



CHEMICAL RISK ASSESSMENTS - CONSUMER PRODUCTS EXEMPTIONS EXPLAINED

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012 (WHS Regulations) and associated Codes of Practice provides practical guidance on how to manage health and safety risks associated with hazardous chemicals for persons conducting a business or undertaking who use chemicals in their workplace.

Under the WHS Regulations, a hazardous chemical is any substance, mixture or article that satisfies the criteria of one or more *Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals* (GHS) hazard classes, including a classification in Schedule 6 of the WHS Regulations. The WHS Regulations include specific duties for a person conducting a business or undertaking to manage the risks to health and safety associated with using, handling, generating and storing hazardous chemicals at a workplace. In relation to chemicals, a hazard is a set of inherent properties of the substance, mixture, article or process that may cause adverse effects to organisms or the environment.

Workers have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and must not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons. Workers must comply with any reasonable instruction and cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure relating to the use, handling and storage of hazardous chemicals at the workplace.

2. IDENTIFIED RISKS AND CONTROLS

2.1 Safe Management of Chemicals

The Safe Management of Chemicals Procedure outlines the planned arrangements for the safe management of chemicals in our university workplaces, and applies to all University staff and research students storing, handling or using chemicals for research, teaching or support services. Potential hazards associated with the purchase, hire, lease or design of hazardous chemicals are to be identified and assessed prior to purchase or design using **WHS12 Chemical Process Risk Assessment and Control**.

2.2 Hazardous Chemicals – Consumer Products

The WHS Regulations defines hazardous chemical ‘consumer products’ and provides some exemptions from regulatory requirements for consumer products when it is reasonably foreseeable that the hazardous chemical will be used at the workplace only in:

- i. quantities that are consistent with household use; or
- ii. a way that is consistent with household use; and
- iii. a way that is incidental to the nature of the work carried out by a worker using the hazardous chemical.

Consumer products are defined as a thing that:

- i. is packed or repacked primarily for use by a household consumer or for use in an office; and
- ii. if the thing is packed or repacked primarily for use by a household consumer—is packed in the way and quantity in which it is intended to be used by a household consumer; and
- iii. if the thing is packed or repacked primarily for use in an office—is packed in the way and quantity in which it is intended to be used for office work.



2.2.1 Recommended Controls

- 1) *In the case of properly-labelled consumer products (e.g. purchased from a supermarket or hardware store) in small quantities (say, less than 500 mL or 500 grams) and used for routine use in offices or staff kitchens for their normal purpose, the product may be used in accordance with the safety instructions on the label without a requirement to carry out a formal risk assessment using form **WHS12** or to enter the chemical on GoldFFX.*
- 2) *For properly-labelled consumer products (e.g. purchased from a supermarket or hardware store) in small quantities (i.e less than 500 mL or 500 grams) and used for routine use in offices or staff kitchens for their normal purpose, it is optional to enter the chemical on GoldFFX.*
- 3) *Where consumer products are used in a manner or quantity different to normal household use, these exemptions do not apply and the legislative requirements must be followed, including recording the chemical in the GoldFFX register, obtaining SDSs to determine the level of risk to workers, and the appropriate controls that need to be implemented.*
- 4) *Safety information on labels must be followed and sufficient information about safe use, handling and storage of the hazardous chemical must be available to workers and emergency services workers.*

Useful Links and Documents:

- [UniSA Safety & Wellbeing website](#)
- [SafeWork SA Resources \(Legislation and codes of practice\)](#)
- [Australian Standards online \(UniSA subscription\)](#)
- Safe Management of Chemicals Procedure
- WHS12 Chemical Process Risk Assessment and Control