**Hazardous Substances**

**Purpose and Scope**

This procedure outlines the basic principles for managing the storage and use of hazardous chemicals, dangerous goods, carcinogens and poisons at Bega Valley Shire Council. Collectively the terms ‘chemicals’ will be used to incorporate all of the above substances.

The overarching principle is to provide a systematic method for identifying and controlling potential chemical hazards in order to minimise the risk of adverse health and safety effects to persons, the environment or property.

This procedure applies to all staff, volunteers, visitors and contractors. It includes activities such as working with chemicals, storing them, or supervising the use or storage of such chemicals.

**Glossary of terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hazardous Chemicals</td>
<td>Substances which have the potential to harm the health of people and the effects are generally over long term use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety Data Sheet</td>
<td>A document which outlines specific health and safety information about the substance. Information includes: Whether the substance is classified as hazardous Chemical aspects of the substance First aid advice Risk controls to prevent injury</td>
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**Duties & Responsibilities**

**Council**

- Address the legal requirements to protect the health and well-being of all Council employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors who may be exposed to hazardous chemicals.
- Provide education regarding this procedure to all staff of the Council.
- Ensure that sufficient and appropriate signage is strategically placed where required.
- Maintain systems to ensure all workers handling chemicals are provided with appropriate training, equipment and PPE to ensure they are able to work safely.
- Ensure all new employees are made aware of this procedure at induction training.

**Managers, supervisors, team leaders**

- Ensure the objectives of this procedure are implemented into work practices.
- Ensure that all employees and contractors under their control fully understand the requirements and provisions of this procedure.
• Provide training and supervision to workers on the safe handling and storage of chemicals.
• Ensure workers comply at all times with the requirements of this procedure and with procedures for the safe handling of chemicals, including the wearing of PPE.
• Ensure all chemical related incidents are reported in a timely manner.
• Ensure any reported incidents of non-compliance are resolved through training and supervision, counselling, and where necessary disciplinary procedures.
• Ensure site specific chemical registers are updated and maintained.

Workers
• Follow safe work procedures for the handling of chemicals at all times.
• Wear the necessary PPE at all times when handling chemicals.
• Report all spills and chemical related incidents immediately.

Purchasing
Every effort should be made to ensure that the hazardous nature of new chemicals is established prior to purchase by reviewing the SDS. This will identify if appropriate controls can be implemented prior to delivery of the chemical. All new chemicals are to be added to the chemical register.

Chemical Register
All chemicals will be entered into Council’s chemical register, which will record the nature of the chemical, the location of storage, chemical hazard, usage, PPE, SDS, details of risk assessments.

Copies of the chemical register will be kept and maintained by each department where chemicals are stored.

Contractors who are using hazardous chemicals must also keep a copy of their work chemical register in the area where the chemicals are used.

Safety Data Sheets
The SDS for each chemical must be readily accessible and available in the immediate vicinity of where a chemical is both used and stored at all times. The SDS must be from the supplier and must contain Australian contact details.

The SDS must be reviewed annually to ensure:
• Each chemical has an applicable SDS,
• The issue date for each SDS is less than 5 years old; and
• Each SDS is protected from environmental conditions e.g. dust, water and remains legible.

The details of the SDS will be used as the basis for training for workers on the safe use, handling and storage of chemicals.

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1 The current chemical register used by Council is ChemWatch. Individual sections/asset owners are responsible for ensuring that the Chemical Manifest is updated and maintained. If it is not viable to use the ChemWatch electronic database a hardcopy Hazardous Chemicals Register has been created and should be used instead. If staff are using a paper based system it is recommended that a hazardous chemicals field folder is used containing the Chemical Manifest, Chemical Risk Assessments and SDS.
Labelling

- Each container that holds a hazardous chemical is required to be labelled.
- Chemicals for immediate use after decanting are not required to be labelled provided the container is cleaned immediately after it has been emptied of the substance.
- All labels must meet minimum standards including for decanted chemicals that specifies the following mandatory information:
  - Product name
  - Risk and Safety phrases
  - Contact details for supplier
  - Emergency information (at a glance)
  - Hazard warning word/dangerous goods class and symbol (e.g. Flammable)

Containers that are too small for a label must:

- Have a label attached to the container, e.g. with string, or
- Have the name of the chemical written on the outside of the container with permanent marker and be stored within another container that is appropriately labelled.

