HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES PROCEDURE

Applies to:	The Organisation	**Version Number:**	15
		Version date:	February 2021
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1. Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all risks associated with the use of chemicals within Direct Care Australia are controlled and managed.

2. Scope:

This procedure applies to all chemicals used in DCA workplaces including clients' homes, residential sites and/or centre-based environments.

3. References:

- *Work Health and Safety Act 2012*
- *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2012*
- *Dangerous Substances Act 1979*
- *Dangerous Substances Regulations 2002*
- Labelling of workplace hazardous chemicals 2020Australian Dangerous Goods Code 7.6 Edition (ADG7 Code)
- AS 1319-1994 Safety Signs for the Occupational Environment
- Hazardous Substances Information System (HSIS): http://hcis.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/

4. Definitions:

Dangerous Goods:	Items or substances that may present an immediate safety hazard such as fire, explosion or toxic cloud emission. Dangerous goods are designated into nine different categories under the Australian Dangerous Goods Code (ADG7 Code) according to their immediate physical or chemical effect. They are easily recognisable by the diamond shaped sign displayed on the substance label.
Hazard:	Anything with the potential to cause harm, injury, illness or loss
Hazardous Substances:	Dilute or concentrated substances in solid, liquid or gas form that have the potential to present a risk of harm to human health during handling or use. A substance is classified as hazardous by the Hazardous Substance Information System (HSIS) based on its health effects.
Incident:	An event that has led to or could have led to an injury. Incidents include near misses, accidents and injuries.
Injury:	Physical damage or harm to a person (includes work related illness).
Material Safety Data Sheet	A Safety Data Sheet (SDS) is a document prepared by the manufacturer, importer or supplier of a dangerous good, hazardous substance or other chemicals. A SDS describes the properties and uses of a particular substance. This includes details about substance identity, chemical and physical properties, health hazard information and precautions for storage, use and safe handling.
Personal Protective	Items and clothing intended to provide individual employees with

Equipment (PPE):	some protection from hazards. Examples of PPE may include protective clothing and footwear, dust masks, and respirators or breathing apparatus.
Risk:	A description of the likelihood and consequence of a hazard causing injury or illness
Risk Assessment:	The process of determining the likelihood and consequence of injury, disease or illness or damage arising from exposure to a hazard.
Risk Control:	Measures that eliminate or reduce the risks associated with hazards using the "hierarchy of controls", where elimination of the hazard will be the first strategy considered.
Safe Working Procedures:	Are documented procedures that outline: ▪ The hazards associated with performing a particular task (which may include equipment use, chemical use or working in hazardous environments); ▪ Safety instructions in performing that task including any checks and precautions to be exercised; ▪ Any required PPE to protect employees, students, contractors and visitors; ▪ A list of the persons authorized to supervise and train persons in how to undertake the task safely.
Subsidiary Risk:	Where a dangerous good presents hazards for more than one class or division, the hazards that are not the primary hazard are referred to as the subsidiary risk. Where a significant subsidiary risk applies, an additional class label is required.
WHS Officer	The Officer responsible for monitoring the implementation of Chemical Management procedures in the workplace

5. Responsibility:

WHS Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring that all dangerous goods and hazardous substances are identified within the workplace and included in a chemical register;
- Ensuring risk assessments and controls are established for dangerous goods and hazardous substance use in consultation with the HSR and employees;
- Developing and implementing Safe Work Procedures (SWP) specific to the handling of dangerous goods and hazardous substances stored in the workplace;
- Ensuring safety information, including SDS and the Chemical Register is readily available;

- Ensuring chemicals are not introduced into the workplace without considering and managing any associated risk;
- Ensuring restricted substances are not used or stored in the workplace;
- Providing appropriate training and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for employees who may be exposed to dangerous goods and hazardous substances; and
- Ensuring relevant signage is displayed, highlighting the hazardous nature of chemicals used or stored in the workplace.

Employees are responsible for:

- Reading and familiarising themselves with the contents of the SDS for dangerous goods and hazardous substances they are required to use;
- Ensuring all dangerous goods and hazardous substance use and storage is in accordance with the SDS;
- Assisting in the development and implementation of SWP and conducting risk assessments specific to dangerous goods and hazardous substances; and

6. Procedure:

6.1 Chemical Register and SDS/Safety Information

The **WHS Officer is** to ensure that all dangerous goods and hazardous substances stored or handled in the workplace are entered into a *Chemical Register* and SDS are obtained.

The *Chemical Register* is to be kept up to date and reviewed when hazards are identified, risk controls are changed or new chemicals are introduced to the workplace.

The WHS Officer must maintain a hard copy collection of current SDS (issued within 5 years) from the manufacturer or supplier of all chemicals stored and used in the workplace.

Where a SDS has not been provided by the manufacturer, one may be obtained from the supplier.

Note: The SDS obtained for each chemical must be the authorised version prepared by the manufacturer or first supplier.

The *Chemical Register* and associated SDS is to be kept by the **WHS Officer** in a central location which is known and accessible to all employees in the workplace as well as any other person who is likely to be exposed to the hazardous substances and/or dangerous goods. Each SDS should be reviewed to consider and manage any associated risk and relevant details entered into the *Chemical Register.*

Further, the **WHS Officer** should make sure that each work area, e.g., Domain, Section, Division, Cleaning Contractor etc is responsible for obtaining and maintaining current SDS relevant to their work area in a folder located where the bulk of chemicals are stored and where they are accessible to all employees under their control.

