



Control approach 1

Eradicating vermin (rats, etc)

SR08

General ventilation



This guidance sheet is for employers **including** the self-employed and franchisees to help them comply with the requirements of the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) by controlling exposure to chemicals and protecting workers' health.

The sheet is part of HSE guidance *COSHH essentials: easy steps to control chemicals*. It describes the key points you need to follow to help reduce exposure to an adequate level. It is important to follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

Rodenticides etc are biocidal products. Authorised products are safe for use so long as you follow the instructions on the label.

Rodenticides etc are very poisonous products that can cause serious ill health if breathed in, swallowed or in contact with the skin. For this reason bait residues and killed vermin should also be treated as poisonous.

This sheet does not apply to space fumigation (eg warehouse, containers, etc).

You may need respiratory protective equipment (RPE).

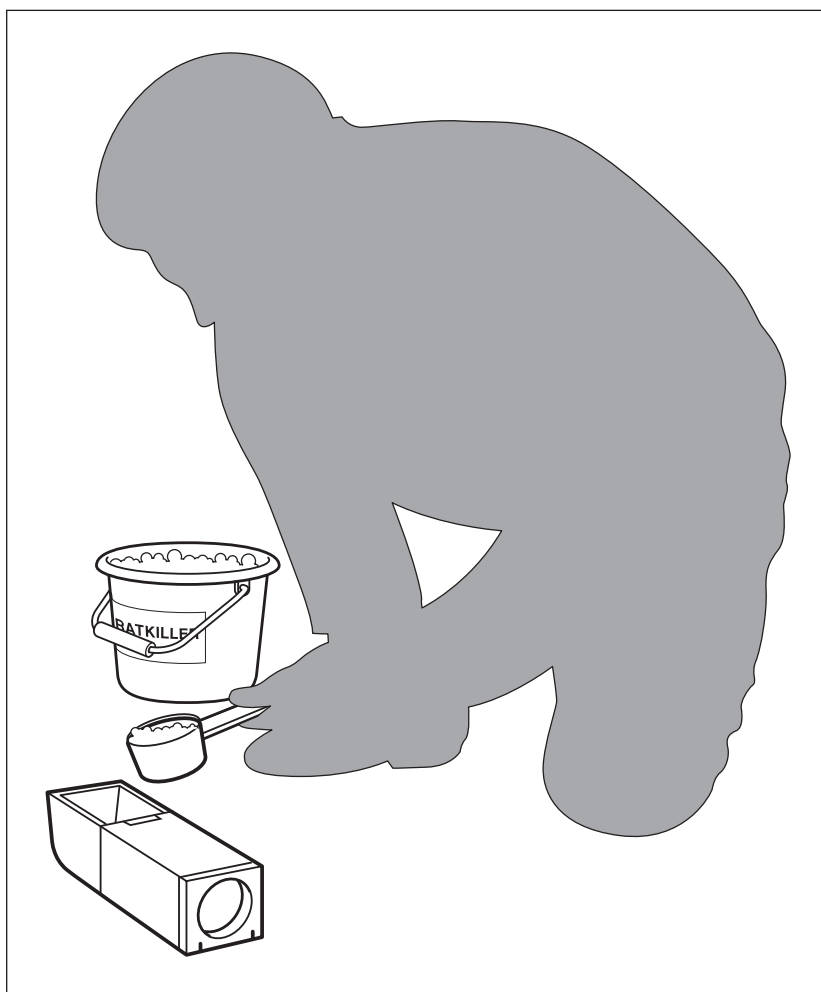
General ventilation is the recommended approach.

Workplace and access

- Vermin control is commonly needed on farms, around docks and in cities.
- ✓ Keep people and pets away while applying rodenticides etc and when retrieving bait or dead animals.
- ✓ Place bait to prevent access by children, pets and non-target animals.
- ✓ If treating by powder blowing, you may need help in blocking burrows.
- ✓ Display warning signs.

Design and equipment

- ✓ Ensure the equipment using the product works properly, without leaks.
- ✗ Never re-use a rodenticide container. Dispose of it safely or return it to your supplier.
- ✓ You need washing facilities for decontamination after handling products.



