FLASHPOINT

Autumn 2009

Should hazardous substances be banned?

NZ INSTITUTE OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES MANAGEMENT

USEFUL ORGANISATIONAL CONTACTS

NZ Institute of Hazardous Substances Management
www.nzihsm.org.nz
The official home of professionals committed to the safe management of hazardous substances and dangerous goods.

The NZIHSM is a 'not for profit' industry association specialising in improving safety, health and (site) environmental performance, particularly the safe management of hazardous substances in the community.

NZ Chemical Industry Council
www.nzcic.org.nz
The NZCIC works closely with Government and industry partners to successfully implement the Hazardous Substances legislation. This is achieved by implementing and promoting Responsible Care™, the international SH&E protection initiative practised by the chemical industry in more than 53 countries worldwide.

ERMANZ
www.ermanz.govt.nz
Extensive information on working with hazardous substances.

Ministry for the Environment
www.mfe.govt.nz
The Ministry administer the HSNO Act, and provides policy, publications, technical reports and consultation documents

Department of Building and Housing
www.dbh.govt.nz
The Government agency that maintains the Building Act and the Building Code.

Local Government NZ
www.lgnz.co.nz/lg-sector/maps/
Local Authorities have responsibility for policing building controls. Some local authorities are contracted to Department of Labour to provide enforcement of the Hazardous Substances legislation.

If you know of other agencies which could be useful to members, please let us know at office@nzihsm.org.nz.

The HSNO Regime, are we seeing any progress?

There has been some significant activity in the area of hazardous substances over the past year – ERMA has identified over 300 incidents and 'accidents' involving hazardous substances which seem to have regularly been prominent in the news media before the "global financial crisis" and "sub-prime" catastrophes catapulted into front page prominence.

One of the notable hazardous substance catastrophes (the 'firefighter disaster' at Tamahere) is still heading towards court and has arguably ruined many lives in the process. The recent exploding fish and chip shop in Nelson adds a new dimension to the HSNO and food safety regimes.

We at the NZIHSM and our members have also been actively involved in assisting the positive uses of hazardous substances, while preventing the adverse effects through advice and assistance to users. As the recent survey indicated, our private test certifiers and enforcers are cost effective, and appear to be actively involved where there is a large degree of service and education of users, particularly in the hazardous substance location certificate process.

It was interesting to note from the NZ Fire Service and NZIHSM studies that only 10% of sites are ready for certification on the first visit, which should not have been an issue if the previous legislation was totally successful.

On the administrative front, the NZIHSM has continued advocating for members and issues, and acts as a conduit on relevant issues between statutory authorities and the users of hazardous substances. We have updated our webpage on www.nzihsm.org.nz , and encourage use of our 'webchat line' as an important part of the HSNO regime for sharing experience for members and other interested parties.

Of course there is still much work to be done. We note that in the recent draft update of the Mfe HSNO Act Test Certifier review, five 'possible problem areas' identified inconsistencies and possible areas of conflicts that may be significant concerns. While the NZIHSM is intrigued as to why this review was mystifyingly limited just to test certifiers

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President John Hickey

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Flashpoint

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Training essential safety element

by Mark Anderson

The responsibility of managing workplace hazardous substances should be shared between the employers and employees.

It is vital that trainees understand the information presented in the delivery of courses with regards to the impact that certain chemicals have and the necessary precautions that need to be taken when working with such chemicals.

Employers' duties:

- Assess training needs based on risk.
- Provide induction and training to all workers.
- Keep records.

Who needs training?

- Staff who might be exposed to hazardous substances at work via handling or emergency situations.
- Staff who supervise others who use hazardous substances at work.
- New staff.
- Staff performing the task for the first time .
- Staff due for refresher training.

What training is needed?

- What constitutes a hazardous substance.
- Safety Data Sheet awareness and extraction of information.
- Container labels.
- Personal protective equipment - correct usage, maintenance and storage.
- Safe work practices.
- Emergency response.