In addition to general WHS signage, chemicals and products in packages, containers, tanks and pipelines must be correctly labelled. This allows easy identification to avoid incorrect use and subsequently any potential harm to people or damage to plant or property.

Preliminary Risk Assessments

To determine the level of risk associated with any chemical, a simple risk assessment is to be performed using information contained in the SDS and any other information based on the intended use of the substance.

If the review of the SDS shows the risk can be controlled in accordance with the information outlined in the SDS then no further risk assessment is required.

For all hazardous chemicals, the information contained in the SDS shall be the default risk assessment and control plan for safe use unless a detailed risk assessment determines otherwise.

Detailed Risk Assessments

If the preliminary risk assessment identifies that the substance cannot be controlled as outlined in the SDS, then a detailed risk assessment is required and should be documented on a risk assessment template.

Storage

Storage quantities should be kept to a minimum to cater for demand. Adequate storage facilities must be provided for all chemicals. For dangerous goods this includes requirements for separation and segregation for all incompatible substances.

Some dangerous goods require having dedicated Australian Standard approved cabinets for each type of dangerous goods (depending on quantity stored).

Safe Disposal

Waste minimisation practices should be encouraged through purchasing smaller quantities, using minimum quantities and sharing chemical resources where practicable.

Disposal down sinks is prohibited.
Air Monitoring and Health Surveillance

The aim of health surveillance is not as an alternative to the maintenance of control measures but as a method to ensure that control measures are effective and to provide an opportunity to reinforce specific preventative measures and safe work practices. Health surveillance is required for employees where:

- There is a risk to the health of an employee as a result of exposure to a hazardous chemical listed in Schedule 14 of the WHS Regulation 2011 (an example of this is provided in Annex 1).
- There is a risk of exposure to a hazardous chemical for which an identifiable disease or health effect may be associated and for which there is reasonable likelihood that the disease or health effect is work related.

Dealing with Chemical Spills

Refer to the relevant SDS for the chemical involved in the spill and follow the directions additionally staff are directed to follow the directions in Site Specific Emergency Management Instructions for Chemical Spills.

Additional Requirements for Dangerous Goods

Dangerous goods are substances or articles classified upon the characteristics they display. This means that “chemicals and explosives” are grouped and labelled based upon the physical hazards they pose. They present an immediate danger due to such attributes as embedded energy (e.g. explosives), concentration (e.g. acids), and may present an immediate risk to health and safety if there is an accidental release.

There are nine classes of dangerous goods:

- Class 1 Explosives
- Class 2 Gases (Flammable, Compressed/Non-Toxic, Poisonous)
- Class 3 Flammable Liquids
- Class 4 Flammable Solids
- Class 5 Oxidisers & Organic Peroxides
- Class 6 Toxic Substances
- Class 7 Radioactive Substances
- Class 8 Corrosive Substances
- Class 9 Miscellaneous Dangerous Goods

Manifest Sites and Placarding

Council is required to submit a Dangerous Goods notification annually to WorkCover. The notification details sites (primarily water/waste treatment plants and the Council Depot) where dangerous goods are stored at quantities above certain thresholds.

Where quantities of hazardous chemicals exceed the threshold outlined in Schedule 11 of the WHS Regulation 2011 placarding is required. Each such location is required to have HAZCHEM placard signage on the entrance to the location.

A manifest may also be required where quantities of hazardous chemicals exceed the thresholds for manifests outlined in Schedule 11 of the Regulation.
Where a manifest is required it must contain:

- The relevant Council contacts and their phone numbers
- The address of Council and of sites where the chemicals are stored
- Details of the chemicals, quantities and storage locations

Further information on manifest requirements is contained in Schedule 12 of the WHS Regulation 2011.

**Segregation and Separation**

Dangerous goods incompatible with other substances are to be segregated from other dangerous goods to eliminate or reduce risk associated with contact as follows:

- Solids/liquids - 1.5m;
- Gases - 3m.
  Dangerous Goods should be separated from people or property. Where barriers are used these should be impervious.

**Record Keeping**

The following records must be maintained in accordance with Council's Record Management requirements.

- Risk assessments
- Chemical register and SDS
- Induction and training programs
- Health surveillance/air monitoring results
- Inspection and testing records for engineering controls
- Dangerous Goods manifests