Hazardous Chemicals

Policy Number: 5.020

Policy Function: Safe Practice and Environment

Issue Date: 19 August 2013

Summary: This policy provides framework to assist in minimising the occurrence of hazardous chemicals and dangerous goods related incidents and injuries.

Responsible Officer: Executive Director Governance and Commercial Services

Applicable Sites:
- Administration Centres
- Community Sites (e.g. Court Liaison Service, Community Integration Team, etc.)
- Health Centres (Adult Correctional Centres or Police Cells)
- Health Centres (Juvenile Justice Centres)
- Long Bay Hospital
- Forensic Hospital

Previous Issue(s): Policy 5.020 (Apr 2009)

Change Summary:
- Change of legislation
- Change of name

TRIM Reference: POLJH/5020

Authorised by: Chief Executive, Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network
1. Preface

Justice Health & Forensic Mental Health Network (JH&FMHN) is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all workers. As part of this commitment, hazardous substances and dangerous goods in the workplace will be managed in accordance with legislation.

This policy provides a framework to assist in minimising the occurrence of hazardous chemicals and dangerous goods related incidents and injuries. This policy should be used in conjunction with Safe Work Australia Code of Practice Managing risks of hazardous chemicals in the workplace.

2. Policy Content

2.1 Mandatory requirements

JH&FMHN as the person conducting business or undertaking is required to,

- ensure the safe use, handling and storage of substances, and
- manage the risks to health and safety associated with using, handling, generating and storing hazardous chemicals at a workplace.

2.2 Implementation – Roles & Responsibilities

Chief Executive and Executive Directors are responsible for:

- ensuring that JH&FMHN uses appropriate resources and processes to eliminate or minimise risks that arise from hazardous chemicals at the workplace.

Senior Managers (Service Directors, Nurse Managers, Operational Managers) are responsible for:

- ensuring their managers and workers comply with this policy;
- ensuring a chemical register is maintained in the workplace, and is readily accessible to workers (this includes Safety Data Sheets (SDS));
- provision of health monitoring to workers if required (if working with hazardous chemicals listed in schedule 14 Code of Practice Managing risks of hazardous chemicals in the workplace);
- ensuring that a risk assessment for all processes that use the substance has been conducted in consultation with workers;
- providing information, training, instruction and supervision to workers; and
- ensuring workers wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

Managers (Department Managers and Nursing Unit Managers) are responsible for:

- implementing this policy;
- ensuring the chemical register is maintained in the workplace and captured in TRIM in site specific chemical register folders, and is readily accessible to workers, including the chemicals SDSs;
- ensuring that a risk assessment for all processes that use the chemical has been conducted in consultation with workers;
- ensuring all chemical containers are appropriately labelled; and
- ensuring workers wear appropriate personal protective equipment as per safe work practices and SDSs.

Worker is responsible for:

- complying with this policy;
- reporting actual and potential hazards relating to hazardous chemicals; and
- following safe work practices (SWP) as well as using equipment and personal protective equipment which has been provided.
Control of Hazardous Chemicals

Work Health and Safety (WHS) Coordinator is responsible for:

- managing the Chemalert system; and
- providing advice and guidance to managers.

3. Procedures

3.1 Hazardous Chemicals

Under the Work Health and Safety Regulations, a hazardous chemical is any substance, mixture or article that satisfies the criteria of one or more hazard classes in the *Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS)*. This includes dangerous goods; most substances that are classified as a dangerous good are also hazardous chemicals. This includes cytotoxic medications and other medications/products that require special handling.

Hazardous chemicals can affect health in the short term with symptoms such as headaches, burns, skin irritation, or in the long term with conditions such as asthma, dermatitis or cancer after years of exposure. Exposure can occur through inhalation, ingestion, or absorption through skin or eye contact.

Hazardous chemicals can be identified by reading the label and the SDSs.

3.2 Risk Management Process for Hazardous Chemicals

A person conducting business or undertaking (PCBU) must manage risks associated with using, handling, generating or storing of hazardous chemicals at a workplace in consultation with workers. To manage risk under the *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011*, JH&FMHN must:

- identify hazards;
- if necessary, assess the risks associated with these hazards;
- eliminate or minimise the risks by implementing and maintaining controls; and
- review control measures to ensure they are effective.

JH&FMHN policy 5.115 *WHS Risk Management* provides further information on the risk management process.

Risk assessments must be kept in the workplace in accordance with the Government Disposal Authority (GDA) for a minimum of 5 years after the last action is completed. Risk assessment must also be captured in TRIM in site specific risk register folders.