A case in point

Recent industry related queries have highlighted just how important it is that employees are equipped with adequate knowledge relating to first aid training, health effects and precautions to be taken when working with hydrofluoric acid (HF). As a corrosive often used within the metal polishing industry, it can cause severe burns to the skin and eyes. It can eat through bone and dissolve calcium.

How many users know what the antidote is?

How urgently is action required to obtain immediate medical attention after exposure? How often are gloves tested for pinholes? How many users know which gloves to use? How often are hands washed?

How many users know that it can eat through leather shoes?

Who is responsible for ensuring that employees are trained in first aid procedures?

What about additional first aid training specifically for HF?

Is an approved handler required under the HSNO Act?

Mark Anderson is the training leader with Quality Environmental Consulting Ltd.

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rather than the whole HSNO Act, we would also argue that more important issues are:

- the high level of hazardous substance incidents;
- the low levels of business compliance;
- the lack of co-ordination and enforcement by some government agencies.

With this in mind we would like to remind everyone of our mutual goal to '***protect people and the environment against the adverse effects of hazardous substances'***.

Like engineers and medical professionals, when confronted by the in-appropriate use of hazardous substances, rather than delay and possibly endanger through philosophical arguments regarding a potential 'conflict of interest' we would urge our members to ACT immediately to assist users and protect people and the environment.

John Hickey
Institute President

Test certifier regime: Conflicts of interest

by Kathryn Holdsworth of the Ministry of the Environment

The Ministry for the Environment's review of the test certifier regime has identified concerns related to conflicts of interest, especially where a test certifier provides consultancy services and then issues a certificate for the same business. Preliminary feedback from test certifiers indicates that this area is not well understood.

Consultancy activities by test certifiers are an important and appropriate part of their services and it is not suggested that this should stop. However, there must be a clear separation between that advice and those who give the final certification. Without this separation there is a potential conflict of interest.

The Ministry believes that it is very important to avoid conflicts of interest. This article opens the topic for discussion.

It is important to distinguish between advice given as part of certification and consultancy which often requires considerable work to be done by the client before certification can occur. Advice is appropriate when given with certification and is not seen as a conflict of interest. An example would be pointing out areas where the business does not measure up to the regulations. This becomes consultancy when further information is provided as to how to overcome the problem, particularly where a formal report may be drawn up and the client charged for it.

If consultancy is provided, it is suggested that certification by the same person is no longer appropriate. In this situation, it is important that the test certifier advises the client that another test certifier will be required for certification sign-off. It is appropriate for the test certifier to indicate someone else for this task as long as the recommended person has not been engaged in the consultancy work.

Chinese wall

Given that a very high proportion of businesses are said to be non-compliant on first visit, it is highly likely that passing off the certification to another test certifier may become the norm.

Where there are two or more test certifiers operating within the one firm, it is necessary to create a Chinese wall between the test certifier that undertakes the consultancy and the one who provides final certification. The firm should develop policies and procedures to ensure separation – and these must be able to be audited to show that the test certifier is abiding by them.

Test certifiers operating as sole traders need to work more collaboratively to provide this separation. Establishing agreements between pairs or groups of individual test certifiers will allow one test certifier to undertake the consultancy and pass over certification to someone else. Such an agreement could relate to the initial certification based on the consultancy report and after this certification could revert back to the original test certifier.

A number of test certifiers consider that consultancy and certification by the same person is not a problem. Other professional groups such as accountants and engineers disagree and have strict codes of ethics and other systems to ensure that the necessary separation exists. For example, accountants have a strict code of ethics that requires (amongst other things) that they use different people for the different roles and conduct regular reviews by a senior person not involved with the client.

The essential element in all of this is the need for clear separation between the consultancy aspect and the final certification. How does your business rate in this?

Feedback from members to: office@nzihsm.org.nz

Skill and faith the major issues

by Anthony Lealand

The recent review of the Test Certifier Regime by MfE, and in particular looking at the issues surrounding conflict of interest, was extremely well written and laid out what in an ideal world would be a sound solution to the issues.

However, when we look at the New Zealand situation, from my perspective at least, conflict of interest appears of far less significance than other major issues.

