

# 9 Health and safety

**A** The average person finds it difficult to assess **risks**. For this reason, work practices need to be **regulated**. Examples of **dangerous** activities are:

- welding or grinding without **goggles**
- working on a construction site work without a **hard hat**
- working in **noisy** factories, cabs, on airport tarmacs and with outdoor machinery without ear protection
- working in chemical areas without **protective clothing**
- **smoking** near hazardous **substances**

Without regulation some employees will take risks.

Health and safety is a part of employment (labour) law. It covers general matters such as:

- **occupational health**
- **accident prevention regulations**
- special regulations for hazardous occupations such as mining and building
- provisions for risks such as **poisons**, **dangerous machinery**, **dust**, **noise**, **vibration**, and **radiation**
- the full range of dangers arising from modern industrial processes, for example the widespread use of chemicals

**B** The key concerns for health and safety are to assess the *risks and hazards* by identifying and quantifying the *effects* so that appropriate *protective measures* can be taken.

### Risks and hazards

combustion • contamination • drains • dust • explosion  
flammable • friction • fumes • fumigation • gas  
harmful • shock • spraying • toxic • vapour

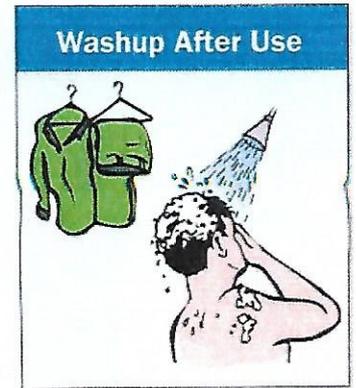
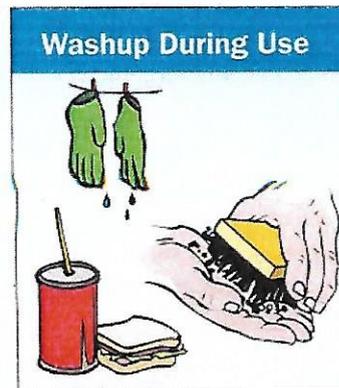
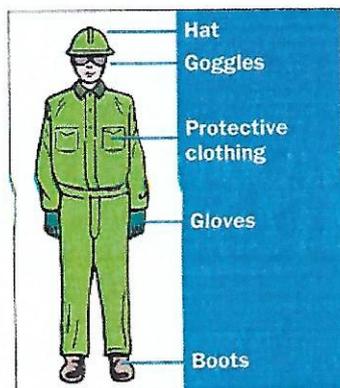
### Effects

adverse effects • birth defect • burn • cancer • dizziness  
drowsiness • genetic damage • impair fertility • irreversible effect • vomiting

### Protective measures

avoid contact with • dispose of • dry • handle • keep  
precautionary • protect • recycle • rinse • seal  
tightly • wash • well-ventilated

**C** The following health and safety notices show some protective measures that can be taken:



## TASKS

### 1 Choose the correct word in each sentence.

- 1 Store containers in a **well-ventilated/good-ventilated** place
- 2 Wipe up any spillages immediately and **wash/rinse** with soapy water.
- 3 Process cooling water can be **returned/recycled**.
- 4 This chemical is **toxic/intoxicating** if swallowed.
- 5 Leftover chemicals should be **disproved/disposed** of safely.
- 6 Please wear protective gloves when **fingering/handling** this material.
- 7 Remember that asbestos fibres can cause **cancer/coma**.
- 8 Pregnant women should not take this medicine as it may cause birth **defects/effects**.
- 9 Increased levels of radiation may lead to **compared/impaired** fertility.
- 10 Do not empty chemical paint products into the **drains/grains**.
- 11 **Protect/Avoid** contact with skin and eyes.
- 12 Do not use with other products as it may release dangerous **fumes/fumigation**.

### 2 Complete the following sentences with a form of the word in brackets.

- 1 When working in this area, please wear \_\_\_\_\_ clothing (protect).
- 2 Don't pour used chemicals into the drains as they will cause \_\_\_\_\_ (contaminate).
- 3 Heating this liquid may cause an \_\_\_\_\_ (explode).
- 4 These chemicals must be kept in a locked cupboard because they are \_\_\_\_\_ (harm).
- 5 While they repair the roof, we will close this department as a \_\_\_\_\_ measure (precaution).
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_ health is one part of Health and Safety (occupation).
- 7 Working in a noisy factory without ear protectors is a \_\_\_\_\_ activity (danger).
- 8 Petrol and oil are \_\_\_\_\_ chemicals (flame).
- 9 Make sure the containers are closed \_\_\_\_\_ (tight).
- 10 Make sure you are wearing breathing equipment before starting \_\_\_\_\_ (fume).

### 3 The manager in charge of health and safety is explaining things to some new employees. Complete what he says by filling the blanks with the correct word from the box.

noise • protection • drowsiness • dust • accidents • smoke  
poisonous • fumes • risks • burns • goggles

MANAGER: New government regulations mean that we are all required to be more aware of (a) \_\_\_\_\_ in the workplace. As your employer, we will provide you with the necessary safety equipment. You must wear (b) \_\_\_\_\_ to protect your eyes when working on this machinery. You should also wear ear (c) \_\_\_\_\_ because the (d) \_\_\_\_\_ from the machines is high enough to cause damage to your hearing. And of course, there is a lot of (e) \_\_\_\_\_ in the air, so please wear masks to stop you breathing it in. But, you too are responsible for your safety and for preventing (f) \_\_\_\_\_ happening.

EMPLOYEE: Are we looking at fire risks?

MANAGER: Yes, of course. Remember that it is very dangerous to (g) \_\_\_\_\_ near the chemical store. In fact, we have a no smoking policy throughout the company. Chemicals themselves are, of course, (h) \_\_\_\_\_ so they should never enter your mouth. They could cause (i) \_\_\_\_\_ if you get them on your skin. If you leave them without a lid, (j) \_\_\_\_\_ may escape and cause headaches, (k) \_\_\_\_\_ or dizziness.