

The
IDIOT'S
guide to CHIP



Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply)
Regulations 2002



Do you sell chemicals?

By chemicals we mean single substances (such as acetone) or mixtures (preparations) such as a paintbrush cleaner. The chemical could vary from a commodity chemical sold in bulk to a household-cleaning product sold in small packages.

If so, this guide is aimed at you. It introduces your legal obligations about providing safety, health and environmental information for your customers.

What have you heard?

You may have heard of CHIP, CHIP 2, CHIP 2000 or CHIP 3. You may wonder if any of them apply to you. But which? You may also have heard they are very long, complicated and technical. Someone may have told you that you need a degree in chemistry to understand them. You may be feeling rather confused, if not anxious. . .

So what is the truth?

If this sounds familiar, then this guide should put you on the right track.

CHIP is our short name for the Chemicals (Hazard Information and Packaging for Supply) Regulations. *The Idiot's guide* will help you decide what you need to do about CHIP and whether you should get help. It introduces you to the Regulations and identifies the various supporting documents which help you to follow the law.

What's CHIP for?

CHIP helps protect people and the environment from the ill effects of chemicals by requiring suppliers to:

- identify the hazards (dangers) of the chemicals they supply;
- give information about the chemicals' hazards to their customers; and
- package the chemicals safely.

CHIP applies to the supply of chemicals - there are different laws for controlling them in the workplace and on the transport of dangerous chemicals. By supply we mean sell, offer for sale, provide commercial samples, import, or transfer chemicals from one person to another.

Are all chemicals covered by CHIP?

No. Some special chemicals, for example medicines and cosmetics, are not covered because other more specific laws apply. These, and the other exceptions, are described in the Regulations.

BUT the vast majority of chemicals are covered by CHIP

What are the basic requirements of CHIP?

The basic requirement of CHIP is for you to decide whether the chemical you supply is hazardous. CHIP, with its Approved Classification and Labelling Guide (ACLG), sets out the rules for this. They tell you how to:

- decide what kind of hazard the chemical has; and
- explain the hazard by assigning a simple sentence that describes it (known as a 'risk phrase' or R-phrase for short).

This process is known as classification.

In CHIP, you have to classify before you do anything else.

If you classify the chemical wrongly then everything else you do under CHIP may be wrong.

If you are selling a substance, some of the work may have been done for you. Many commonly used substances have already been classified and appear in the CHIP Approved Supply List (ASL).



You must use these classifications.

If your substance is not in the ASL, or if you are supplying a preparation (a mixture of substances), then you must classify it yourself:

■ For substances, the ACLG explains how to classify for physicochemical properties (eg how easily the chemical will catch fire), health effects (eg the chemical burns the skin or causes asthma) and dangers for the environment (eg the chemical kills fish). The explanations in the ACLG are called criteria. There is no need to do expensive tests, you can use information that is already available to you.

■ For preparations, you can use either a calculation method, or for certain hazards you can use the criteria in the ACLG.

An easy to follow summary can be found on page 8.

As a general rule, if the chemical is not dangerous there may be nothing more you need

to do. The exceptions to this (listed in CHIP) include several special cases where some preparations that are not dangerous need additional warning information, and/or a safety data sheet.

Providing hazard information

After deciding what the classification is, you have to:

- tell your customers about the hazards; and
- tell them, as far as you can, how they can use your chemicals safely.

You have to do this by

- a label; and
- a safety data sheet (a must if your customer uses the chemical at work, but other equally good measures may be used for consumers).

Labelling

If you supply a dangerous chemical in a package, the package must be labelled.

If the chemical is not supplied in a package (eg if the chemical is supplied from a tanker or down a pipeline), then you don't have to provide a label - it wouldn't be practical!

The aim of the label is to:

- tell anyone handling the package or using the chemicals about its hazards; and
- give brief advice on what precautions are needed.

For workers the label is a supplement to information provided by the employer.

CHIP specifies what has to go on the label (eg the chemical's name) and also tells you how packages should be labelled (eg the size of the label).

Safety data sheets

Safety data sheets are a MUST if your chemical is dangerous and supplied for use at work - whether in packages or not.

Safety data sheets (SDSs) are also needed if your chemical is not classified as dangerous, but contains small amounts of a dangerous substance.

If you are selling to someone who is going to use the chemical for their work then a SDS must be provided, but you can use different (but equally good) methods for other customers, eg information on the package.

CHIP doesn't tell you exactly what should go into a safety data sheet but does:

- set a standard for the quality of information to be included; and
- give 16 headings under which the information has to be provided.

The quality standard puts the responsibility on you to ensure that the information provided is sufficient, ie enough to allow the user to decide how to protect:

- people at work; and
- the environment.

This will usually include information on:

- the hazards of the chemical;
- handling and storage;
- its environmental effects; and
- exposure controls/personal protection.

People are sometimes uncertain where CHIP finishes and the law on workplace and environmental control of the chemical starts, but broadly:

- Providing a safety data sheet to your customers is covered by CHIP.
- Employers' use of the information in the safety data sheets to assess and manage the risks is covered by workplace control law (eg the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH)* and the Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations), or environmental control law.

What else does CHIP expect me to do?

Packaging

CHIP says that the packaging used for a chemical must be suitable. We think this is explained clearly in the Regulations. Let us know if you do not understand it. Our address can be found at the end of the guide.

Child-resistant closures and tactile danger warnings

CHIP sets out special requirements for the packaging of certain chemicals that are sold to the public.

More help on SDS can be found in the CHIP SDS Approved Code of Practice.