The goal of the regulations is surely the creation of safe industrial practices. We have the Tamahere fire as a prime example of failure in this regard. It seems that the most basic of inspections would have revealed the problems, i.e. no signage and, we understand, the lack of a stenching agent.

There is clearly an imperative need to get all New Zealand industry on board. The industrial sector needs to appreciate that by being on board, it limits exposure to risk, and is able to consider its working practices in the light of regulations.

But from the perspective of an industrial client, having to call in one test certifier for consultation, followed by a second one to sign off on the work, will look like suspiciously like featherbedding. The extra costs involved in a consultant and a test certifier are a disincentive for them to get on board.

The industrial client will also wonder about the quality of the consultation if consulting test certifiers have not got the conviction to sign off on their work. And when the consulting test certifier explains that ERMA requires this separation to avoid conflict of interest, the client will once again be wondering what world the regulation-makers live in.

New Zealand has a long skinny geographic distribution. Having one test certifier travelling to distant industrial locations is expensive enough without bringing a second one to the location. There is also the matter of the size and scale of industries in New Zealand and the availability of adequately knowledgeable test certifiers.

While it is right outside my area of expertise, I understand that the petrochemical industry has many skilled and knowledgeable test certifiers available. They have largely a captive market and while costs are obviously a concern for them, in the scale of their operations, one or two test certifiers is a relatively negligible cost.

But New Zealand also has many smaller scale specialist industries, such as my industry – pyrotechnic manufacture. There are very few people in New Zealand with active

working knowledge of this industry other than possibly my business competition, and I expect they would be less than forthcoming as consultants to me, and why should they be.

I certainly resource pyrotechnic safety information from specialist colleagues overseas who have long experience in industrial and military pyrotechnics. I am sure I am not alone in this situation. There will be other industries where the level of test certification knowledge is really insufficient to have proper insight into the industrial practices.

When there are only one or two test certifiers with the specialist knowledge in New Zealand, then the issues over conflict of interest pale into insignificance compared to the need to have test certification implemented by the most knowledgeable and available test certifiers.

Complex industry

In a complex industry where there may be multiple hazards such as static electricity, dust, flammable materials, storage and handling procedures, there may be only one or two test certifiers in the country skilled in that industry.

In such a situation it may be necessary to bring in a couple of test certifiers to consult on various aspects that they are skilled in. But to then ask for an additional test certifier who may not necessarily have the overall knowledge to certify it surely puts them in an invidious situation and they may decline in the responsibility of certifying.

In the early days of the regime, ERMA approached individuals to ask them to be test certifiers. They went to people who were prominent in the industry, or alternatively had many years of experience in the DOL inspectorate generally preceded by earlier industrial knowledge. I understand this was seen to be the best way to capture the country's knowledge base in this area.

Faith required

Rather than seeking a second test certifier after the consultation, it seems to me that faith must be placed in this knowledge base and knowledgeable people to do what is right to ensure implementation of the regulations to ensure safety.

While the MfE example of accounting practices is a good one for a very uniform field such as accounting, it is not a good example for industry with all the major differences in risks, products and procedures.

To provide checks and balances I suggest that DOL would be able to make spot inspections, in the process clearly informing industry that this is an inspection of the test certification standards, and not that industry itself.

It would not take many inspections to get a very clear idea as to the quality of the test certification.

Anthony Lealand, Test Certifier #000040, is the owner of Firework Professionals Ltd.

Mistakes made at Mapua

Environment officials made mistakes in the big clean-up of toxic chemicals at Mapua, says Minister Nick Smith, but an independent report shows how future soil remediation projects can be done better.

The ministry managed the clean-up of a wide range of horticultural chemicals and toxic residues at the Mapua site, while Tasman District Council — a partner in the clean-up — remained responsible for ensuring it complied with its consents.

The project clean-up was the subject of a damning report, which found the ministry breached its consents, almost certainly released dioxins into the air and allowed other contaminants to flow into a nearby estuary.

