

# Health & Safety Management Plan

## Appendix B –Specific Policies and Procedures

### 9. Hazardous Substances Policy

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#### Policy Statement

We are committed to maintaining a safe and healthy environment for workers and others in our churches. This includes ensuring our workers are safe when working with or around hazardous substances.

#### Purpose

To provide guidance on managing risk when working with hazardous substances.

#### Definition

A 'hazardous substance' is any substance that has one or more of the following intrinsic hazardous properties:

- explosiveness
- flammability
- ability to oxidise (accelerate a fire)
- human toxicity (acute or chronic)
- corrosiveness (to human tissue or metal)
- ecotoxicity (with or without bioaccumulation)
- capacity, on contact with air or water, to develop one or more of the above properties.

#### Asbestos

Anyone who works on the fabric of a building may be at risk of disturbing asbestos. This is especially so for buildings built before 2000.

Asbestos can be in places that you might not expect, so you could come into contact with it without knowing about it beforehand. Once asbestos-containing materials are disturbed, tiny asbestos fibres are released. These fibres are hazardous and if breathed in can cause lung disease and cancer.

If you uncover or damage materials that may contain asbestos:

- Stop work immediately.
- Keep people away.
- Minimise the spread of contamination to other areas.
- Get advice on what to do next.
- Removal of asbestos should only be carried out by a licensed asbestos removalist.

#### Lead based paint

The use of lead-based paints, common until the 1980s, creates problems for those involved in repainting and redecorating. Stripping off any paint containing lead can create a serious health hazard, not only for the person doing the job but for the building's occupants and neighbours, particularly children.

Since redecoration generally covers earlier layers of paint, lead-based paint is likely to be present in most properties, although not necessarily on the surface. Assume that paintwork on pre-1980 buildings is lead-based unless records or tests show otherwise.

The following precautions must be taken to reduce the risk of lead poisoning:

- If removing paint from the inside of a building, always remove curtains and furniture and cover the carpets.
- If removing paint from the outside of a building, close all windows and doors to prevent contamination inside.
- Collect all paint debris on a large ground sheet. If working on a scaffold, tie a sheet underneath to catch falling paint. If removing paint with a water blaster, try and collect all flakes of paint from the surrounding area.
- Clean the area around the groundsheet with a vacuum cleaner to collect any other paint debris. Dispose of contents immediately after wrapping securely. Do not burn paint debris.
- After sanding, wet wipe surfaces to remove dust then use a commercial vacuum cleaner to clean up dust.
- Keep children and pets away from the work area.
- Wash face and hands carefully and change out of contaminated clothing before eating or handling children. Wash overalls separately.
- Wear a hat or cover hair, especially when dry sanding.
- Wear a good quality, properly fitted toxic dust respirator when sanding, making dust or burning off paint. If using a disposable respirator, only those with a double head straps are suitable
- If removing paint with chemicals, wear safety glasses, overalls and gloves. Ensure good ventilation.

## **Mould**

Moulds are fungi, which are simple, microscopic organisms. They are present everywhere, indoors and outdoors. Excessive indoor humidity resulting in condensation on walls from plumbing leaks, spills from showering or bathing and water leaking through foundations or roofs, will all promote mould growth. In principle, preventing mould is a straightforward matter of keeping things dry.

Everyone is exposed to mould spores without noticeable harm, but they can cause health problems when inhaled in large numbers. People with pre-existing asthma are at greater risk, as even a relatively small number of spores may trigger an asthma attack. Similarly, those with weakened immune systems, the elderly and infants are more at risk.

If dealing with mould, respiratory protection should be used. A respirator with particulate filter(s) P1 minimum is required for spores. Protective clothing that is easily discarded and rubber or other suitable gloves should be worn.

## Chemicals

Many parishes store some chemicals on site, such as Round Up for weed killing or fuel for lawn mowers. It is important that these substances are stored and handled safely.

Each parish should list all of hazardous substances on site and the quantity of each substance held. This is called a hazardous substances inventory. The product label and safety data sheet will tell you if the substances are hazardous. Consider people's exposure to hazardous substances and then take necessary precautions to keep them safe, i.e. wearing safety glasses or gloves.

Where possible get rid of hazardous substances or isolate their use away from people. If someone may still be exposed, minimise exposure as much as possible. Train people about the substances they use and how to protect themselves, and store only what you need.

Store hazardous substances in labelled, leak-proof containers. Store incompatibles separately and store gas cylinders safely. Be aware that flammable vapour can build up and accidentally ignite.

Manufacturers and suppliers must sell you products that are correctly labelled, but you must make sure that the label stays on the container and continues to be readable. If a hazardous substance is decanted from one container to another, the receiving container must also be labelled. It is never safe to have hazardous substances in unlabelled containers because people may become confused about what hazardous substance they are using and not take the necessary safety precautions. Never put hazardous substances in food or drink containers because people may eat or drink it by mistake. Always read the label before using a hazardous substance so you know what you are dealing with.

For more information about safety with hazardous substances please visit [www.hazardoussubstances.govt.nz](http://www.hazardoussubstances.govt.nz)