6.2 Identify Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances

The **WHS Officer** is to identify all dangerous goods and hazardous substances within the workplace and enter them into a *Chemical Register.*

Examples of locations where dangerous goods and hazardous substances may be found include:

- Medicine cabinets.
- Storage areas (including the cleaner's cupboard).
- Maintenance/Garden sheds.

- Kitchens

While dangerous goods are generally easy to identify (the diamond symbol on the product/label indicates the class), hazardous substances can be more difficult to identify.

The product label provides some information about the hazards of the substance and precautions for use. If the product is a hazardous substance the label should display the word 'hazardous' or other similar warnings. The SDS will be the primary information source for most chemicals and includes details about substance identity, chemical and physical properties, health hazard information and precautions for storage, use and safe handling. Another source of information is the online Hazardous Substances Information System (HSIS) accessible at http://hcis.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/

The Safety Phrases and Risk Phrases for a specific chemical also provide additional information about the safety precautions and risks associated with the storage and handling of the product.

Examples of types of hazardous substances include:

- Acids
- Caustic substances
- Disinfectants
- Pesticides and herbicides; and
- Solvents and thinners.

6.3 Introducing Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances into the Workplace

The **WHS Officer** must make sure that the requirements of the Purchasing Procedure are adhered to.

The procedure requires that the risks associated with procurement of goods are identified prior to purchase.

New substances may present a risk to employees and visitors. Potential risks associated with a new chemical must be identified prior to purchase.

The **WHS Officer**, in consultation with the HSR and employees, must make sure that no new substances are introduced into the workplace without first receiving the manufacturer's SDS and completing a Safe Work Procedure template using information from the SDS to determine if the chemical can be safely introduced into the workplace (refer to Section 6.5 and 6.6 below)

6.4 Risk Assessment of Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances

The **Workplace Officer and/or Management OHS Nominee** is to make sure that a Safety Data Sheet is available for each chemical with a high or extreme risk rating as identified in the Chemical Register.

In order to complete the Safe Work Procedure, the SDS must be reviewed to determine whether or not the health and safety requirements defined within the SDS can be met by the DCA workplace and/or other persons such as contractors who may be exposed to, or use the substance.

6.5 Controlling Risks

6.5.1 Risk Management of Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances

At all times, the **WHS Officer** should make sure the risks posed to employees, contractors and visitors from dangerous goods and hazardous substances is as low as reasonably practicable.

When determining controls to reduce risks the **WHS Officer** must follow the hierarchy of controls outlined in the Risk Management Procedure.

Examples of effective controls (from most to least effective) could include:

ELIMINATION

- Eliminate the use of the substance (e.g. using a physical process instead of a chemical process).

SUBSTITUTION

- Use a safer substance or a safer form of the substance (e.g. using a detergent instead of chlorinated solvent for cleaning).

ENGINEERING

- Physical controls that eliminate, isolate or reduce exposure to people or property (e.g., provision of drip trays to limit the area of contamination in the event of spills and leaks, using local exhaust ventilation system such as fume cupboards).

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Using SWP and other administrative processes including good housekeeping and storage practices (e.g. vacuuming or wet sweeping to suppress dust being generated, storing chemicals in purpose-built cabinets).

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- Protective clothing and equipment for employees, contractors and visitors (e.g. where necessary, overalls, gloves, chemical resistant safety glasses).

6.5.2 Labelling

Where possible **WHS Officer** must make sure that all dangerous goods and hazardous substances are clearly labelled to ensure proper identification. The label on the container in which the dangerous good and/or hazardous substance is supplied in must be intact, legible and unaltered.

All chemicals shall be retained in their original packaging where practicable, or where necessary decanted into a suitable container recommended by the manufacture/supplier. To allow for monitoring of the age of the chemical and the use of older materials first, the date of receipt and date of opening of the container should be marked on the original container.

6.5.3 Consultation and Training

The **WHS Officer** must make sure that arrangements are in place for consultation in relation to chemical management with the employees. Consultation should occur in relation to:

- The introduction of new chemicals to the workplace;
- The identification and assessment of risks associated with chemicals at the workplace;
- Development of SWP;
- Decisions about control measures to be implemented;
- Induction and training requirements; and

- Liaising with any designated medical professionals for health surveillance (if required).

For employees required to use dangerous goods and hazardous substances or for employees who have the potential to be exposed to hazardous substances in the workplace, the **WHS Officer** is to make sure employees are trained in the safe use and storage of the substance.

This training is to include:

- The requirement for, and type of information provided on labels of products;
- The location of, and how to read the SDS for dangerous goods and hazardous substances;
- The control methods required to reduce the risk of an incident, near miss or harm to human health occurring (e.g. SWP to be followed in the use, storage, transport and disposal of dangerous goods and hazardous substances);
- The proper use and fitting of PPE;
- First aid treatment, incident reporting procedures and emergency management protocol to be followed in case of injury or illness; and
- Any health surveillance required in order to detect the effects of exposure to a dangerous good or hazardous substance.

Records of this training are to be recorded and maintained by the **People & Culture Co-Ordinator.**

Relevant Documentation:
Chemical Register
Communication Policy
Service Booking Procedure
Support Plan Template
Induction and Training Procedure
WHS Risk Register
Risk Management Procedure
Safe Work Procedure Template
Workplace Inspection Procedure
Workplace Inspection Checklist