But the ministry's CEO until 2006, Barry Carbon, later said the criticism was nit-picking, whining, mean-spirited and ill-judged, and that heroes at the ministry and the TDC had cleaned up pollution that was too hard for everyone else.

Dr Smith said the current chief executive had accepted the independent report in full. "The ministry erred in not having good project and financial management systems, in not complying with the resource consent around marine sediments, and in failing to deal effectively with conflicts of interest," he said.

Should hazardous substances be banned ?

by John Hickey

The Hazardous Substance and New Organisms Act is intended to protect the community and the environment from the adverse effects of hazardous substances, but contrary to some beliefs, it plays no part in stopping the use of chemicals and hazardous substances throughout New Zealand.

In the past 200 years human society has benefitted greatly from the presence and use of chemicals. It would be hard to imagine a society without plastics, paints, cars, trucks, trains, metals, medicines or even supermarkets and packaged foods.

Chemicals and derived substances have greatly contributed to the 'good life' that we current humans now enjoy and these positive benefits should indeed be encouraged.

However, like most items in nature, the good points and benefits can often be offset by adverse properties if these substances are used, stored or released in an inappropriate manner. Fuel can burn and release energy which is a fantastic property when harnessed by an engine but this burning sensation is not so good when uncontrolled burning scorches property and people around it. The same fuel while providing much needed heat can be toxic to humans and make fish swim funny.

The process and methodologies in which the substance is used is more often the problem, rather than the substance itself. The HSNO Act is intended to control the use of chemicals by implementing a process that maximises the positive aspects of the chemical whilst minimising the adverse effects.

The HSNO location certification process seeks to identify what hazardous substances are present, where and how they are stored, emergency management procedures, signage to warn of dangers and protection from flammable environments through the control of fuel or ignition sources.

The HSNO Act certification process was set up to achieve these goals through involving the three distinct functions namely;

legislators (govt), compliance advice (private test certifiers);

and hazardous substance users (private);

working together to minimise HS locations and users from non-compliance in order to protect users, society and the environment from the adverse effects of hazardous substances.

Unfortunately this is not an instant process and in practice has meant that the compliance test certifiers often find themselves in an education role for the users of hazardous substances which while not perfect is a practical necessity.

This is further highlighted in the recently released draft test certifier review document which identifies the following possible solutions to current issues facing the HSNO regime:

- increasing awareness of HSNO requirements by industry;
- developing a professional test certifier training programme;
- accreditation to an appropriate quality management standard and membership of a professional association;
- consistent interpretation of the legislation and requirements;
- increasing enforcement.

Perhaps not surprisingly, if we compare these to the major areas identified by the respondents to the recent NZIHSM survey for assistance for the HSNO and Test Certifier Regime as follows:

- Encouragement for all sites to commence HSNO test certification through increased enforcement. Unfortunately there are still many non-compliant sites that only respond to authoritative or government intervention.
- Similar to most other professions there should be encouragement for a professional test certifier association like the NZIHSM. For a fully sustainable system, government assistance for a professional institute would be recommended.
- There should be an ability for test certifiers to be able to issue interim test certificates and ability to enforce compliance of slow moving or reluctant sites.
- Government assistance, training, quick query resolution and support of test certifiers is required to maintain a sustainable system.

General agreement

We can see that both studies are in general agreement and if all the parties work together the positive aspects of chemical use can continue to be enhanced whilst the negative aspects can be minimised through ALL parties working TOGETHER in the HSNO regime process as outlined in the attached diagram on the previous page.

So should hazardous substances be banned? The answer is NO – they are far too useful to humankind but the PROCESS of their use should indeed be managed.

John Hickey is a Test certifier and Process engineer and current President of NZIHSM.

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Consultation on group standard ammendment

Erma is consulting the public on a proposed amendment to the group standards. This amendment has been requested by ACCORD Australasia Ltd (the applicant) and affects a number of the group standards published by Erma on 1 July 2006.

