

GPG 23 Managing Hazardous Substances



Governing Legislation and Standards:

Environment Protection Act
Environment Protection (Prescribed Waste) Regulations
Occupational Health & Safety Act
Dangerous Goods Act



Summary Information:

A clear distinction must be made between Dangerous Goods and Hazardous Substances.

Dangerous Goods can catch fire, explode, cause corrosion or are poisonous.

Hazardous Substances include anything that can harm people or the environment.

Because chemicals, fuels and other hazardous substances can cause a variety of severe problems (to both workers and the environment) they need to be managed with care.

If the groundwater, soil or stormwater is contaminated then the owner or occupier of the property may be subject to potential liability claims from neighbours as well as legal action by the local council or the EPA.



Further Help:

Material Safety Data Sheets

GPG 23



Good Practice Risk Control:

- Identify all of the hazardous substances on site.
- Identify all of the hazardous substances that are also classified as dangerous goods.
- Keep and use a minimum of hazardous substances.
- Keep hazardous substances in labelled containers in properly designed areas.
- Always use hazardous substances according to the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet).
- Train and assess staff competency in use of materials and emergency management.
- Prohibit smoking and ignition sources in flammable substance areas.
- Always use the PPE shown on the hazardous substance's MSDS.
- When considering the risks that are associated with any hazardous substance you need to evaluate a number of factors, including the:
 - Likely duration of use (is it once off, will you only use it for the short term or will it have an ongoing use?)
 - Volumes to be stored and used
 - The severity and the likelihood of risk associated with the storage or the use of the substance
 - Methods staff use to handle the substance
 - Equipment available to manage spills (absorbent rags etc) or other incidents
 - Methods used to dispose of any waste you generate
- Where possible eliminate any hazards by not using the substance in question.
- Alternatively, change the equipment or materials used:
 - Always choose the least harmful substances that will do the job.
 - Use equipment and technology that makes hazardous substances as safe as possible.