

COSHH ASSESSMENT · UNITED KINGDOM · 2026

Commercial Cleaning COSHH Assessment

UK template for a commercial / janitorial COSHH assessment under COSHH 2002 — surface disinfectants, washroom acids, kitchen degreasers, chlorine releases and the dilution / decant risk that drives most cleaning incidents.

Commercial cleaning is the sector that generates the most under-reported COSHH incidents in the UK — chemical mixing in mop buckets, decanting from drums into unlabelled trigger-sprays, chlorine gas release from acid-and-bleach combinations in washrooms. A cleaning COSHH assessment under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 has to cover every chemical the operative will touch, but more importantly it has to address the three operational realities that drive most incidents: dilution and decanting, the COSHH chain when the cleaner is sub-contracted, and the consumer-grade products that staff bring from home and use on site.

Document structure a reviewer expects

1. Site and contract scope

Premises type, areas cleaned (washrooms, kitchens, clinical, general), contract manager and on-site supervisor.

2. Product inventory

Each product by trade name, supplier, SDS reference date, active hazardous ingredient and concentration, CLP class, WEL where set.

3. Dilution and decanting procedure

Dosing system or labelled measuring jug; trigger-spray labelling requirements; named-operative responsibility for decants.

4. Incompatible mixtures and colour coding

Explicit prohibition of bleach + acid; colour-coded equipment and store segregation; training reference.

5. PPE matrix by product

Gloves (material and length), eye protection, apron, RPE where required — selected by product and task, with replacement frequency.

6. Spill response

Spill kit location and contents, neutralisation procedure for acids and alkalis, evacuation threshold and ventilation route.

7. Storage and segregation

Locked chemical store, segregation of acids from chlorine-based products, ventilation, secondary containment for drums.

8. Training and competence

Manufacturer training where required (e.g. dosing system, oven cleaner), BICSc / CGCS competence, induction and refresher cycle.

9. Health surveillance

Skin checks for chlorine releasing agent users, glove rotation for sensitisation, asthma surveillance where required.

10. RIDDOR and incident reporting

Route to RIDDOR for any over-7-day injury, occupational asthma, chemical burns; internal incident-log review.

Common reasons reviewers reject this document

- Generic 'cleaning chemicals' line — no per-product inventory, no SDS references.
- SDS files older than 12 months or no review date recorded.
- Decanting permitted without trigger-spray labelling rule.
- No explicit prohibition of bleach + acid combinations.
- Colour-coding system not named or not aligned to BICSc / industry standard.
- PPE matrix specifies 'gloves' without naming the material — operatives wearing latex with chlorine compounds is a routine finding.

UK regulation reference

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended) SI 2002/2677

The statutory framework — assessment, prevention or control, exposure monitoring and health surveillance.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/2677/contents/made>

L5 — Control of substances hazardous to health (ACoP and guidance) HSE L5

The principal guidance on the COSHH duties and the recognised compliance framework.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/l5.htm>

GB CLP Regulation — Classification, Labelling and Packaging of substances and mixtures GB CLP

Workplace labelling requirements — applies to decanted-on-site containers.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/chemical-classification/legal/clp-regulation.htm>

EH40 — Workplace exposure limits HSE EH40

The published WELs that the COSHH assessment must check against for any inhalation-route exposure.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/eh40.htm>

INDG136 — Working with substances hazardous to health HSE INDG136

Plain-English summary — the standard reference for operative training content.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg136.htm>

RIDDOR — Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 SI 2013/1471

Notification regime for over-7-day injuries, occupational asthma and dangerous occurrences.

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/1471/contents/made>

Frequently asked questions

How often does a cleaning COSHH assessment need to be reviewed?

Whenever a new product is introduced, when an SDS is reissued by the manufacturer, after any incident, and as a minimum annually. Most contract clients (healthcare, education, food premises) also require a contract-start review and an annual re-issue regardless of mid-contract changes.

Can a cleaning operative decant chemicals into a trigger spray?

Yes, provided the spray is labelled in workplace format under GB CLP — product name, active ingredient, dilution ratio and date — and the dilution follows the manufacturer's SDS. Unlabelled decants are a common adverse finding and are the leading cause of accidental mixing incidents.

Why is mixing bleach and acid dangerous?

It releases chlorine gas, which at low concentrations causes eye and respiratory irritation and at higher concentrations causes pulmonary oedema. The most common cause of acute hospital admissions from cleaning work in the UK. The assessment must explicitly prohibit the combination and the operative training must cover it.

Do I need to provide gloves of a specific material?

Yes. The choice of glove material is product-specific — nitrile is the general-purpose choice for cleaning chemicals; latex is to be avoided where any chance of sensitisation exists; PVC is appropriate for some specific chemicals. The assessment names the glove material per product, not just 'gloves'.

Does this assessment cover staff bringing products from home?

It should explicitly prohibit them. Consumer-grade products do not come with workplace SDS, are not in the assessment, and are not covered by the dilution / PPE / incompatibility procedures. Most adverse incidents the HSE investigates in the sector involve a domestic product brought from home.

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