The amendment would extend the exemption from labelling requirements of a group standard if a substance complies with:

1. The relevant current labelling requirements of Australia, USA, Canada, the EU or any other country as approved by the Authority, as if the substances were for sale or supply in those countries, and

2. The group standard requirement to provide the product name, 24-hour emergency number, information on New Zealand importer, supplier or manufacturer and directions for use.

The current exemption expires on 31 December 2010, the applicant is proposing that this date is extended to 31 December 2020.

Race fuel for general use

Renewable biofuel E85 – already used in V8 supercars and for the Toyota Motorsport series – is now permitted for general use in New Zealand, following an approval by the Environmental Risk Management Authority.

E85 is a mixture of 85% ethanol and 15% petrol. In New Zealand, ethanol is produced from milk whey and tallow – waste products from the dairy and meat industry.

It can be used in specially designed "flex-fuel" vehicles, and provides another option for reducing imports of oil and greenhouse emissions from vehicles.

Its use in V8 supercars is relatively new, having been used in the first two rounds of V8 championships in Australia this year. It was used by V8 supercars for the first time in New Zealand at the Hamilton 400 on 17-19 April. V8 Supercars New Zealand event director Stephen Vuleta says switching to a more sustainable fuel has been a goal of V8 Supercars for some time and E85 achieves this.

There is no difference in engine performance, though E85 is about 25% less economical.

"It burns more, but it burns cleaner,"he says. The lack of fumes produced by E85 is another significant benefit of the fuel, particularly for drivers in hot conditions.

The application to approve E85 for full release in New Zealand was made by the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority, For the past two years, ERMA has approved E85 for use in the Toyota Racing Series. However, these approvals allowed the biofuel to be used only in containment, and only for the duration of the series.

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Endosulfan reminder

ERMA New Zealand has issued a reminder that the total ban came into force on January 16 and all stock of the chemical must be disposed of safely within 12 months.

Farmers, horticulturalists, growers, turf care specialists, landscapers and contractors who have stock of endosulfan, will need to make arrangements for it to be disposed of safely, said ERMA's reassessments manager Michael Morris.

The prohibition is the outcome of a formal reassessment of the chemical by ERMA, under the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996.

It is now illegal to use or dump the chemical, and there are a number of other provisions applying to disposal. People who have unused or part-used stock can ask their local regional or district council as to whether the product can be dropped off at transfer stations or surrendered to any ongoing agrichemical collections.

Regional councils currently operating a collection and disposal scheme for hazardous agricultural chemical waste are Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago. Otherwise, people are advised to contact a commercial hazardous waste operator able to handle and dispose of toxic waste.

There is more information on disposal and on the reassessment of endosulfan at www.ermanz.govt.nz/endosulfan/

Motorsport fuel CoP approved

ERMA recently approved the Code of Practice put together with help of Motorsports Association of New Zealand and half a dozen hazardous substances experts who have all had a number of years in the industry.

The NZIHSM has reviewed and submitted on the draft document, and is pleased to see its proposals have been adopted.

It is a very user friendly code that does not over complicate the basic issues which can often occur in such publications. The diagrammatical explanations make it really easy to follow. The preface, clearly explains that this code sets out a means of compliance with the legal requirements of regulations and transfer notice controls.

Such use of approved Standards and Codes of Practice can greatly assist industry and the enforcement agencies in their ability to achieve compliance with the HSNO legislation.

It is hoped that we will see a lot more of this pragmatic approach from ERMA in the future in areas such as wholesale/retail sales of hazardous substances, the fibreglass industry, the bulk oxygen storage facilities, and the automotive panel and paint industry. All these are presently finding difficulty in complying with quite prescriptive legislation embodied in the 2004 Transfer Notice and the Class 1 – 5 controls.

The ERMA website – www.ermanz.govt.nz/hs/complianace/codesofpratice.html, shows all the Codes of Practice approved, under consultation, referenced or under development.

-- Jack Travis

Major step forward

Distilling details on safe fuel handling practice from over 100 pages of legislation in different laws into a single easy to read document for motorsport enthusiasts is a major step forward for the sport, says Motorsport NZ's Ian Snellgrove.