* HSE has published guidance to help firms using chemicals to control the health risks to their employees better and comply with the law. *COSHH essentials: easy steps to control chemicals*, takes employers through a risk assessment to find the control measures they need and gives practical examples in a series of control guidance sheets (see details at the end of the guide). The starting point for the assessment is your safety data sheet. You can use this guidance to help the firms you supply to find the control measures they need to protect health. You may also find it helpful yourself.

Some have to be fitted with a child-resistant closure (meeting a certain standard) to prevent young children swallowing the contents.

Some must have a tactile danger warning (normally a small, raised triangle) to alert the blind and partially sighted that they are handling a dangerous product.

If you're unclear about what needs to be done, you should contact your local Trading Standards Office for advice. You may also wish to see a leaflet called *Stop children swallowing household chemicals* - available from the Department of Trade and Industry's publications orderline (Tel: 08701 502500).

Where do I get more information?

- From HSE's CHIP website www.hse.gov.uk/hthdir/noframes/chip/chip0.htm.
- Phone HSE's information line (Tel: 08701 545500).
- Speak to your local HSE Inspector or Trading Standards Officer. (They don't bite.)
- Get advice from your trade association or from a professional society.

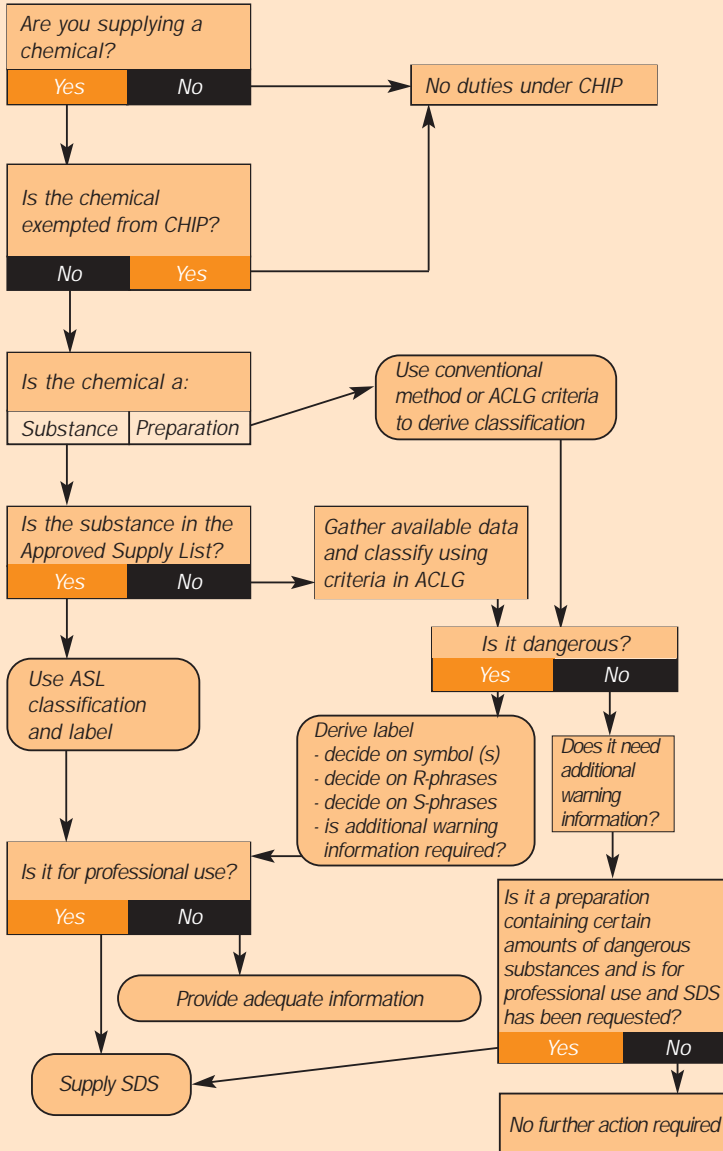
Finally

We hope the *Idiot's guide to CHIP* has been useful. If it has, you can thank the small group of suppliers and others who commented on the drafts. If it hasn't, we take all the blame. In either case, we would like to know. Please tell us.

Our address is:

Chemicals Policy Division
Health Directorate
Health and Safety Executive
Rose Court
2 Southwark Bridge
London SE1 9HS.

Summary of what you need to do



References

The compilation of safety data sheets. Approved Code of Practice (third edition) L130 HSE Books 2002 0 7176 2371 8

Approved classification and labelling guide (fifth edition) L131 HSE Books 2002 ISBN 0 7176 2369 6

Approved Supply List. Information approved for the classification and labelling of substances and preparations dangerous for supply (seventh edition) L129 HSE Books 2002 ISBN 0 7176 2368 8

CHIP for everyone HSG228 HSE Books 2002 ISBN 0 7176 2370 X

Why do I need a safety data sheet? INDG353

HSE Books 2002 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 0 7176 2367 X)

Read the label INDG352

HSE Books 2002 (single copy free or priced packs of 10 ISBN 0 7176 2366 1)

COSHH essentials: easy steps to control chemicals HSG13

HSE Books 1999 ISBN 0 7176 2421 8

Scratch and sniff... chemical risks at work Video

HSE Books 2002 ISBN 07176 2252 5

For further information, see HSE's CHIP website www.hse.gov.uk/hthdir/noframes/chip/chip0.htm

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Further information

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This leaflet contains notes on good practice which are not compulsory but which you may find helpful in considering what you need to do.

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