Procedures

- ✓ Contractors using pesticides should have a British Pest Control Association (BPCA) qualification.
- ✓ Store products containing chemicals securely in a cool, dry, dark place, capable of keeping in spills. Don't store far more than you need.
- ✓ Read instructions on labels carefully - follow the instructions for use.
- ✓ Keep chemicals and mix bait on a lipped tray, to retain spills.
- ✓ Clear up spills immediately. Absorb liquids in granules. Scoop solids or absorbed liquids into a marked secure container.
- ✓ Keep chemicals off your skin - wash off any splashes immediately.
- ✓ Put the cap back on the container immediately.
- ✓ Make a plan for the treatment - don't over-bait.
- ✓ Make sure the air is fit to breathe before working in a confined space (eg in a conveyor boot or sewer).
- ✗ Don't carry out gassing treatments within 10 metres of dwellings.
- ✓ Keep baits away from watercourses.
- ✓ Scoop residues and left-over baits into a marked secure container. Put dead animals into marked polythene bags and seal for disposal by burning.
- ✓ Consider what information you need to give to clients.

Special care

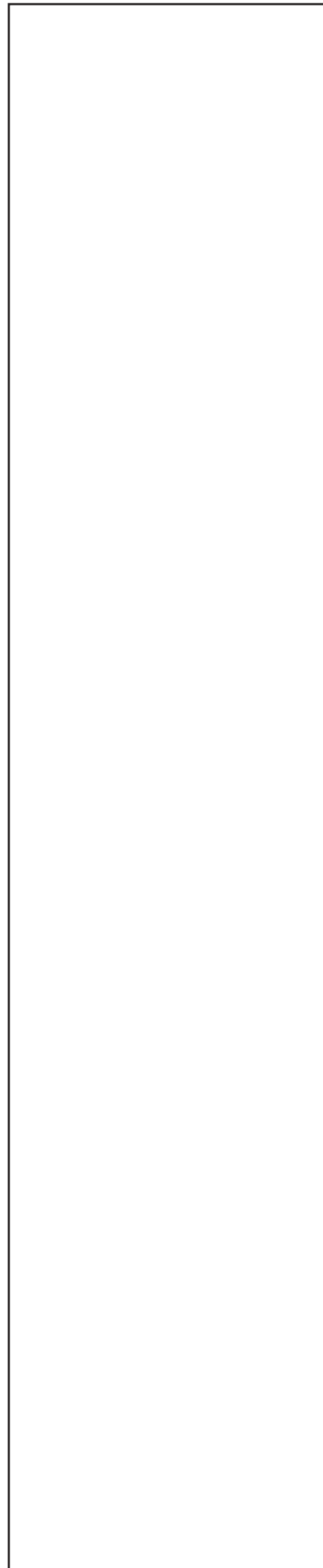
- If gassing with powders that generate hydrogen cyanide, or phosphine, refer to specific regulations on indoor uses (eg COSHH regulation 14.2).
- Contact with rat urine can lead to leptospirosis (Weill's disease). Cover cuts and broken skin. Carry the *Leptospirosis: are you at risk?* card.

Examination and testing

- ✓ Make sure that users examine their respiratory protective equipment thoroughly and test that it works properly every time it is used.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Follow the instructions on product labels.
- ✓ Ask your safety-clothing supplier to help you get the right PPE.
- ✓ You need respiratory protective equipment (RPE) when using phosphine or cyanide powders or pellets. Seek advice from your RPE supplier. Make sure you fit the right cartridge before starting work.
- ✓ Make sure you know how to check that RPE fits correctly. Seek advice from your supplier.
- ✓ If the label doesn't tell you what PPE to use, wear cotton coveralls, protective footwear and gloves. Single-use gloves are acceptable. If you must use latex gloves, use only 'low-protein, powder-free' gloves.
- ✓ Throw away single-use gloves every time you take them off.
- ✓ For phosphine or cyanide treatments, wipe down the respirator, clothing and equipment with a damp cloth before taking your RPE off.
- ✓ Skin creams are important for skin protection and help in washing contamination from the skin. These are **not** 'barrier creams'. After work creams help to replace skin oils.
- ✗ Workers must not take work clothing home for washing. Use a contract laundry.