The Code of Practice for MotorSport Fuel Storage and Handling was signed off recently by the Environmental Risk Management Agency and has now been Gazetted as an official policy.

Fuel handling at circuits has been a concern for the sport for some time and Occupational Safety and Health inspectors have visited circuits on several occasions recently to check on fuel handling practices.

Over the past five years a couple of pit fires at circuits and the introduction of ethanol into some race fuels heightened the awareness of the importance of handling fuel the correct way.

"The Code does not establish any new rules," he said. "It simply draws together all the relevant information from other legislation. There are very substantial fines embedded in that legislation. We wanted to make sure that competitors did not unwittingly expose themselves to those and the safety risks as well.

"It was not realistic to expect competitors to hunt through all the rules and, with OSH inspectors taking a close interest in the sport, the Executive felt it a worthwhile exercise to codify what was relevant to our sport.

"In fact the code is suitable for any motorised sport," he said.

The code, a full copy of which is on the MotorSport New Zealand website, is set out in three chapters:

- transporting and storage of fuel;
- fuel handling and storage protocols;
- safe practice for storage.

Chapters one and two directly affect both race and rally competitors.

Chapter three carries more detailed information on emergency responses and fuel storage at motorsport sites, particularly relevant to circuit operators with fuel dumps.

A series of appendices provide downloadable samples of labels, emergency response plan template, endurance race refuelling procedures and equipment.

Handler certificates need revalidation

Agcarm and ERMA are co-operating on a campaign to remind individual handlers of agrichemicals and animal health products to ensure they re-validate their certificate, which is valid for five years.

Tens of thousands of certificates are due to expire over the next few years, peaking at 35,000 expiries in 2011. Farmers and growers can't purchase agrichemicals and certain animal health products without a current certificate.

Agcarm is very keen to ensure product users understand the importance of complying with the certification process. Agcarm members have already given a commitment to not sell product to anyone without a current approved handler certificate. It is important the whole industry adheres to this.

The joint Agcarm/ERMA awareness initiative includes the production of bright A4 posters designed to be placed in prominent positions near cash registers in retail outlets run by Agcarm members. ERMA is also writing to all test certifiers, providing them with lists of people they have certified and whose certification will expire within 12 months.

Agcarm wants one regulator

"Ticking the boxes" with two regulators is a daily reality for people in the crop protection and animal health industry.

To sell products, they must seek approvals from both ERMA and the NZFSA – even though dealing with one regulator would be more efficient, cheaper and reduce compliance costs.

Agcarm's CEO Graeme Peters is campaigning for one regulator and asking people to imagine the hassle of dealing with two government departments to get a driver's license, or the stress of needing building permits from two separate councils to build a house. "Two regulators add cost for little benefit. Farmers, growers, consumers, and the industry would all be better off if the regulators were merged or replaced with a new, single regulator.

"This is not an attack on NZFSA or ERMA; they do their very best under the circumstances. It is more a case of convincing a new government - that is clearly serious about reducing regulatory burdens and compliance costs and creating a more productive economy - that one regulator makes more sense than two."

For decades the industry dealt with one regulator, but that changed in the 1990s when the ACVM Act and HSNO Act were passed. The ACVM Group, part of NZFSA, is responsible for the registration of agricultural compounds and veterinary medicines, and for monitoring their importation, manufacture, sale, and use. ERMA's main role is to decide on applications to import, develop or field test new organisms, or to import or manufacture hazardous substances in New Zealand.

In practice, much of their work is the same, and could be done by one regulator operating under two pieces of legislation or, ideally, one set of laws. "There is a precedent for having one regulator. Medicines for humans are approved by one regulator, Medsafe, but medicines for animals – an industry only the third the size of human pharmaceuticals—require double approval," he said.

He has detailed the benefits of a 'one regulator' approach to the new Minister of Food Safety, Kate Wilkinson, and Environment Minister Nick Smith.

www.nzihsm.org.nz

Chemical exposure deaths:

An unacceptable tragedy

by Dr Simon Buckland

As many as a thousand people are dying each year in New Zealand from exposure to chemicals. That's nearly three times our national annual road toll. Few, if any, New Zealanders would find that acceptable, yet it continues, year after year after year.

