

Hazardous Substances

Some school workers may come into contact with potentially hazardous substances during their work. This risk should be factored into any occupational health and safety program.

Hazardous substances found in schools could include

- Cleaning compounds used by custodial staff
- Pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers used by grounds staff
- Chemicals and biological substances in science labs
- Lead, paints, solvents, and fuels used in applied skills classrooms
- Medical waste in the first aid room
- Asbestos used as insulation in older school buildings (may become airborne during maintenance or renovation work)
- Ozone and chlorine if your school has a pool
- Mould

Consider the following when designing safety policies and procedures related to hazardous substances:

- Involve school staff in helping identify any potentially hazardous substances as well as any activities in and around the school that might give rise to exposure.
- Ensure that any staff required to work with hazardous substances are trained in WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System). This system includes guides to recognizing various classes of hazardous substances (e.g., poisonous, corrosive, flammable), as well as protocols for safe handling, storage, and disposal.
- Make sure that the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) is available, and that staff know how and when to use it. PPE might include gloves, safety eyewear, and/or respirators.
- Have a plan in place for first aid and treatment in the case of accidental exposure.

In the OHS Regulation

- Part 5, Chemical and Biological Substances
- Part 6, Substance Specific Requirements

Resources

Available from
WorkSafeBC.com/Publications

- *WHMIS at Work* (BK40)
- *WHMIS: The Basics* (BK61)
- *Asbestos* (BK27)
- *Lead: Preventing Exposure at Work* (BK17)
- *PoolSafeBC Best Practices Guide*

Safety is everyone's responsibility!

WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line: 604 276-3100 • Toll-free: 1 888 621-SAFE (7233)

WORK SAFE BC

WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
worksafebc.com