

# G206

## Sack filling

### COSHH essentials



The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) require employers to ensure that exposure is prevented or, where this is not reasonably practicable, adequately controlled. This guidance gives practical advice on how this can be achieved by applying the principles of good practice for the control of exposure to substances hazardous to health, as required by COSHH.

It is aimed at people whose responsibilities include the management of substances hazardous to health at work (eg occupational health specialists, anyone undertaking COSHH assessments, supervisors and is also useful for trade union and employee safety representatives). It will help you carry out COSHH assessments, review existing assessments, deliver training and supervise activities involving substances hazardous to health.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance.

See Essential information near the end of the sheet.

### Control approach 2 Engineering control

#### What this sheet covers

This sheet describes good control practice when carrying out sack filling.

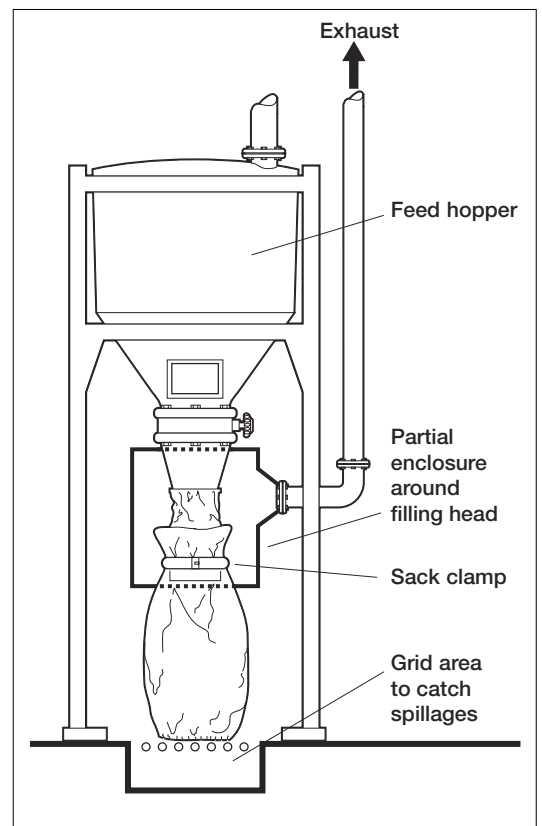
It covers the key points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level. Follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

#### Access to work area

- ✓ Allow access to authorised and appropriately trained people only.

#### Equipment and procedures

- ✓ Ensure bags/sacks and filling equipment are compatible and well maintained.
- ✓ Enclose the filling head as much as possible.
- ✓ Provide a ventilated enclosure around the filling point with an inward airflow.
- ✓ Airflow must be sufficient to control airborne contaminants effectively. This will depend on the design, size of opening and the type of process and substance being controlled.
- ✓ Check for dust emission during filling.
- ✓ Provide clamps and seals, and make arrangements to discharge air displaced during filling.
- ✓ Provide a ventilated hopper at floor level to capture spills.
- ✓ Ensure the filling head doesn't discharge dust when the bag/sack is removed by ensuring the filling head is within the ventilated enclosure.
- ✓ Make sure the enclosure is large enough to allow the bag/sack to be closed and sealed before it leaves the enclosure.
- ✓ Consider mechanical/pneumatic assistance with bag/sack handling.



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- ✓ Where possible, site the work area away from doors, windows and walkways, to stop draughts interfering with the local exhaust ventilation (LEV) and spreading the airborne contaminant.
  - ✓ Have a clean air supply coming into the workroom to replace extracted air.
  - ✓ Provide an easy way of checking the LEV is working, eg airflow indicator or equivalent.
  - ✓ Discharge extracted air to a safe place away from doors, windows and air inlets.
  - ✓ With dusts you can re-circulate clean, filtered air into the workroom.
  - ✓ Ensure all components are appropriate for the materials being captured, ie suitable for explosive, corrosive and flammable substances.

### Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Chemicals identified by COSHH Essentials as **hazard group S** can damage the skin and eyes, or enter the body through the skin and cause harm. Check the safety data sheets to see what PPE is needed.
- ✓ Ask your supplier to advise on suitable protective equipment.
- ✓ Make suitable arrangements for maintenance, storage and replacement of PPE.