A lack of awareness and understanding of the harm chemicals can do, a lack of knowledge and resources on how to avoid that harm, a lack of commitment by business owners and managers and a lack of personal responsibility by workers, all contributes to this unacceptable tragedy.

The safe management of chemicals is regulated by our workplace health and safety legislation and prescribed in the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act. Without a doubt, a contributing factor to people being harmed is the myth that HSNO is complex.

This myth really rankles with me. I hear of the complexity of HSNO all the time; when I read articles on HSNO or listen to people, it's frequently an underlying theme. And the more it's said, the more people take it at face value. It becomes another reason for people not to do the right thing, with unfortunately unacceptable consequences.

The reality is that for the majority of businesses that use chemicals, HSNO is not complex. There are some basis steps that are easily taken. These include, for example, ensuring:

- employees have the appropriate specialist training and are using the right personal protective equipment;
- compliant safety data sheets are available for each chemical used – if you don't have them, ask your supplier for them;
- there is appropriate signage for the chemical hazards on site;
- an emergency management plan is available and regularly rehearsed so that staff know what to do if an incident occurs (a template plan is available from http://www.ermanz.govt.nz/resources/publications/pdfs/ERMA%20Flip%20Chart.pdf);
- the necessary test certificates – e.g. approved handlers or location test certificates have been obtained (a test certifier can give you the relevant advice on this);
- a 'person in charge' is nominated to take responsibility for ensuring that things get done.

Your local Department of Labour inspector and chemical supplier can provide the advice you need.

It's your responsibility

Of course, managing chemicals on some sites will be more involved than on others. For larger industrial sites, implementing HSNO may be more demanding. But when you consider that it is small to medium-sized businesses that deal with most of the chemicals in this country, the steps above will make inroads into reducing the death rate from chemical exposure.

Employers know it is their responsibility to look after their staff, but often their focus is physical hazards. It is vital we start paying more attention to the harm that can occur from chemicals. We're either committed to managing chemicals safely or we're not.

For the sake of your staff, friends and colleagues, take these simple steps that will save people's lives.

Complying with HSNO -– it's straightforward, really.

Simon Buckland is ERMA Hazardous Substances Compliance Co-ordination Manager.

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Website for public reporting

ERMA New Zealand has launched a new web page to allow people to report incidents involving hazardous substances. The objective is to better understand how and why such incidents occur and to allow us to take all practicable measures to minimise risk.

While hazardous chemicals are most commonly associated with industrial applications, they can also be found in our homes and on farms.

For example, many workplaces contain hazardous substances such as solvents, dyes, explosives and pesticides. Hazards at home can include fuel in the barbecue and lawnmower, as well as bleach, other cleaning products, paints and solvents.

Unfortunately, incidents can occur involving hazardous substances that may harm people or the environment.

They may occur for example, from an accident, an equipment failure or because people are not following the rules that are set to safely manage hazardous substances.

ERMA monitors incidents that occur which enables us to determine the effectiveness of the regulatory system and whether the rules are working. It can also see if any trends are developing or if particular substances or practices are causing problems.

The incidents webpage can be found at www.ermanz.govt.nz/hs/incidents.html

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Or: ☐ *Self-employed*

Business Name: _____

3. Preferred mailing address: _____

_____

_____

Telephone (Bus.) (0) _____

Contacts (Res.) (0) _____

(Mob.) (02) _____

(Facsimile) (0) _____

E-Mail: _____

Website: _____

4. I have previously been a member of the Institute ☐ Yes ☐ No

If NO: I am applying to be a ☐ Member ☐ Associate member

5. **Return to**: Linda Amtrano
c/o NZIHSM Secretary
PO Box 5069
Wellington
Phone: 04 802 4079
Fax: 04 384 4710
Email: office@nzihsm.org.nz

www.nzihsm.org.nz
office@nzihsm.org.nz