Navigating the chemical guideline

The Guideline to Managing Risks with Chemicals in DoE workplaces is large because it covers a wide range of chemical topics across all departmental workplaces.

The following information highlights key areas of the guideline to help make managing chemicals at work safer and easier.

What does DoE say I need to do with chemicals in my workplace?

The department uses policies, procedures and guidelines to help staff meet their legislated responsibilities for managing chemicals. Department workplaces must follow any policies and procedures provided by the department. Mandatory chemical management practices are provided in the:

- Managing risks with chemicals in Department of Education (DoE) workplaces procedure.

Practical assistance with implementing the responsibilities outlined in this procedure is provided in the:

- Guideline for managing risks with chemicals in DoE workplaces.

Finding answers in the guideline

What chemicals are banned from use? See the prohibited and high risk chemicals list, appendix 4b.

What chemicals can I purchase? As long as the risk of storing, handling, using and disposing of the chemical is acceptable, you can purchase any chemical you require to complete a task provided:

- it is not on the prohibited chemical list
- it does not require health monitoring (appendix 2a)
- you have explored the availability of a less hazardous, fit-for-purpose substance
- you are not introducing any significant new hazards into the workplace.

You can use the checklist in appendix 4a for guidance during the purchasing process.

How do I dispose of chemical waste? See chapter 6. Appendix 6a has a disposal chart and appendices 6b and 6c help you to compile a disposal manifest to obtain quotes and prepare waste for licenced contractors to remove.

What is a hazardous chemical register and do I need one? The legislation requires you to have a hazardous chemical register. Section 3.2 tells you what you need to know and appendix 3a provides a template for you to use if you do not already use ChemWATCH.

Do I need a manifest? You don't *legally* need a manifest until your dangerous goods storage quantities exceed those listed in schedule 11 of the WHS Regulation 2011. However, section 3.1 of the guideline explains why **it is a good idea to have one**. You can use ChemWATCH to easily maintain a manifest, or use the manifest template provided in appendix 3a.

Do I need a safety data sheet (SDS)? Yes. You need a manufacturer's SDS for each hazardous chemical in your workplace. An SDS provides information about the hazardous nature of chemicals and how to use them safely. In an educational environment, it is good practice to have an SDS for non-hazardous chemicals as well, since there is still a requirement under the WHS Regulation for the safe management of these chemicals. Section 2.1.1 outlines SDS requirements. It is very important that chemical users know how to read and interpret an SDS.

Do I need labels on my chemicals? Yes! You need a label on every chemical container because labels are the first place you look for hazard information. Sections 2.1.3 and 4.5 outline label requirements. Labels are important not just for you, but for the safety of everyone who comes into contact with the chemical.

What is placarding and when do I need to do it? Placarding is safety signage used to advise of bulk chemical storage. Sections 4.6, 4.7.5 and appendix 4f provide advice on why, when and how to placard. Workplaces with swimming pools, fuel depots, bulk agricultural chemicals and LP gas may need to placard their storage and the site.

How do I manage chemical spills? Each workplace is required to have an emergency plan. This plan should include chemical spill response strategies. You should also have spill kits specific to the type of chemicals you use. The kits are to be located close to where chemicals are stored and used. Spill kits can be purchased from science suppliers and safety shops or put together yourself. Appendix 7a contains guidance on spill kit contents.

It is helpful to develop safe operating procedures (SOPs) for specific chemicals to manage spill clean-ups. SOPs can also be useful to advise and train workers in correct spill response.

Can I transport chemicals in my own vehicle? It is the department's preference that employee's private vehicles are NOT used for the transport of chemicals. Section 4.7 covers the transport requirements of small quantities of chemicals if you have management approval to do so.

Can I spray herbicides? You might need an *ACDC* licence to spray herbicides in certain areas of Queensland. See appendix 4g. Remember that schools officers are prohibited from using S6 and S7 biocides.

More chemical resources can be found on the department's Chemicals and Hazardous Substances webpage.

Risk assessment information

The users of chemicals need to ensure that a sound risk management process is in place to identify and manage the risks before using any chemical product.

For **non-hazardous** chemicals, this process can be achieved through regular planning and following the manufacturer's safe directions for use. Chemical Hazards in the Curriculum template for student based **curriculum** activities can be accessed here.

When do I have to do a risk assessment when using chemicals? The department requires that a formal chemical risk assessment is completed for the handling, storage, use and disposal of all hazardous chemicals. Chapter 5 outlines risk assessment requirements. You can use the Chemical Risk Assessment Template found here.

ChemWATCH

ChemWATCH (GoldFFX) is an online chemical database that provides a number of helpful chemical management features. You can access a FFX FAQ factsheet here.

The department has an online subscription to ChemWATCH that each workplace can access through the Chemicals and Hazardous substances section of the Creating Healthier Workplaces website. The database itself can be opened here. An eLearning training link for GoldFFX is available here.

Information for using FFX as a risk management tool can be found in the FFX FAQ Factsheet or in s5.1.1 of the Chemical Guideline.

Legal information and resources for managing chemicals

The legislation describes the broad legal duties related to chemical management we need to uphold to safely manage the use of all chemicals, irrespective of the quantities and types of chemicals that may be used. For chemicals, the key legislation in Queensland is the:

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Qld)
- Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 (Qld) (mostly chapter 7)

Within the legislation, chemicals are now classified as hazardous chemicals in line with the:

- *Globally Harmonised System for Classification and Labelling of Chemicals 4th Revised Edition.*

More information about the GHS is available here.

Other information that helps us to comply with the requirements of the legislation includes:

- Managing Risks of Hazardous Chemicals in the Workplace Code of Practice 2012
- Hazardous Chemicals Code of Practice 2003
- How to Manage Work Health and Safety Risks Code of Practice 2011

Further information

If you have further enquiries about the management and safe use of chemicals or you would like advice or assistance on chemical related matters, please contact your line manager, workplace Health and Safety Advisor, your regional Health and Safety Consultant, Institute Health and Safety Managers/Coordinators and/or the health and safety staff in the Organisational Health Unit.