Where health surveillance is required, and monitoring must be utilised, records must be kept for the allocated time periods relating to any monitoring and health surveillance performed including records of consultation with employees involved with these processes.

3.3 Chemical Register

A chemical register must be kept and maintained in each individual workplace. This register must be updated when new substances are introduced or if the use of a substance is discontinued, or at least once every 12 months. The register must contain a list of all chemicals contained in a JH&FMHN workplace and a SDS for all chemicals classified as a hazardous substance or dangerous good.

The register must be accessible to all workers. A chemical register form EMP 141 is located on the intranet, or registers can be created in Chemalert and printed. Each update of the chemical registers must be captured in TRIM in the workplaces allocated site specific chemical register folder.

3.4 Safety Data Sheets

A hardcopy of the SDS must be located within the work area and be accessible to all workers. SDSs must be dated within the last five years and be available prior to use of the chemical. The supplier is required to provide a copy of the SDSs on first purchase and if the SDSs is amended.
3.5 Labels

The Work Health and Safety Regulation 2011 requires hazardous substances and dangerous goods to be labelled. Suppliers are responsible for labelling containers and must ensure that all containers of hazardous substances and dangerous goods are appropriately labelled.

If containers are found without a label in the workplace, containers must be disposed of in accordance with JH&FMHN policy 5.175 Waste Management.

3.6 Decanting

A hazardous chemical that is decanted and used completely and immediately does not require labelling, for example when the pouring of a substance into a bucket with water is used to mop the floor, and the contents of the bucket is disposed of immediately after use. If a substance is decanted and kept in a container for up to 12 hours or a shift length, the container must be labelled with the product name and the relevant risk and safety phrases.

Where practical, substances should be purchased in appropriate sizes to ensure a chemical is used completely and immediately.

3.7 Purchase of a New Hazardous Chemical

Prior to the introduction of any new chemical into a workplace, a risk assessment must be conducted and if required a SWP developed for the task for which the chemical will be used. A copy of the SDS must be forwarded to all workplaces where the substance is to be used and training needs assessed. A substance should not be approved to be purchased if an alternative less hazardous is available for use.

3.8 Disposal

All hazardous substances and dangerous goods must be disposed of appropriately and a copy of the SDS is to accompany the substance off site. Please refer to the JH&FMHN Waste Management Manual prior to the disposal of any substances.

3.9 First Aid

First aid arrangements must be in place in accordance with JH&FMHN policy 5.040 First Aid. A risk assessment of the hazardous chemicals will determine whether any special first aid measures need to be included at the facility for example: eye wash stands or safety shower.

If a worker is injured whilst using a substance and medical treatment is required a copy of the SDS is to accompany the worker. Workers must notify any incidents or injuries to their manager and via the Incident Information Management System (IIIMS). All incidents must be investigated as per JH&FMHN policy 5.040 First Aid.

3.10 Training

Provision of instruction and information is essential to any incident prevention strategy and, training is required to be assessed, be included as part of induction and be particular to the task being performed.

Instruction and information must include,

- Hazards involved in the task,
- Control measures to minimise risks, and
- Spill control, first aid and emergency response and incident reporting.

Records of training must be kept for 5 years.

3.11 Storage

All chemicals, when not in use must be stored in non-patient areas or secured in cupboards. Oxygen cylinders must be restrained and secured in accordance with AS 4332-1995 relating to the storage and handling of gases in cylinders.
3.12 Chemalert

Chemalert is a chemical information and management database that enables users to search for chemicals, access SDSs, develop and maintain chemical registers and undertake risk assessments. All workers are able to search for any chemical on Chemalert without the need to login and print the SDSs. To develop and maintain chemical registers and risk assessments, a login and password is required. This is arranged by the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Coordinator.

If the chemical used in the workplace cannot be found on Chemalert, workers must contact the WHS Coordinator to arrange to have the chemical’s SDS placed on Chemalert.

Chemalert is located on the JH&FMHN intranet site in useful links. An eLearning training package is also available on the site.

Workplaces are still required to have a paper version of the chemical register and SDSs, as these must be accessible at all time to workers.

4. Definitions

Safety Data Sheets

A safety data sheet (SDS) is a document prepared by the manufacturer or supplier of a product. An SDS will clearly state whether a product is classified as a hazardous substance or a dangerous good. The workplace must have a copy of an SDS prior to commencement of any work involving the use of a hazardous substance. Although SDSs are available on Chemalert, a hardcopy of the SDS must be located with the chemical register and be accessible to all workers.

Must
Indicates a mandatory action or requirement.

Should
Indicates a recommended action that should be followed unless there are sound reasons for taking a different course of action.

5. Legislation and Related Documents

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