### Personal decontamination

- ✓ Provide warm water, mild skin cleansers, and soft paper or fabric towels for drying. Avoid abrasive cleansers.
- ✓ Provide pre-work skin creams, which will make it easier to wash dirt from the skin.
- ✓ Provide after-work creams to replace skin oils.

**Caution:** 'Barrier creams' are not 'liquid gloves' and they do not provide a full barrier.

### Maintenance, examination and testing

- ✓ Keep all equipment used for the task in effective working order. Maintain it as advised by the supplier or installer.
- ✓ Check for signs of damage to control equipment before starting work.
- ✓ Follow any special procedures before any systems are opened or entered, eg purging or cleaning. Don't forget you may need personal protective equipment (PPE) for some maintenance tasks.
- ✓ Visually check all equipment at least once a week for signs of damage or faults.
- ✓ For LEV systems, a user manual or log book is helpful in setting out the frequency of checking, maintenance or parts replacement.
- ✓ For LEV systems with no user manual or log book, you may need the help of a competent person. They can determine the performance needed for adequate control.
- ✓ Keep records of all examinations for at least 5 years.
- ✓ LEV systems require a statutory 'thorough examination and test' (TExT).
- ✓ Get a competent person to perform the TExT at least every 14 months.
- ✓ Carry out all actions arising from the TExT.
- ✓ HSG258 provides more detailed information on LEV systems and legal and competence requirements.

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- ✓ Several measures are available to check effectiveness of controls. These range from simple qualitative (use of dust lamp) to complex quantitative techniques (eg air sampling) – usually for higher risk scenarios.

### Cleaning and housekeeping

- ✓ Clean work equipment and the work area daily. Clean other equipment and the workroom regularly – at least once a week.
- ✓ Vacuum dry dust or use wet cleaning methods.
- ✓ Deal with spills immediately – use suitable protective gloves. You may also need respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

**Caution:** Never allow the use of brushes or compressed air for removing dust from skin and clothing. Avoid the use of brushes or compressed air for removing dust from surfaces or from inside machinery.

### Training and supervision

- ✓ Provide supervision – ensure that safe work procedures are followed.
- ✓ Tell workers about the hazards associated with their work.
- ✓ Provide workers with training on:
  - working safely with hazardous substances;
  - when and how to use controls;
  - how to check they are working;
  - how the LEV system works;
  - how to use the LEV to get the best out of it;
  - how to check that the LEV is working; and
  - what to do if something goes wrong.
- ✓ Consider keeping training records.
- ✓ Changes to the work process and LEV means that staff might need retraining.
- ✓ Have a procedure to check that control measures are in place and being followed.
- ✓ Involve managers and supervisors in health and safety training.

### Essential information

*General storage of solids and liquids* COSHH Guidance Sheet G101  
HSE 2016 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/g101.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/g101.pdf)

*General advice on chemicals causing harm via skin or eye contact*  
COSHH Guidance Sheet S100 HSE 2016  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/s100.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/s100.pdf)

*Selection of personal protective equipment* COSHH Guidance Sheet S101  
HSE 2016 [www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/s101.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/s101.pdf)

### Further information

*Clearing the air: A simple guide to buying and using local exhaust ventilation (LEV)* Leaflet INDG408(rev1) HSE Books 2008  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg408.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg408.htm)

*Controlling airborne contaminants at work: A guide to local exhaust ventilation (LEV)* HSG258 HSE Books 2011  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg258.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg258.htm)

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Local exhaust ventilation (LEV) workplace fume and dust extraction web page: [www.hse.gov.uk/lev/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/lev/)

You can find the full COSHH essentials series at [www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/essentials/index.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/essentials/index.htm)

Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register: [www.oshcr.org/](http://www.oshcr.org/)

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit [www.hse.gov.uk/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/). You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

### Employee checklist

- Are you clear about the procedures for doing the job?
- Check the room is well ventilated, and any extraction or air supply is switched on and working properly. Check the airflow indicator or equivalent.
- Look for signs of leaks, wear and damage before every job.
- If you find any problems, tell your supervisor. Don't just carry on working.
- Ensure that sacks/bags are properly tied.
- Wash hands before starting the job, and before eating, drinking, smoking or using the lavatory.
- Don't use solvents to clean your skin.
- Clear up spills immediately. For liquids, contain or absorb spills with granules or mats. For solids, use vacuum or wet cleaning.
- Dispose of spills safely.
- Use, maintain and store any PPE provided in accordance with instructions.

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