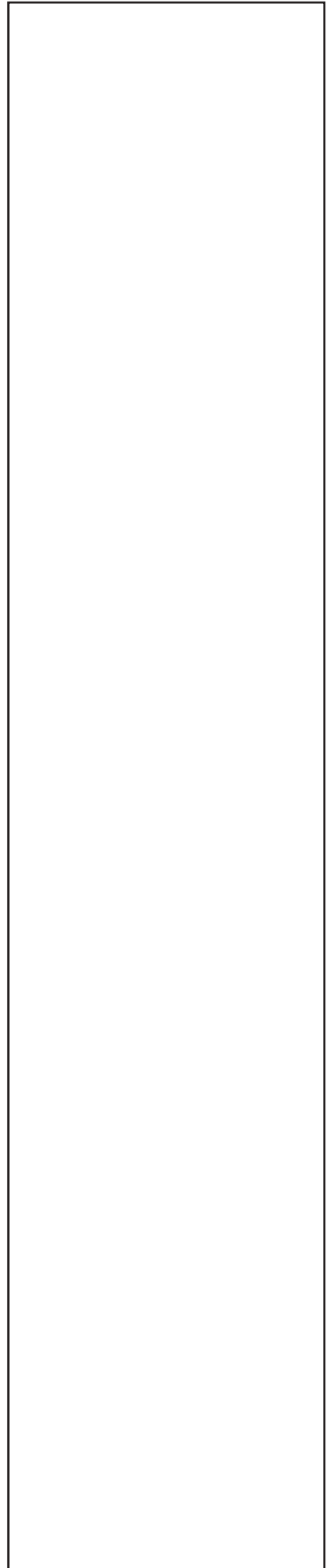


Health advice

- ✓ Ask your workers to check their skin for dryness or soreness every six months. If these effects appear, check the proper use of skin creams and PPE.
- ✓ Workers must tell their doctor that they work with rats if they develop flu-like symptoms.

Training

- ✓ Show your workers this sheet and check that they understand it.
- ✓ Tell them about the risks of using the product - see product labels or Section 15 of the safety data sheet from your product supplier.
- ✓ Ensure training includes how to keep exposures low, how to use and look after PPE and RPE, and what to do if something goes wrong.
- ✓ Train on how to tell clients about the risks.
- ✓ Train workers to clear up spills, bait and dead animals safely.



Further information

- *The selection, use and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment: A practical guide* HSG53 (Second edition) HSE Books 1998 **ISBN 0 7176 1537 5**
- *Assessing and managing risks at work from skin exposure to chemical agents: Guidance for employers and health and safety specialists* HSG205 HSE Books 2001 **ISBN 0 7176 1826 9**
- *Leptospirosis: Are you at risk?* Pocket card INDG84 HSE Books 1990 (single copy free or priced packs of 20 **ISBN 0 7176 2546 X**)
- *Preventing dermatitis at work: Advice for employers and employees* Leaflet INDG233 HSE Books 1996 (single copy free or priced packs of 15 **ISBN 0 7176 1246 5**)
- *Controlling rats in urban areas and the safe use of rodenticides* Leaflet MISC515 HSE Books 2003
- Health and safety consultants: the BOHS Faculty of Occupational Hygiene keeps lists of qualified hygienists who can help you. Contact BOHS on 0133 229 8087 or at www.bohs.org/

Employee checklist

- Look for signs of leaks, wear and damage.
- Check that your RPE works properly every time you put it on.
- If you find any problems, tell your supervisor. Don't just carry on working.
- Tell clients not to interfere with bait or dead animals - tell them how to contact you.
- Wash your hands after use, and before and after eating, drinking, smoking and using the lavatory.
- Clear up chemical spills promptly. Absorb liquid spills in granules and dispose of them safely.
- Use and store your protective equipment according to instructions.
- Throw away single-use gloves every time you take them off.
- Check your skin regularly for dryness or soreness - tell your supervisor if these symptoms appear.
- Use skin creams provided as instructed.



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