessing and controlling risks employers and workers can take control of health and safety in the workplace.**

### Risk indicators in the workplace

Some things to look for include:

- Work processes which release hazardous fibres, vapours, mists, gases, fumes and so on into the air;
- Working without adequate control measures such as ventilation, or personal protective equipment;
- Obvious chemical smell in the air and on clothes;
- Complaints of for example, nausea, rashes, headaches and so on from employees or workplace visitors;
- Unlabelled containers of chemicals and substances;
- Rags and hankies used as respirators.

### Examples of what can be done to stop such occurrences from happening

Employers should, for example, make sure that:

- Chemicals and substances are not used unless necessary;
- Less hazardous substances are used in preference to more hazardous ones;
- Food and drink containers are not used to store chemicals;
- All hazardous substance and dangerous goods containers are well labelled so that employees can clearly identify them;
- Material Safety Data Sheets are obtained from suppliers or manufacturers of chemicals used on your premises;
- Barriers are used to keep employees at a distance from chemicals and substances;

putting safety first >



- Ventilation extraction systems are installed to reduce the spread of chemicals and substances;
- Safe work procedures are written for tasks involving chemicals and substances;
- Training is provided in the safe use of chemicals and substances;
- Appropriate, good fitting personal protective equipment, such as respirators, masks, overalls, gloves, face shields is provided.

### To find out more

For further information on this topic refer to:

The [Workplace Health and Safety Act](#) and the [Workplace Health and Safety Regulations](#) in particular those on protective equipment.

The [Dangerous Goods Regulations](#), in particular Regulations 13 to 16.

[Australian Standards](#) applicable to this topic include:

[AS 3544](#) Industrial vacuum cleaners for particulate hazardous to health

[NOHSC 3008](#) Exposure standards for atmospheric contaminants in the occupational environment

[NOHSC 2007](#) Control of workplace hazardous substances

[Australian Standards](#) are available from the Territory Construction Association, phone 8922 9666. Australian Standards can be viewed online by visiting the Northern Territory Library, Parliament House, phone 8999 7177.

*NT WorkSafe kindly acknowledges WorkCover SA.*

## NT WorkSafe >

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