

A practical Guide for the assessment and prevention of the risks related to chemical agents at work

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INTRODUCTION

The Royal Decree 374/2001 has been adopted in the Spanish legislation to comply with the Council Directive 98/24/EC, on the protection of the health and safety of workers from the risks related to chemical agents at work, and with the Commission Directive 2000/39/EC that establishes a first list of indicative occupational exposure limit values in implementation of the above Directive.

In order to make easy the application of that Decree, the INSHT has prepared, with participation of the social partners, a Guide for the assessment and prevention of the risks related to chemical agents at work.

The Spanish regulations on the prevention of occupational risks establish that risks assessments and the adoption of preventive measures, in the case of risks arising from the presence of hazardous chemical agents at the workplace, should be performed by qualified professionals with a postgraduate Diploma in occupational risks prevention. So, the Guide is addressed to skilled specialists and intend to explain the application of its provisions and to provide useful information for its implementation.

CONTENT OF THE GUIDE

In the Guide, the provisions of the Royal Decree are discussed in detail. Criteria and complementary information are given to allow its enforcement in any event. The Guide includes several appendices dealing with some topics, such as methodology for the assessment of the exposure to chemical agents, ventilation techniques, methodology and quality of chemical measurements and selection and use of personal protective equipment.

Figure 1 shows a diagram with the main measures to control risk that Royal Decree 374/2001 set out, including specific actions related to each measure. The Guide, or its appendices, gives advice and/or information on all the actions pointed out in the diagram.

(Figure 1. Diagram of the provisions of Royal Decree 374/2001)

CONCLUSION

The Guide has been well received by social partners and prevention specialists as a useful tool for the application of the Spanish regulations on the prevention of occupational risks resulting from exposure to hazardous chemicals.

Figure 1. Diagram of the provisions of Royal Decree 374/2001

